

A decorative graphic on the left side of the cover. It features a vertical lime green bar. To its right is a photograph of a worker in a yellow and black safety suit and white helmet, standing on a white wind turbine structure. Above this, there are white line-art waves. Below the green bar, there are several white line-art wind turbine icons arranged in a cluster. The background of the entire cover is a teal color with some darker teal geometric shapes.

Arklow Bank Wind Park 2

Planning Documents

Planning Report



Arklow Bank Wind Park 2

Planning Report



Turley

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Client
Sure Partners Ltd

Our reference
SSEB3021

May 2024

1. Introduction

Overview

- 1.0 This Planning Report has been prepared by Turley on behalf of Sure Partners Ltd (hereinafter referred to as the 'Applicant'), being a wholly owned subsidiary of SSE plc.
- 1.1 This Report is submitted in support of an Application to An Bord Pleanála (hereinafter referred to as 'ABP') under Section 291 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (hereinafter referred to as 'the Act') for a Proposed Development in the maritime area.

Proposed Development

- 1.2 The Project is known as the Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 offshore windfarm, including both offshore and onshore infrastructure. The Proposed Development for the purpose of this Planning Report is the Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 Offshore Infrastructure (hereinafter referred to as 'ABWP2' and the 'Proposed Development'), being an offshore wind farm which is to be located c. 6 – 15 km off the coast of Co. Wicklow and Co. Wexford in the Irish Sea (hereinafter referred to as 'the Application Site').
- 1.3 Please refer to Section 4 of this Report for further details on the 'Application Site' and Section 5 of this Report for further details on the 'Proposed Development'.

Purpose of this Report

- 1.4 The purpose of this Report is to describe the nature and extent of the Proposed Development, its principal features, and to provide an overview of the relevant national, regional and local planning policy context to assist ABP in its determination of the Application.
- 1.5 This Report also demonstrates that the Proposed Development is consistent with the relevant national, regional and local planning policies/objectives, and would, therefore, be in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

Accompanying Plans and Particulars

- 1.6 This Report should be read in conjunction with all the plans and particulars accompanying the Application to ABP, which includes a suite of planning drawings, an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

Report Structure

- 1.7 The Planning Report is structured as follows:
- **Section 2 - Project Background:** outlines relevant background information on the Proposed Development including the relevant planning history.

- **Section 3 – Consultations:** provides an overview of the non-statutory and statutory consultations for the project.
- **Section 4 - Application Site:** describes the Application Site.
- **Section 5 - Proposed Development:** describes the Proposed Development and also outlines the need for, and benefits of, the Proposed Development.
- **Section 6 – Strategic Policy:** provides an overview of the relevant strategic European, national, regional and local policies/strategies/frameworks/plans.
- **Section 7 - National Planning Policy:** assesses the Proposed Development against relevant statutory national planning policy.
- **Section 8 - Regional Planning Policy:** assesses the Proposed Development against relevant statutory regional planning policy.
- **Section 9 - Local Planning Policy:** assesses the Proposed Development against relevant statutory local planning policy.
- **Section 10 - Conclusion:** Provides concluding comments on the acceptability of the Proposed Development.

2. Project Background

The Applicant

- 2.0 The Applicant (SPL) is a wholly owned subsidiary of FTSE 100 listed company SSE Plc under SSE Renewables. SSE Renewables (SSER) is a leading renewable energy developer, owner and operator, headquartered in the UK and Ireland, with a growing presence internationally. Its strategy is to lead the transition to net zero through the world-class development, construction and operation of renewable assets.

Maritime Area Consent

- 2.1 Projects that obtain a MAC are required to apply for all requisite consents and planning permission and will be subject to the full assessment procedures by ABP.
- 2.2 In December 2022, the Applicant obtained a Maritime Area Consent (MAC) (Ref 2022-MAC-002) for the construction and operation of an offshore windfarm and associated infrastructure (including decommissioning and other works) on and around Arklow Bank in the Irish Sea.
- 2.3 A copy of the MAC is appended to the Application Form. This Application has been prepared in accordance with the MAC as granted.
- 2.4 Following the grant of a MAC, the Applicant must submit the Application for permission to ABP under Section 291 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (hereinafter referred to as the Act). This Application is made to ABP in accordance with Section 291 of the Act.

Planning History

Arklow Bank Wind Park 1

- 2.5 The existing Arklow Bank Wind Park 1 (ABWP1) is surrounded by the proposed 'Array Area' for the Proposed Development, however, it is not included within the extent of the Application Site. It was constructed in 2003/2004 and consists of seven wind turbines with a combined capacity of 25.2 MW.
- 2.6 The turbines have a hub height of 73.5 metres and a height to blade tip of 124 metres. The turbines use a steel monopole foundation and each turbine has a landing platform for boat access. The turbines are spaced approximately 600 metres apart.
- 2.7 A second phase of this wind farm was to be developed consisting of 193 turbines, but this phase and planned connection to the EirGrid transmission system was cancelled in 2007.
- 2.8 ABWP1 is owned and operated by Arklow Energy Limited and remains the first and only operational offshore wind farm in Ireland.

Arklow Bank Wind Park 2

- 2.9 Planning permission has already been granted for essential enabling and supporting onshore infrastructure for the Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 project. Details on these extant planning permissions are provided below.

Onshore Grid Infrastructure

- 2.10 The Onshore Grid Infrastructure (OGI) for ABWP2 was approved in May 2022 by ABP (under Plan Reg. Ref. No. ABP-310090-21).
- 2.11 The OGI comprises transmission infrastructure and consists of all onshore electrical works from the landfall point (i.e. the High Water Mark) to the point of connection with the transmission network and includes an onshore HV export double circuit cable and an onshore substation located at the Avoca River Park in Arklow, Co. Wicklow
- 2.12 The OGI is necessary to connect ABWP2 to Ireland's electricity transmission grid and includes the following:
- Landfall for two offshore export cable circuits from the High Water Mark to two Transition Joint Bays at Johnstown North located c. 4.5 km to the northeast of Arklow Harbour.
 - Connection by two underground 220kV high voltage alternating current cable circuits, and fibre optic cables over a distance of c.6 km, from the landfall to the new onshore 220kV substation.
 - A new onshore 220kV substation to be located at Avoca River Park, Shelton Abbey & Kilbride, Arklow, Co Wicklow, approximately 2.1 km northwest of Arklow consisting of two connected compounds:
 - The transmission compound with the infrastructure to physically connect to the National Electricity Transmission Network; and
 - The connection compound with the infrastructure to allow the connection of the windfarm in accordance with EirGrid grid code requirements.
 - Flood defence improvement works to the existing Avoca River Business Park flood defences located c. 500m west of substation site, a 220kV overhead line connection from the new 220kV substation at Shelton Abbey to the existing 220kV transmission network located c. 200m from the substation site.

Operations and Maintenance Facility

- 2.13 The onshore Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) for Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 was granted planning permission in June 2022 by Wicklow County Council (under Plan Reg. Ref. No. 21/1316).
- 2.14 The OMF will include office and welfare facilities for the management of the offshore wind farm as well as warehouse space for the storage and maintenance of machinery associated with the wind farm alongside educational spaces for visitors. It will provide a base to service ABWP2 and support its operation.

3. Consultations

Non-Statutory Community/Stakeholder Consultations

- 3.0 The Applicant has been undertaking a stakeholder engagement campaign since 2018.
- 3.1 A Consultation Report has been prepared by GoBe Consultants and is submitted with the Application. The Consultation Report contains a record of, and provides an overview of, the public/community and stakeholder consultation undertaken to date in relation to the Proposed Development.

Statutory Pre-Application Consultations

- 3.2 The Applicant has undertaken statutory Pre-Application consultations with ABP in accordance with Sections 287 and 287A of the Act.
- 3.3 The Applicant submitted a request to ABP on 23rd December 2022 to:
- (i) enter into Pre-Application consultations under Section 287 of the Act on the Proposed Development (Ref. No. ABP-315796-23)¹; and
 - (ii) enter into Pre-Application consultation under Section 287A of the Act and seek a Section 287B opinion from ABP as to flexibility with respect to the Proposed Development (Ref. No. ABP-316331-23)².
- 3.4 The Applicant met with representatives of ABP on four occasions during the Pre-Application consultation process on 13th June 2023, 23rd August 2023, 6th November 2023 and 11th December 2023.
- 3.5 At the meeting of 6th November 2023, the Applicant confirmed that following on from the previous meeting, the project design options had been reduced from four options to two. Please refer to 'Chapter 3 – Consideration of Alternatives' of the EIAR for further details on the design options considered and 'Section 5 - Proposed Development' of this Report for a description of the 2 no. proposed design options.
- 3.6 The Section 287 Pre-Application consultations concluded on the 25th of January 2024.
- 3.7 On the 2nd of February 2024, the applicant received notice of ABP's Section 287B Opinion on Design Flexibility in accordance with the consultation under Section 287A of the Act.
- 3.8 The ABP opinion is summarised in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1: Opinion on Design Flexibility

Information	Details/Circumstances
-------------	-----------------------

¹ <https://www.pleanala.ie/en-ie/case/315796>

² <https://www.pleanala.ie/en-ie/case/316331>

a) The details, or group of details of the proposed development that may be confirmed after the application has been made and decided	Model and Number of Turbines Layout of turbines and associated cabling Limit of Deviation Layout of offshore platforms and associated cabling Limit of Deviation Turbine hub height (m) Rotor Diameter (m) Upper blade tip height (above Lowest Astronomical Tide) (m) Lower blade tip height (above Lowest Astronomical Tide) (m) Chord width (m) Average annual Revolutions Per Minute
b) the circumstances relating to the proposed development that indicate that it is appropriate that the proposed application be made and decided before the prospective applicant has confirmed the details referred to in paragraph (a) above.	To avail of technology developments and advancements Supply chain Procurement of projects with short term targets and ability to supply Vessel availability

3.9 In general terms, the Opinion on Flexibility confirms that the flexibility sought by the Applicant is appropriate and will enable the Applicant to avail of technology developments and advancements; allow for consenting timelines alongside technological developments in the offshore wind industry; and to take account of potential challenges on the supply chain to deliver in support of the short-term national targets. Flexibility will also be beneficial in terms of the construction vessel availability.

3.10 This Application is submitted directly to ABP for determination. In accordance with the undertaking given to ABP under Section 287(A)(2)(f) of the Act, the Applicant has provided with the Application two options in respect of each detail which is unlikely to be confirmed at the time of the Application, in compliance with ABP's Opinion, thereby setting out the information on the basis of which the Application may be decided by ABP.

Statutory Application Consultation

3.11 As part of the Application process, further consultation will take place. This will include:

- Issuing details of the Application to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's EIA Portal.
- Direct consultation with the relevant Prescribed Bodies, Coastal Authorities and Transboundary Bodies as required under S292(3) of the Act. A schedule of all bodies notified is appended to the accompanying Application Form.
- Placing a public notice in one national newspaper (the Irish Independent) and 2 no. local newspapers (the Wicklow People and the Gorey Guardian).

- Placing a copy of the application and all accompanying documents on display in the offices of An Bord Pleanála and the offices of Wicklow County Council and Wexford County Council, being the relevant Coastal Planning Authorities; and
- Access to all plans and particulars associated with the Application will also be facilitated via a dedicated project website at: www.arklowbank2offshoreplanning.ie

3.12 Any submissions/observations arising from the Application consultation and notification process will be submitted directly to, and considered by, ABP as part of the Application assessment process.

4. Application Site

4.0 The Application Site, which covers an area of approx. 139.4 km², is located on and around Arklow Bank in the Irish Sea approximately 6 km to 15 km to the east of Arklow in County Wicklow.

4.1 The general location and extent of the Application Site is illustrated in **Figure 4.1** below.

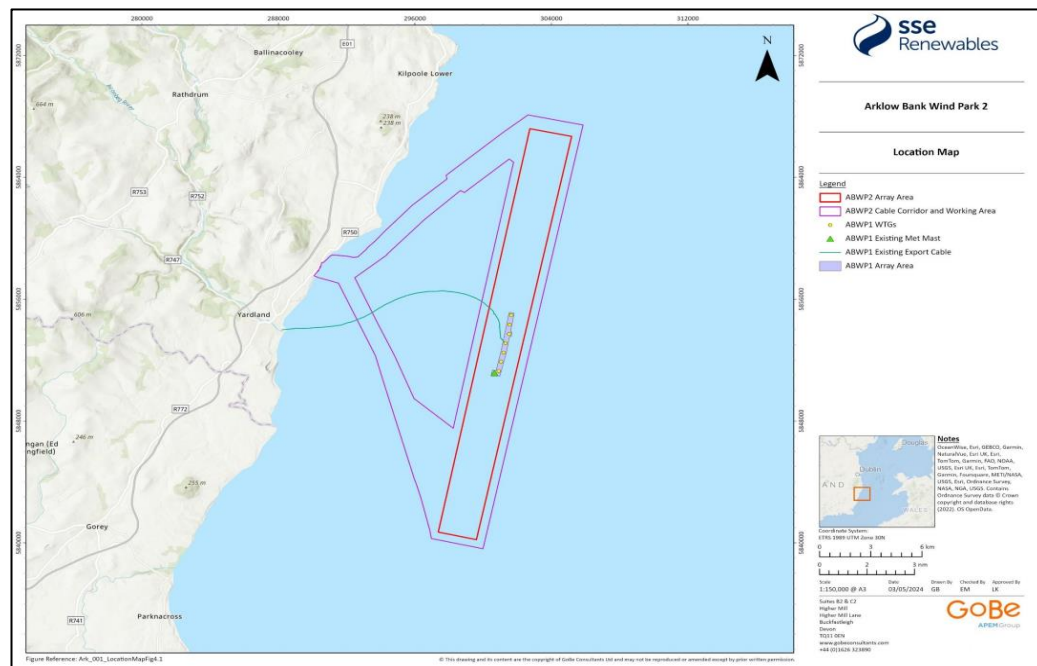


Figure 4.1: Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 Site Location Plan

4.2 Arklow Bank is a shallow offshore sandbank, measuring approximately 27 km by 2.5 km. On the bank, water depths vary between 0.6 metres and 25 metres relative to Lowest Astronomical Tide (LAT), with shallower areas particularly occurring in the vicinity of the existing seven wind turbines of ABWP1.

4.3 The general morphology of the sandbank is oriented generally in a north-south direction. There is a large variation in depth within the area, with water depths in excess of 50 metres LAT beyond the bank towards the east. The Application Site is located seaward of the High Water Mark (HWM).

4.4 The Application Site for the Proposed Development will comprise an 'Array Area' (the area within which the Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs), the Offshore Substation Platforms (OSPs), and associated cables (export, inter-array and interconnector cabling) and foundations will be installed). The 'Array Area' covers an area of approx. 63.4 km² and is located approx. 6 km to 15 km off the east coast of Ireland.

4.5 The Application Site also comprises a 'Cable Corridor and Working Area' (the area within which export, inter-array and interconnector cabling will be installed) which covers an area of approx. 76.0 km² and extends from the 'Array Area' to the HWM at Johnstown North, north of Arklow Town, Co. Wicklow where the offshore export cables make landfall (the Landfall).

5. Proposed Development

- 5.0 The Proposed Development is the Arklow Bank Wind Park 2 (ABWP2) Offshore Infrastructure (hereinafter referred to as the Proposed Development).
- 5.1 The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm, located off the coast of Co. Wicklow and Co. Wexford, on the east coast of Ireland. A Maritime Area Consent (MAC) (Ref 2022-MAC-002) was granted in December 2022 for the construction and operation of an offshore windfarm and associated infrastructure (including decommissioning and other works) on and around the Arklow Bank in the Irish Sea.
- 5.2 As noted above, the site of the Proposed Development comprises an Array Area (the area within which the Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs), the Offshore Substation Platforms (OSPs), and associated cables (export, inter-array and interconnector cabling) and foundations will be installed) and a Cable Corridor and Working Area (the area within which export, inter-array and interconnector cabling will be installed). The overall Proposed Development site area is 139.4 km² and all of the Proposed Development will be seaward of the High Water Mark (HWM). The Array Area is located approximately 6 km to 15 km off the coast and covers an area of approximately 63.4 km². The Cable Corridor and Working Area extends from the Array Area to the HWM at Johnstown North, north of Arklow Town, Co. Wicklow where the offshore export cables make landfall (the Landfall). The area of the Cable Corridor and Working Area is 76.0 km².
- 5.3 The Proposed Development will comprise:
- I. One of two Project Design Options – Project Design Option 1 (which comprises Models 1a and 1b,) or Project Design Option 2. Project Design Option 1 (Models 1a and 1b) comprises WTGs with the same rotor diameter, hub height and tip heights and with slight variations in chord width and revolutions per minute (RPM) between the two models. The Project Design Options comprise the following parameters:

Parameters	Project Design Option 1		Project Design Option 2
Number of WTGs	56		47
Hub Height (above Lowest Astronomical Tide) (m)	155		162
Rotor Diameter (m)	236		250
Upper Blade Tip Height (above LAT) (m)	273		287
Lower Blade Tip Height (above LAT) (m)	37		37
Chord Width (m)	Model 1a	Model 1b	6.9
	5.4	6.8	
Average Annual RPM	6.34	5.73	6.19

- II. The WTGs for both Project Design Options will comprise three blades and a horizontal axis rotor. The blades will be connected to the hub, forming a rotor which turns a shaft connected either directly to the generator ('direct drive') or to a

gearbox, which are located within the nacelle. Each WTG will be installed on a steel monopile foundation with a diameter ranging from 7 m to 11 m.

- III. Two Offshore Substation Platforms (OSP) each comprising a topside structure with a main structure height of 53 m above LAT, an antennae height of 63 m above LAT, topside length of 46 m and topside width of 33.5 m, supported on a monopile foundation ranging from 7 m to 14 m in diameter. One OSP will be located in the north, and one will be located in the south of the Array Area. The OSP topside structure will contain switch gear, transformers, control equipment, auxiliary electrical equipment, cranes, batteries, generators, fire control systems, communication mast and other ancillary equipment.
 - IV. The monopile foundations for the WTGs and OSPs will consist of a hollow steel tube installed into the seabed. WTG monopile foundations will be installed to a depth ranging from 20 m to 37 m below Lowest Seabed Level (LSBL), while OSP monopile foundations will be installed to a depth ranging from 20 m to 45 m below LSBL.
 - V. A network of inter-array cabling between WTG and OSP locations with a length of between 110 km and 122 km.
 - VI. Interconnector cabling between the two OSPs with a length of between 25 km and 28 km.
 - VII. Two export cable circuits extending from the OSPs to the proposed Landfall at Johnstown North with a combined length of between 35 km and 40 km.
 - VIII. Associated ancillary works comprising cable protection and scour protection. Cable protection will be installed to prevent movement and exposure of the cables over the lifetime of the Proposed Development where the cables cannot be buried to the required depth. Scour protection will be used to protect the monopile foundations from tide induced scour that may occur around the monopile foundation.
 - IX. Ancillary components to be mounted on the monopile foundations including boat landings, J-tubes, platforms and davit cranes to support the construction, operation and decommissioning of the infrastructure described above.
 - X. Confirmatory surveys comprising geotechnical, geophysical and environmental surveys.
 - XI. Project Design Options 1 and 2 have defined WTG and OSP layouts with a 100 m limit of deviation applying to each location to allow avoidance of site constraints such as difficult ground conditions during construction.
 - XII. At Landfall, the export cables will be installed using trenchless techniques between the HWM and the exit point of the trenchless technique. This involves installing the export cables along underground drilled pathways of length between 350 m and 880 m, without the need to excavate an open trench.
 - XIII. This application is seeking a ten-year permission and 36.5 year operational life from the date of final commissioning of the Proposed Development.
- 5.4 Please refer to the Planning Drawings and 'Chapter 4 – Description of Development' of the EIA which accompany the Application for further information on the two Project Design Options, including details on layouts, elevations, general arrangements etc.

Need for, and Benefits of, the Proposed Development

- 5.5 Section 6 of this Planning Report identifies the strategic policy support at European, National, Regional and Local levels for the development of offshore renewable energy development in Ireland that will support the transition away from GHG emitting sources of energy and towards greener renewable energy. There is a critical yet unfulfilled need for offshore wind in Ireland and urgent action is required to meet Ireland's strategy of increasing renewable energy generation to supply 80% of demand, with at least 5GW of offshore wind required by 2030 to meet the goals of CAP24.
- 5.6 Six Maritime Area Consents (MACs) were granted by the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, with a commencement date of 23rd December 2022, representing a potential opportunity for approximately 4.2GW of offshore wind generation capacity. These Phase 1 developments, which include the Proposed Development, are aiming to commence operation in the late 2020s subject to securing a planning permission. Therefore, the capacity of Ireland's offshore wind development pipeline, based on the current pipeline of identified proposed developments that have the benefit of a MAC, is not yet sufficient to meet the CAP24 target of at least 5GW of offshore wind by 2030. This means further offshore renewable energy development will need to come forward in order to achieve the CAP24 goals.
- 5.7 The Proposed Development will comprise an offshore wind farm with an export capacity of 800MW. Offshore wind is a proven technology and can be deployed with confidence, following a grant of planning permission. If the Proposed development is consented it will export power to the Irish grid from 2029 and therefore will provide a significant contribution to the offshore wind sector in Ireland, to support both the 2030 Irish decarbonisation targets and delivery commitments, and Ireland's energy security of supply. The Proposed Development has the potential to deliver 16% of the CAP24 offshore wind capacity target for 2030.

Economic Benefits of the Proposed Development

- 5.8 An Economic Impact Assessment is included at Appendix 21.1 of the EIAR Volume 3 and outlines the potential economic benefits of ABWP2 across three project stages: capital expenditure (CAPEX including development), operational expenditure (OPEX) and decommissioning (DECEX). It estimated that over the lifetime of the Project €4.9 billion will be spent across these three stages.
- 5.9 This investment in the ABWP2 project will deliver the following benefits to Ireland and the regional area of Counties Wicklow and Wexford:
- Create 1,720 annualised Full Time Equivalent (aFTE) jobs during the development and construction phase, 430 of which will be in the regional area.
 - Employment that will generate €111 million Gross Value Added (GVA) for the Irish economy.
 - Employment generating €25 million (GVA) for the regional economy.

- Generate €16 million for the Irish economy of which €11 million will benefit the regional economies during the operational phase of the development; and
- Generate over €500 million GVA over the 36.5 year operational lifespan of the development.

5.10 The ABWP2 project will also:

- Facilitate an increase in the use of renewable energy generation with the ABWP2 having a generation capacity of 800MW, which has the potential to power almost 850,000 homes and offset around 830 billion kilos of carbon emissions per annum.
- Provide security of supply for Ireland and lead to an increase in the production of domestic energy.
- Make a significant contribution on decarbonising energy and meeting Ireland and EU's binding energy targets.

5.11 The following factors also demonstrate the suitability of the ABWP2 project to deliver on decarbonisation targets, in the context of other identified and any future pipeline of offshore wind development opportunities. These attributes include:

- the suitability of the proposed location in relation to important environmental factors.
- the suitability of the grid connection options already identified.
- a 16% contribution to the target of 5GW offshore wind from the Proposed Development; and
- progress already made on development actions which increases the deliverability of the project i.e. the OGI and OMF already granted planning permissions.

Community Benefits of the Proposed Development

- 5.12 SSE has a long and proud history of sharing economic value from its renewable assets with communities. SSER owns and operates 29 onshore wind farms on the island of Ireland and to date has invested over €16m on a voluntary basis in the surrounding communities. SSER has direct experience of administering community benefit funds with a total lifetime value of €367m across Ireland and Great Britain.
- 5.13 SSE has been engaging with local communities near the proposed ABWP2 site since 2018, and to date, has invested over €500,000 on a voluntary basis across County Wicklow and North Wexford.
- 5.14 This investment has been made through two separate Sponsorship and Fisheries Funds. The Sponsorship Fund has supported more than 80 community initiatives under themes of marine-based activities, environmental and social sustainability and energy efficiency. The Fisheries Fund has sought to provide direct benefit to locally

registered commercial fishery operators and in 2023, in collaboration with Wicklow County Council, delivered a new 16 berth commercial pontoon at Arklow Harbour.

- 5.15 SSER has committed to the continuation of these voluntary funds throughout the development phase in order to demonstrate its commitment to the local region and support for communities in the vicinity of the ABWP2 project.
- 5.16 ABWP2 was not successful in the first round of the Government's ORESS scheme, however, SPL remains fully committed to delivering the project, and, providing a community benefit fund. Without an ORESS support contract, ABWP2 is not in a position to deliver a community fund in line with the ORESS scheme. However, SPL is pleased to be able to commit to providing a fund of €3m per annum for the duration of an alternative route to market (corporate power purchase agreement) contract.
- 5.17 The ABWP2 Community Benefit Fund will be administered in line with SSER's 29 existing community benefit funds in Ireland and align with the fundamental principles of the ORESS community benefit guidelines, namely community participation and community-led decision-making.
- 5.18 In administering the community benefit fund for ABWP2, SSER will:
- Ensure community participation in fund decision-making via the establishment of a local Fund Committee;
 - Develop a Funding Strategy and Development Delivery Plan which will be approved by the Fund Committee;
 - Raise awareness and ensure effective promotion of the application process in line with the Funding Strategy;
 - Ensure that applications for funding are assessed in a fair, non-discriminatory and transparent manner;
 - Publish an annual report detailing the performance of the fund and ensure transparency;
 - Maximise the impact of the fund by supporting communities to deliver their priorities with measurable and sustainable benefits;
 - Ensuring that communities benefit from funding during the construction of ABWP2. Following Financial Investment Decision (FID), SSER will make prepayments available during the three years preceding Commercial Operations as follows:
 - 1st Early Contribution Year - €0.5m
 - 2nd Early Contribution Year - €1m
 - 3rd Early Contribution Year - €1.5m

- 5.19 The early contribution payments would be offset at a rate of €0.5m per annum from the funds during subsequent years, or at an amount as agreed with the Fund Committee.
- 5.20 In the event ABWP2 does manage to secure a future government-backed subsidy arrangement or an alternate arrangement which provides additional support to the project, then the level of this fund would be reviewed and increased as appropriate in accordance with the ORESS community benefit guidelines.

6. Strategic Policy Context

Overview

- 6.0 This section of the Report provides an overview of the strategic European, national, regional and local policies/strategies/frameworks/plans which are relevant to renewable energy projects in Ireland.
- 6.1 This Section demonstrates that there is a significant amount of strategic policy support for renewable energy projects, such as the Proposed Development, which is an important consideration in the assessment of the Application.
- 6.2 This section of the Report sets out the strategic policy context which is applicable to the Proposed Development, but does not provide a detailed assessment of the Proposed Development against each of these policies/strategies/frameworks/plans. The statutory planning policy context, along with an assessment of the Proposed Development against the relevant policies and objectives, is provided in the following sections of this Report:
- Section 7 - National Planning Policy
 - Section 8 - Regional Planning Policy
 - Section 9 - Local Planning Policy

European Context

EU Offshore Renewables Energy Strategy 2020

- 6.3 To ensure that offshore renewable energy can help reach the EU's ambitious energy and climate targets for 2030 and 2050, the European Commission published a dedicated EU strategy on offshore renewable energy (COM/2020/741) on 19th November 2020 which proposes ways to support the long-term sustainable development of this sector.
- 6.4 The strategy aims to increase offshore wind capacity to around 25 times its current level, and facilitate the commercialisation of new offshore renewable technologies, such as tidal, wave and floating solar energy. The EU strategy sees potential for a vast increase in the volume of electricity generated from offshore wind.
- 6.5 The Strategy sets targets for an installed capacity of at least 60 GW of offshore wind and 1 GW of ocean energy by 2030 rising to 300 GW and 40 GW, respectively, by 2050, as part of its much broader European Green Deal (December 2019) to decarbonise Europe's energy consumption.
- 6.6 The European Commission estimates that investment of nearly €800 billion is necessary between now and 2050 to meet its proposed objectives, with most of the investment anticipated to come from the private sector.

REPowerEU 2022

- 6.7 On 18 May 2022, the European Commission presented its REPowerEU plan, which seeks to end both the EU's energy dependency on other countries, and to make further advances in tackling the climate crisis by transforming Europe's energy systems. It seeks to do so by saving energy, diversifying energy supplies, and producing clean energy.
- 6.8 The plan recognises that wind energy, in particular offshore wind represents a significant future opportunity for the green and secure energy future of the EU. The plan aims to further strengthen the EU wind sector's global competitiveness, and achieve the REPowerEU ambition with fast wind energy deployment, supply chains need to be strengthened and permitting drastically accelerated.

2030 EU Climate and Energy Framework

- 6.9 The 2030 EU Climate and Energy Framework provides a framework for climate and energy policies in Europe. The framework seeks a 40% reduction in EU Green House Gas (GHG) emissions from 1990 levels with a greater contribution from renewable energy sources.

National Context

Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy – Policy Statement 2024

- 6.10 The Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy is an overarching Framework for long term delivery of ORE, identifying key actions and future directions that will be addressed through subsequent policy to develop and initiate a long term, plan-led approach to the ORE future in Ireland.
- 6.11 It reiterates the ambitious targets of 5GW of ORE by 2030, 20GW by 2040 and at least 37GW in total by 2050.

Climate Action Plan 2024

- 6.12 The Climate Action Plan (CAP) is integral to the National Development Plan 2021-2030 and sets out how Ireland can accelerate the actions required to respond to the climate crisis, putting climate solutions at the centre of Ireland's social and economic development.
- 6.13 Ireland's statutory climate objective is a 51% reduction in emissions by 2030 (relative to the 2018 Levels) and net zero emissions no later than 2050. This requires the need for the full implementation of the CAP, and any future Climate Action Plans.
- 6.14 CAP24 was approved in May 2024 following the completion of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. It is the third annual update to Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2019. CAP24 builds upon the previous year's Plan by refining and updating the measures and actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings. The Plan provides a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve Ireland's emissions by 2030 and reach net zero by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021.
- 6.15 Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP23), the predecessor of CAP24, was pivotal for offshore wind development in Ireland as it specified the urgent need for offshore wind energy.

Since CAP23, an Offshore Wind Delivery Taskforce has been established, tasked with developing a system-wide plan for delivery of offshore wind in Ireland.

- 6.16 Chapter 12 of CAP24 outlines specific goals for renewable energy, focusing on solar, onshore wind, and offshore wind generation. It states that the national target for offshore wind is at least 5GW Offshore Wind by 2030 with an increase in renewable generation to supply 80% of demand by 2030, through the accelerated expansion of onshore wind and solar energy generation, developing offshore renewable generation, and delivering additional grid infrastructure.
- 6.17 CAP24 notes that the scale of Ireland's offshore renewable opportunity has been estimated to be 37 GW. The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) commits to updating the plan every 12 months in a manner that is underpinned by consultation with key stakeholders.
- 6.18 Updates to the plan will be informed, *inter alia*, by corrective actions that may be needed to stay on track toward the overall 2030 targets and the ultimate objective of achieving a transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient, and environmentally sustainable society and economy by 2050.

Ireland's National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030

- 6.19 Ireland's National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) pledges to increase electricity generated from renewable sources to 70%, of which there will be at least 3.5GW of offshore renewable energy. This has been revised upwards since the adoption of the plan in 2020 to 5 GW of offshore renewable energy.
- 6.20 The NECP also supports the target of a 30% reduction in non-ETS greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (from 2005 levels).
- 6.21 The NECP recognises that Ireland has one of the best offshore renewable energy resources in the world with a sea area of 900,000 square kilometres. Achieving the goals to decarbonise electricity will require significant investment, to build out relevant infrastructures and to expand capacity to integrate new renewable technologies such as offshore wind energy.
- 6.22 The NECP includes the assumption that the deployment of offshore wind capacity will grow from 2025 onwards, in line with assumptions from Ireland's 2019 Climate Action Plan, highlighting an urgent impetus to develop offshore wind energy to meet its climate targets.

Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply 2021

- 6.23 The Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply advises that '*Electricity is vital for the proper functioning of society and the economy.*'
- 6.24 Noting this, the Policy Statement confirms that '*Ensuring continued security of electricity supply is considered a priority at national level and within the overarching EU policy framework in which the electricity market operates.*'

- 6.25 The Policy Statement sets out a number of updates to national policy in the context of the Programme for Government 2020 commitments relevant to the electricity sector, planning authorities and developers.
- 6.26 It also recognises that the majority of renewable energy generated by 2030 will be from wind and solar.

Project Ireland 2040: National Development Plan 2021-2030

- 6.27 The Project Ireland 2040: National Development Plan 2021-2030 (NDP) identifies strategic priorities for public capital investment in order to underpin the implementation of the NPF.
- 6.28 The NDP identifies strategic priorities for public capital investment in line with the NPF. It is a strategic priority of the NDP to have a new Renewable Electricity Support Scheme. A strategic investment priority in renewable energy is for regular Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) auctions, which have delivered competitive levels of onshore wind and solar electricity generation which indicatively could be up to 2.5 GW of grid-scale solar and up to 8 GW of onshore wind by 2030. The RESS is also committed to financially supporting the delivery of up to 5 GW of additional offshore renewable electricity generation by 2030.
- 6.29 The NDP commits to increasing the share of renewable electricity up to 80% by 2030. This is an unprecedented commitment to the decarbonisation of electricity supplies. In the unprecedented scale of development in the renewable sector, the NDP recognises the contribution of the private sector to support the ambitions of the Government.

Policy Statement on the Framework for Ireland's Offshore Electricity Transmission System 2021

- 6.30 The DECC developed a framework and associated policy for Ireland's future offshore electricity transmission system, which was approved by Government on 14th April 2021.
- 6.31 The new offshore transmission system policy approved by Government includes a phased transition from current decentralised offshore transmission system mode to a centralised one. This transition will be made up of three stages as follows:
- **Phase One – Decentralised Stage Grid Development (2021-2024):** *The successful projects in the first offshore RESS auction will develop the associated offshore transmission system requirement.*
 - **Phase Two – Transition Stage Grid Development (2025-2030):** *Participants in the second RESS auction, including projects unsuccessful in the first auction, may continue to plan, build and transfer transmission assets during the Second Phase as per the First Phase. The planning and development of the offshore transmission system from the second RESS auction may be carried out by either renewable energy projects or EirGrid.*
 - **Phase three – Enduring Centralised Grid Development (2030 onwards):** *To correspond with the third RESS auction, the offshore transmission system will be exclusively developed by EirGrid, with maritime areas in which renewables*

development may take place to be provided for by the second Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (ORED II).

Programme for Government, Our Shared Future 2020

- 6.32 The Programme for Government, Our Shared Future (PfG) outlines the government's goals and policies during its term in power. Under the PfG, Ireland is committed to achieving a 7% annual average reduction in greenhouse gas emissions between 2021 and 2030.
- 6.33 The development of offshore renewables is identified in the PfG as an important aspect of Ireland delivering on its climate ambition. The PfG is committed to the production of a longer term plan, which will set a clear pathway to achieving 5GW capacity in offshore wind by 2030 off Ireland's Eastern and Southern coasts.

Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan I and II

- 6.34 Published in 2014, and reviewed in 2018, Ireland's first Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (ORED) provided a framework for the sustainable development of Ireland's Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) resources, setting out key principles, policy actions and enablers for delivery of Ireland's significant potential in this area.
- 6.35 The ORED I is guiding the State's policy approach to achieving 5GW of ORE by 2030, mostly through fixed-bottom wind turbines in relatively shallow waters of up to 70 metres off the east and southeast coasts.
- 6.36 The ORED was subject to SEA and Appropriate Assessment (AA) and for the purposes of the Plan, the marine area was assessed by way of six Assessment Areas. Within the SEA, the development potential for fixed wind development in Assessment Area 2 for the East Coast South Area (where the Proposed Development is located) that could be accommodated without likely significant adverse effects on the environment was found to range between 3000 and 3300 MW (Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, 2014, SEA, Table 2.7).
- 6.37 This range took into account the offshore wind developments in Irish waters that had then been approved by means of the foreshore consenting process including Arklow Bank Windfarm (520 MW) as well as other projects such as Codling Bank (approximately 1,100 MW) and the proposed Dublin Array offshore wind farm (approximately 214 MW).
- 6.38 The Proposed Development is located on the same site as the previously consented Arklow Bank Windfarm although the current iteration of the Proposed Development proposes significantly less numbers of WTGs and a greater output capacity on the site. The advances in technology which have enabled this reduction in numbers of WTGs and an increase in output capacity would suggest that the East Coast South Area could potentially accommodate more fixed wind development without likely adverse effects on the environment than the SEA previously concluded.
- 6.39 DECC has commenced work to update the ORED I with a second plan, ORED II. Consultation was undertaken by DECC on the draft ORED II between 24 February 2023 to 20 April 2023 and responses are currently being considered.

- 6.40 The OREDP II assessment encompasses the maritime area covering all of Ireland's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which reaches up to 200 nautical miles or 370 km off the coast. The plan will consider advances in technology to assess the ORE potential in Irish waters. It will seek to map areas most suitable for ORE using the latest data available on a range of themes including other maritime activities and marine biodiversity.
- 6.41 The OREDP II will assist in delivering the Programme for Government commitment to develop a long-term plan to take advantage of a potential of at least 30GW of floating wind off the Atlantic coast and become a major contributor to a pan-European renewable energy generation and transmission system.
- 6.42 The goals of the OREDP II include quantifying the offshore renewable energy potential in Ireland's maritime area, facilitating the identification of candidate areas for future offshore renewable development and prioritising data gaps to be addressed. The OREDP II, in tandem with a planned economic analysis, will set out the pathway for the deployment of offshore renewable energy in the Enduring Regime beyond 2030.

The White Paper: Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030

- 6.43 The White Paper recognises that Ireland's sea area is around ten times the size of its landmass and the country has one of the best offshore renewable energy resources in the world. Ireland's geography offers significant potential for offshore wind, wave and tidal energy.
- 6.44 The plan cites the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPP), which provides a framework for the sustainable development of the offshore wind. It notes that exchequer support for ocean research, development and demonstration is being increased under the OREDPP. It states that offshore wind has been effectively used in other EU Member States and can yield a higher relative energy output than onshore wind due to scale. It also recognises the potential for Ireland's offshore resource to be a potential export opportunity.

The Marine Planning Policy Statement (MPPS) 2019

- 6.45 Ireland's first Marine Planning Policy Statement (MPPS) provides for the preparation, adoption and review of the statutory marine planning policy statements. Broadly the MPPS sets out the overarching policies and principles the Government expects marine planning bodies and other Public Bodies that engage with the marine planning system to observe. The MPPS sets out high level priorities for the enhancement of the marine planning system.
- 6.46 The MPPS recognises that the '*construction of wind turbines and associated development*' is one of many development types within the foreshore development management. One of the overarching principles and high-level priorities outlined in the MPPS is as follows:

"Marine planning will facilitate Ireland's transition to a low carbon and climate resilient economy. Marine planning should ensure that developments in the marine environment consider as a matter of course ways to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and also that they have due regard to the impacts of a changing

climate. Marine planning should also support the realisation of relevant measures contained in the Government Plan to Tackle Climate Breakdown.”

Regional

Mid-East Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024

- 6.47 This Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 for the Mid-East (REP) which includes Kildare, Wicklow and Meath County Councils, is centred around a number of strategic objectives, including Strategic Objective 4 to ‘Ensure that the Mid-East Region accelerates the transition to a low carbon economy’.
- 6.48 In relation to the Strategic Objective 4, the Plan notes that offshore wind energy is at the heart of the National Climate Action Plan’s ambition to cut GHG emissions in the electricity sector by two-thirds and increase the renewable energy share of electricity demand to 70 per cent by 2030 from its current 35 per cent. The REP recognises the potential of the offshore wind farms along the east coast of Ireland that are currently in development to achieve the aims of national policy.
- 6.49 Action 4.3 of Strategic Objective 4 seeks ‘...the establishment of Marine Enterprise Facilities in the Mid-East.’ As part of the rationale, the following is noted:

*‘The **harbours at Wicklow and Arklow are well positioned to service the offshore wind industry** and other marine services such as aquaculture. **The creation of Marine Enterprise Hubs at Arklow and Wicklow harbours will provide services to the offshore renewable energy industry** as well as to fishing, and to the expanding aquaculture sector. There are opportunities to foster new marine related enterprise in a value-added product. There is significant potential to repurpose underused quayside properties as marine enterprise spaces offering many benefits and opportunities including **driving innovation and improvements in the operation and maintenance of offshore wind**, identifying opportunities to maximise the economic impact of investment in the renewable energy sector...’ **[our emphasis]***

- 6.50 Action 4.4 of the REP is also of relevance which provides for ‘The establishment of a Marine Education and Training facility for the Mid-East’ and states:

‘Experts advise that there is the potential for 2,532 direct jobs in offshore renewable energy in Ireland to be created during the development & construction of 3.5GW of offshore wind with the majority of these jobs created between 2025 and 2030. It is likely that the majority of the pre 2030 jobs will be created off the East Coast between Louth and Wexford. A number of projects are at advanced stages of planning off the County Wicklow Coast. In addition to the Arklow Bank Ireland’s first offshore wind farm, there are four projects (out of a total of seven nationally) off the County Wicklow Coast which have been declared to be “Relevant Projects”. Developers of Relevant Projects will have priority over earlier stage projects in accessing the planning process for those Relevant Projects when the new offshore consenting regime is in place.’

South-East Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024

- 6.51 The South-East Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 (SEREP) was launched by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in Wexford on the 24 March 2022.

The Plan includes projects and initiatives across the four South-East counties (Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford).

- 6.52 The Plan contains 5 key strategic objectives with discrete actions developed for each. Strategic Objective 2 - Green Growth is of particular note and the Plan states that *'The South-East Region is determined to play its part in working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to tackle climate change'*.
- 6.53 The Plan is seeking to *'Establish the South-East Region as the #1 region for fixed bed Offshore Renewable Energy'*. Indeed, the Plan identifies a specific action to help achieve this objective - *'Action 2.1 - Position the South-East as an Offshore and Onshore Wind Energy Hub'*.
- 6.54 The Plan notes that the South-East region has the necessary ingredients to become a hub for green enterprise as the region has access to key natural resources in wind and sun, and has an existing industry base and skills pipeline that aligns to the new green economy.

Local

Wicklow County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2019)

- 6.55 This strategy demonstrates that Wicklow County Council is fully committed to tackling climate change to contribute to national and regional climate action objectives.
- 6.56 The strategy examines the future impacts and risks that climate change may have on the County and sets out actions that are designed to reduce the County's vulnerability to the effects of climate change and promotes use of sustainable energy sources. The Strategy identifies that:

'Wicklow has a growing renewable energy sector with wind energy production both onshore and offshore... Plans to extend the offshore capacity will result in County Wicklow being an important contributor into the national grid. The electricity supply network servicing the county and crossing the county is also a key asset.'

Wicklow Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

- 6.57 The Wicklow Climate Action Plan (WCAP) sets out commitments to address climate change in line with statutory obligations, guided by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and the National Climate Action Plan 2023.
- 6.58 The overarching goal of the WCAP is to transition to a climate-resilient, biodiverse, sustainable, and carbon-neutral County by 2050. The plan within the WCAP aligns with the national climate objective, which targets a climate-neutral economy by 2050.
- 6.59 The WCAP contains eight 'Strategic Goals' which establish a structured approach to the arrangement of climate actions to be addressed. The eight goals are based on the objectives of 'Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030' and the following are relevant with respect to the Proposed Development:
- *'Adopt climate focused governance, provide leadership and build partnerships for climate action.'*

- *Achieve carbon emissions reduction of 51% and energy efficiency improvement of 50% in our operations by 2030, creating a pathway to net zero by 2050.*
- *Mobilise climate action in enterprise and agriculture, supporting the transition to an inclusive, net zero and circular economy.*
- *Test the scope and scale of decarbonisation in Arklow with the aim of creating a vibrant town which has low carbon living at its core."*

6.60 The WCAP identifies three major infrastructure projects for Arklow including the development of the Arklow Bank Wind Park.

6.61 Section 5.4 of the WCAP advises that *'There are eight key goals that Wicklow County Council set out when selecting Arklow as the community that would lead the way as a pilot for decarbonisation.'* The first key goal directly references the development of offshore wind energy as follows:

'1. To build on Arklow's status as a leader in offshore renewables and as a centre of innovation for decarbonisation.'

Wexford County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

6.62 The Wexford County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 (WXCAP) sets out how Wexford County Council will be responsible for enhancing climate resilience, increasing energy efficiency, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, across the County. The mission statement of the WXCAP is *"to transition County Wexford to a Climate Resilient, Biodiversity Rich, Environmentally Sustainable and Climate Neutral Economy."*

6.63 With respect to offshore wind energy projects the WXCAP states:

'The offshore wind industry offers strong commercial possibilities for the port [Rosslare] and county in general. It will also provide much needed infrastructure to enable Ireland to reach its renewable energy targets into the future. (Local Economic and Community Plan 2023 -2029).

7. National Planning Policy

Overview

- 7.0 This section of the Report outlines, and assesses the Proposed Development against, the relevant national planning policy context, which includes:
- Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework; and
 - Project Ireland 2040: National Marine Planning Framework.
- 7.1 This Section of the Report also outlines the relevant Government planning guidelines which are applicable to the Proposed Development, including:
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessments (2018).
 - Appropriate Assessment of Plans & Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (2010); and
 - Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1999).

Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework

- 7.2 The Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (NPF), published in February 2018, forms the top tier of national planning policy for Ireland and sets out a strategic development framework for the country to 2040.
- 7.3 As a strategic development framework, the NPF sets the long-term context for Ireland's physical development and associated progress in economic, social and environmental terms and in an island, European and global context.
- 7.4 Ireland 2040 is underpinned by supporting policies and actions at sectoral, regional and local levels. The NPF also establishes the policy context for the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) and local level Development Plans.
- 7.5 The NPF contains 10 National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) and 'NSO 8 - Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society', which is reproduced below, is of particular relevance for the Proposed Development:

*'The National Climate Policy Position **establishes the national objective of achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050.** This objective will shape investment choices over the coming decades in line with the National Mitigation Plan and the National Adaptation Framework. New energy systems and transmission grids will be necessary **for a more distributed, renewables-focused energy generation system**, harnessing both the considerable on-shore **and off-shore potential from energy sources such as wind,***

wave and solar and connecting the richest sources of that energy to the major sources of demand.' **[our emphasis]**

- 7.6 Under NSO 8, the NPF identifies a number of 'Green Energy' targets including the need to **'Deliver 40% of our electricity needs from renewable sources by 2020 with a strategic aim to increase renewable deployment in line with EU targets and national policy objectives to 2030 and beyond...'** and to **'Strengthen energy security and resilience to support an island population of 8 million people...'** **[our emphasis]**.
- 7.7 The NPF does not specifically reference the Application Site or the Proposed Development, however, Section 7 of the NPF, entitled 'Realising our Island and Marine Potential' relates to maritime planning and development in the marine environment, including offshore renewable energy.
- 7.8 Section 7 of the NPF states that *'As an island nation with sovereign rights over one of the largest marine areas in Europe, with a sea: land ratio of 10:1, Ireland's economy, culture and society are inextricably linked to the sea'*.
- 7.9 The NPF notes that *'Our marine environment is a national asset that yields multiple commercial and non-commercial benefits in terms, of, for example, seafood, tourism, recreation, **renewable energy**, cultural heritage, and biodiversity'*. **[our emphasis]**
- 7.10 Section 7 of the NPF recognises that land use planning and maritime planning processes will work alongside each other, including working with other national administrations, such as Northern Ireland, regarding transboundary issues to ensure a consistent and effective policy and regulatory approach to marine and terrestrial planning. Indeed, the NPF states:
- 'Sustainable utilisation of Ireland's marine resources, particularly in the nearshore, is dependent to a significant degree on how we manage our resources on land, and how successfully we can align long-term spatial planning for our terrestrial and marine areas through the National Planning Framework and the Marine Spatial Plan. Implementation of the NPF, a principally land-based plan, will evolve in parallel with the EU Directive requirement to develop a national maritime spatial plan by 2021.'*
- 7.11 Section 7.5 of the NPF, entitled 'Offshore Renewable Energy', recognises that *'Ireland's territorial waters present major opportunities in the blue economy **and offshore renewable energy sectors**, which would support our transition to a zero carbon economy'*. **[our emphasis]**
- 7.12 The NPF references Ireland's ambitious plans for renewable energy and offshore renewable energy resource development under the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPA) and notes that *'Over the period to 2040, it is likely that **technological advances will accelerate** the commercial application, development and deployment of a marine renewable energy sector including offshore floating wind farms, tidal turbine devices and wave energy converters.'* **[our emphasis]**
- 7.13 The NPF contains a number of National Policy Objectives (NPOs) which are relevant to the Proposed Development, including:

- **National Policy Objective 39** – Support the sustainable growth and development of the maritime economy and continue to invest in the seafood sector and our Fishery Harbour Centres, particularly in remote rural coastal communities and islands.
- **National Policy Objective 41a** – Ensure that Ireland’s coastal resource is managed to sustain its physical character and environmental quality.
- **National Policy Objective 42** – To support, within the context of the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPA) and its successors, **the progressive development of Ireland’s offshore renewable energy potential**, including domestic and international grid connectivity enhancements. **[our emphasis]**
- **National Policy Objective 43** – Work with the relevant Departments in Northern Ireland for mutual advantage in areas such as spatial planning, economic development and promotion, co-ordination of social and physical infrastructure provision and environmental protection and management.
- **National Policy Objective 50** - In co-operation with relevant Departments in Northern Ireland, ensuring effective management of shared landscapes, heritage, water catchments, habitats, species and trans-boundary issues in relation to environmental policy.
- **National Policy Objective 52** - The planning system will be responsive to our national environmental challenges and ensure that development occurs within environmental limits, having regard to the requirements of all relevant environmental legislation and the sustainable management of our natural capital.
- **National Planning Objective 54** – Reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.
- **National Policy Objective 55** - Promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050.
- **National Policy Objective 59** - Enhance the conservation status and improve the management of protected areas and protected species by:
 - Implementing relevant EU Directives to protect Ireland’s environment and wildlife.
 - Integrating policies and objectives for the protection and restoration of biodiversity in statutory development plans.
 - Developing and utilising licensing and consent systems to facilitate sustainable activities within Natura 2000 sites.
 - Continued research, survey programmes and monitoring of habitats and species.
- **National Policy Objective 60** - Conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural and cultural heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their significance.

- **National Policy Objective 74** - *Secure the alignment of the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan through delivery of the National Strategic Outcomes.*

7.14 The Proposed Development has been carefully sited and designed, with design flexibility in the two Project Design Options, to ensure that it will be consistent with the NPF by supporting the national ambitions and objectives of:

- transitioning to a competitive, low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy.
- ensuring a more distributed, renewables-focused energy generation system.
- harnessing the considerable off-shore potential from energy sources such as wind.
- increasing the quantum of our electricity needs from renewable sources.
- increasing renewable deployment in line with EU targets.
- progressively developing Ireland's offshore renewable energy potential; and
- strengthening Ireland's energy security and resilience.

7.15 Pre-application consultation has been undertaken with relevant prescribed and transboundary bodies for the Proposed Development. Further consultation will be undertaken with these bodies as part of the planning application process to ensure a consistent regulatory approach to marine and terrestrial planning.

National Marine Planning Policy Framework

7.16 The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) was published by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on the 30th the June 2021 and is intended to represent the marine equivalent to the National Planning Framework.

7.17 The Framework adopts an ecosystem-based approach and brings together all marine-based human activities for the first time, outlining the government's vision, objectives and marine planning policies for each marine activity.

7.18 It also details how these marine activities will interact with each other in an ocean space that is under increasing spatial pressure, ensuring the sustainable use of our marine resources to 2040.

7.19 The NMPF creates the overarching framework for decision making that is consistent, evidence-based and secures a sustainable future for the maritime area and all applications for activity or development in Ireland's maritime area will be considered in terms of their consistency with its objectives.

7.20 The importance of the marine environment for Ireland is highlighted by the NMPF, as follows:

‘As an island nation with sovereign rights over one of the largest sea areas in Europe, Ireland’s economy, culture and society is inextricably linked to the sea. Our marine environment is a national asset that yields multiple commercial and non-commercial benefits from sectors such as seafood, tourism, recreation, renewable energy, cultural heritage, and biodiversity’.

- 7.21 Noting the importance of the marine environment, Chapter 4 of the NMPF sets out the ‘Overarching Marine Planning Policies’ (OMPPs) which will ensure the sustainable management and use of Ireland’s marine environment and which ‘...apply to all proposals capable of having impacts in the maritime area’.
- 7.22 The OMPPs are grouped according to ‘Environmental – Ocean Health’ (Chapter 5), Economic – Thriving Maritime Economy’ (Chapter 6) and ‘Social – Engagement with the Sea’ (Chapter 7). The OMPPs are supplemented by, and should be read in conjunction with, the Sectoral Marine Planning Policies (SMPPs) in the sector specific chapters of the NMPF (i.e. Chapters 8 to 24).
- 7.23 Chapter 13 of the NMPF entitled ‘Energy – Offshore Renewable’ is the sector specific chapter relevant to the Proposed Development. Chapter 13 advises that ‘A secure, sustainable and affordable supply of energy is of central importance to Ireland’s economic and social wellbeing’ and notes that ‘Ireland has some of the best offshore renewable energy resources in the world.’
- 7.24 Chapter 13 also confirms that ‘The initial focus for ORE [Offshore Renewable Energy] will be in developing wind in the shallower waters off Ireland’s eastern and southern coasts, in line with current technology maturity and our target of achieving 5GW of capacity in offshore wind by 2030’.
- 7.25 A detailed assessment of the Proposed Development against the NMPF’s OMPPs and relevant SMPPs, including ORE 1 to ORE 11 of Chapter 13 ‘Energy – Offshore Renewable’, has been undertaken by GoBe Consultants as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and is reproduced at **Appendix 1** of this Report. The detailed assessment demonstrates that there is overall compliance between the Proposed Development and the relevant objectives and policies of the NMPF. In the very limited instances, where significant environmental effects have been identified and where it has not been possible to implement the hierarchy of mitigation provided for in objectives and policies, the need for and benefits of the Proposed Development, set out in section 5.6 of this Report, support the reasons for proceeding. Please refer to **Appendix 1** for further details.
- 7.26 In particular, it is noted that the Proposed Development will align with/make a positive contribution to the following ‘Energy – Offshore Renewable’ objectives of the NMPF:
- *Support the development of ORE in Ireland as a driver to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and accelerate the move to cleaner energy in line with national and EU policy.*
 - *Increase the sustainable ORE use of our extensive marine resource in an efficient and co-ordinated manner identifying, where possible, potential for synergies and opportunities for multi-use of our shared maritime area.*

- *Support Ireland's decarbonisation journey through increased use of ORE while delivering significant and sustained benefits, import substitution, fiscal return, national and local economic development and technology learning.*
- *Support the strategic growth of the ORE industry recognising the potential to derive benefits particularly for Ireland's coastal communities.*
- *Provide enhanced security of energy supply for Ireland in the short and medium term, in accordance with the Climate Action Plan.*
- *Ensure good regulatory practices in ORE installation and generation, including decommissioning of existing facilities, at end of life, according to international best practice.*

National Planning Guidelines

Marine Planning Guidelines

- 7.27 Section 7 of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (as amended) advises that the Minister may at any time, prepare and issue marine planning guidance to public bodies regarding their functions under this Act and public bodies shall have regard to those guidelines in the performance of their respective functions.
- 7.28 At the time of writing this Report, the Minister has not issued any specific national marine planning guidelines. Notwithstanding, the Proposed Development has been sited and designed, and the plans and particulars accompanying the Application have been prepared, in accordance with all relevant and prevailing legislative, policy, guideline and best practice requirements.

Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on Carrying Out Environmental Impact Assessments (2018)

- 7.29 These Guidelines were issued by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to planning authorities and ABP and both are required to have regard to the Guidelines in the performance of their functions under the Act.
- 7.30 The purpose of the Guidelines is to '*...provide practical guidance for planning authorities and the Board (Competent authorities) on legal and procedural issues and matters of interpretation arising from the amended Directive [Directive 2014/52/EU], which should result in greater consistency in procedures adopted by competent authorities in the planning system*'.
- 7.31 The Guidelines, for the greater part, address key areas of change introduced by Directive 2014/52/EU and contain an outline and guide to sections 171A and sections 172, 172A, 172B, and 172C of the Act, arising from the transposition of the Directive.
- 7.32 The Guidelines aim to ensure compliance with the highest international standards in relation to taking environmental factors into account when determining development proposals and ensuring that environmental considerations are fully addressed as part of the planning process, as well as properly managed thereafter.

- 7.33 In accordance with the Guidelines, an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been prepared in respect of the Proposed Development and is submitted with the Application.

Appropriate Assessment of Plans & Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (2010)

- 7.34 This Guidance document was published by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) to guide compliance with the Birds Directive, 1979 (Council Directive 79/409/EEC) and the Habitats Directive, 1992 (Council Directive 92/43/EEC).
- 7.35 It preceded, but anticipated, the legislation which now transposes the Birds and Habitats Directives in Ireland, i.e. the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, and parallel provisions relating to Appropriate Assessment in planning legislation (i.e. Part XAB of the Act and associated Regulations).
- 7.36 This guidance is intended to assist and guide planning authorities in the application of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as it relates to their roles, functions and responsibilities in undertaking Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects. It applies to plans and projects for which public authorities receive an application for consent, and to plans or projects which a public authority wishes to undertake or adopt.
- 7.37 It sets out the different steps and stages that are needed in establishing whether a plan or project can be implemented without adversely affecting the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. The guidance also addresses issues of mitigation and avoidance of impacts, and also the Article 6(4) derogation provisions for circumstances in which there are no alternatives and for which there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) requiring a plan or project to proceed.
- 7.38 In accordance with the Guidance, a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared in respect of the Proposed Development and is submitted with the Application.

Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1999)

- 7.39 This document was published by the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands to help further the implementation of the Valletta Convention in Ireland.
- 7.40 It sets out basic principles of national policy on the protection of the archaeological heritage and seeks to avoid conflict between the protection of the archaeological heritage and the Proposed Development.
- 7.41 The document explains that '*Archaeological sites and monuments vary greatly in form and date, examples include earthworks of different types and periods (e.g. Early Historic ringforts, prehistoric burial mounds), megalithic tombs from the Prehistoric period, medieval buildings, urban archaeological deposits and underwater features such as wrecks*'.
- 7.42 Part III of the document sets out principles for the protection of archaeological heritage, which include:

- *Archaeological heritage is non-renewable resource requiring careful and responsible management. The gathering of archaeological information should not destroy any more of that heritage than is necessary.*
- *There should always be a presumption in favour of avoidance of developmental impacts on the archaeological heritage and preservation in-situ of archaeological sites and monuments must be presumed to be the preferred option.*
- *If archaeological sites or monuments have to be removed due to development, then it is essential that the approach of preservation by record be applied.*
- *Carrying out of archaeological assessment is the first step in ensuring that preservation in-situ and preservation by record take place. Archaeological monitoring is another method of ensuring this occurs.*
- *Issues arise in relation to the protection of the archaeological heritage within urban areas, but the overall principles, approaches and methods still apply.*
- *Costs of archaeological are a legitimate part of development costs.*
- *The document advises that the above principles ‘...apply whatever the particular type of development, whether urban or rural or on land or underwater’.*

7.43 Section 4.5 of this document relates to the ‘Protection of wrecks and underwater archaeological objects’ and notes that Section 1 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987 Act provides that ‘wreck’ means:

‘...a vessel, or part of a vessel, lying wrecked on, in or under the sea bed or on or in land covered by water, and any objects contained in or on the vessel and any objects that were formerly contained in or on a vessel and are lying on, in or under the sea bed or on or in land covered by water’.

7.44 The document confirms that ‘Wrecks more than one hundred years old and archaeological objects situated underwater are afforded comprehensive protection under Section 3 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987’.

7.45 Chapter 18 of the EIAR undertakes a detailed analysis of the Proposed Development with respect to marine archaeology and cultural heritage. A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring.

7.46 Chapter 18 concludes that the Proposed Development will not create any significant effects with respect to marine archaeology during the construction, operation, maintenance or decommissioning phases.

8. Regional Planning Policy

Overview

8.0 This section of the Report outlines, and assesses the Proposed Development against, the relevant regional planning policy context, which includes:

- Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031; and
- Southern Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031

- 8.1 The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (EMRSES) is a strategic plan and investment framework to shape the future development of the region, including Co. Wicklow, to 2031 and beyond.
- 8.2 The EMRSES is underpinned by key cross-cutting principles that reflect the three pillars of sustainability: social, environmental and economic and are expressed in a manner which reflects the challenges and opportunities of the region.
- 8.3 It seeks to determine at a regional scale how best to achieve the shared goals set out in the National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) of the NPF. To this end, the EMRSES sets out 16 Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs), which are aligned with international, EU and national policy and which in turn set the framework for city and county development plans.
- 8.4 The 16 RSOs are cross referenced and aligned with the 3 key principles of the EMRSES, these being: Healthy Placemaking; Climate Action; and Economic Opportunity. RSO 9 is reproduced below and is of particular note with respect to the Proposed Development:

‘Regional Strategic Outcome 9 - Support the Transition to Low Carbon and Clean Energy. Pursue climate mitigation in line with global and national targets and harness the potential for a more distributed renewables-focussed energy system to support the transition to a low carbon economy by 2050.’

- 8.5 The EMRSES, as a strategic plan, identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs). The following section of this Report identifies the RPOs which relate to the Proposed Development and demonstrates how the Proposed Development will align with their objectives.

Economy and Employment

- 8.6 The EMRSES recognises that development opportunities in the marine or blue economy relate to a diverse array of uses such as fishing, renewables, new applications for health and medicine, and tourism. Growing the Blue Economy is a key component of the EMRSES. The plan promotes a joined-up approach to planning and management

in the marine area. The following regional policy objectives relate to marine development:

- **RPO 6.22:** *‘EMRA support the preparation of the Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) to ensure alignment, and consistency between land use and ocean based planning, and to ensure co-ordination which supports the protection of the marine environment and the growth of the Marine economy.’*

- 8.7 The Proposed Development will support the national, regional, and local economy by making a significant investment in renewable energy infrastructure and aligns with the aims of RPO 6.22. The Proposed Development has been designed and sited to align with applicable spatial policies and to ensure environmental impacts are minimised. The Proposed Development therefore aligns with the aims of RPO 6.22’ given that RPO 6.22 identifies protection of the marine environment as well the growth of the Marine economy.

Environment and Climate

- 8.8 Section 7.2 of the EMRSES identifies the key EU Directives underpinning integrated land and marine planning in Ireland, such as the Marine Strategy Framework (MSFD), Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Water Framework Directives (WFD). It supports integrated Land and Marine Planning to ensure human activities at sea are as sustainable as possible, and to engage multiple stakeholders. The following objectives relate to integrated land and marine planning:

- **RPO 7.1:** *‘To ensure consistency and alignment between the upcoming National Maritime Spatial Plan (due in 2021) and regional approaches to marine spatial planning and to integrate the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Marine Spatial Planning implementation into future land use plans in the Region in recognition of the opportunity to harness Ireland’s ocean potential.’*
- **RPO 7.2:** *‘To achieve and maintain ‘Good Environmental Status’ for marine waters and to ensure the sustainable use of shared marine resources in the Region, and to promote the development of a cross-boundary and cross-border strategic management and stakeholder engagement framework to protect the marine environment.’*

- 8.9 The EMRSES states that as an island nation, Ireland is highly dependent on its seas and Ireland’s marine sector, or blue economy is an important and growing part of the national economy. Recent years have seen significant growth in the sector and increased spending on marine research. Harnessing our Ocean Wealth – An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland (HOOW) targets a doubling of the value of the maritime economy by 2030 including; shipping, maritime transport, sea fisheries, aquaculture, tourism and energy. One of the future challenges will be to align ‘blue growth’ with conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem health, while adhering to the objectives of the MSFD, MSP and WFD.

- 8.10 Fisheries and aquaculture are recognised within the EMRSES as a substantial sub-sector in the Region. It notes that the MSP will play a key role in managing the environmental impacts of ‘blue growth’ on marine biodiversity, introduction and/or spread of invasive species and increased pollution.

- **RPO 7.3:** *“EMRA will support the use of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) to enable collaborative and stakeholder engagement approaches to the management and protection of coastal resources against coastal erosion, flooding and other threats.”*
- 8.11 The EMRSES recognises that the south east coast of Ireland is rich in maritime history and heritage. The EMRSES states that submerged monuments are subject to statutory protection established under section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. The plan also points to the UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, which sets an international standard for the protection of underwater cultural heritage. The plan commits local authorities to protecting shipwreck sites over 100 years old and supports the promotion of submerged tourism through diving on wrecks, coastal wreck trails and maritime heritage tours.
- **RPO 7.6:** *‘Local authorities shall include in development plans, where relevant, policies for the protection and enhancement of shipwrecks and underwater cultural heritage and shall consult the Wreck Inventory of Ireland Database when assessing planning applications located in marine, riverine or lacustrine environments.’*
- 8.12 The EMRSES advises that *‘Air pollution is one of the biggest environmental risks to human health leading to respiratory disease, asthma and lung cancer, and to the environment as sources of air pollution also produce climate pollutants.’* The EMRSES identified particulate matter from the burning of fossil fuels as a leading cause of air pollution in the Region.
- **RPO 7.7** *‘To reduce harmful emissions and achieve and maintain good air quality for all urban and rural areas in the Region and to work with Local authorities and the relevant agencies to support local data collection in the development of air quality monitoring and to inform a regional air quality and greenhouse gas emissions inventory.’*
- 8.13 Noise pollution is recognised to have chronic effects on human health, as well as harmful effects on wildlife.
- **RPO 7.8:** *“Local authorities shall incorporate the objectives of the EU Environmental Noise Directive in the preparation of strategic noise maps and action plans that support proactive measures to avoid, mitigate, and minimise noise, in cases where it is likely to have harmful effects.”*
- 8.14 It is recognised that artificial light is important for certain projects, however the inappropriate or excessive use of artificial light – especially blue light – can be harmful to wildlife, particularly nocturnal species and on human health due to sleep disruption. Light pollution can refer to skyglow (the brightening of the night sky over urban areas), light trespass (where light falls where it is not intended) or light glare (where light is excessively bright). Light pollution is increasing in the region due to increasing development.
- **RPO 7.9:** *“Local authorities shall consider measures to minimise the harmful effects of light pollution in the future provision of outdoor lighting, including*

improving their approach to street lighting and ensuring that new developments are lit appropriately and to ensure that environmentally sensitive areas are protected.”

8.15 Water quality is critical to the environment and climate of the Irish sea. The following objectives support the Water Framework Directive and improving water quality across the region.

- **RPO 7.10:** *“Support the implementation of the Water Framework Directive in achieving and maintaining at least good environmental status for all water bodies in the Region and to ensure alignment between the core objectives of the Water Framework Directive and other relevant Directives, River Basin Management plans and local authority land use plans.”*
- **RPO 7.11:** *“For water bodies with ‘high ecological status’ objectives in the Region, local authorities shall incorporate measures for both their continued protection and to restore those water bodies that have fallen below high ecological status and areas ‘At Risk’ into the development of local planning policy and decision making any measures for the continued protection of areas with high ecological status in the Region and for mitigation of threats to waterbodies identified as ‘At Risk’ as part of a catchment based approach in consultation with the relevant agencies. This shall include recognition of the need to deliver efficient wastewater facilities with sufficient capacity and thus contribute to improved water quality in the Region.”*

8.16 The EMRSES supports the transition of the region’s economy and energy supply to being low carbon, circular, and climate resilient. It recognises this goal will lead to an increase in electricity demand from both increased population and economic development but also resulting from a move away from the use of fossil fuels in the transport and energy sectors. The following objectives are relevant to the Proposed Development and its impact on the transition required as a result of reducing GHG emissions.

- **RPO 7.16:** *“Support the implementation of the Habitats Directives in achieving an improvement in the conservation status of protected species and habitats in the Region and to ensure alignment between the core objectives of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives and local authority development plans.”*
- **RPO 7.31:** *“Within 1 year of carrying out a regional emissions assessment, EMRA shall compile and publish an emissions inventory and, in collaboration with the relevant departments and agencies, agree emissions reductions targets in accordance with agreed national sectoral plans and to support an aggregate 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 in line with the EU 2030 Framework.”*
- **RPO 7.32:** *“With the assistance and support of the Climate Action Regional Offices, local authorities shall develop, adopt and implement local climate adaptation and mitigation strategies which shall address issues including local vulnerability to climate risks and identify and prioritise actions, in accordance*

with the Guiding Principles of the National Adaptation Framework [2024], National Mitigation Plan [2017].”

8.17 The EMRSES explicitly supports an increase in the amount of new renewable energy sources in the Region. It refers to the development of wind energy – both onshore and offshore, on a larger scale at appropriate sites in accordance with National policy. The plan calls on planning authorities to harness the potential of renewable energy across the technological spectrum, as well as consistency among planning authorities in identifying areas suitable for renewable energy and having regard to potential impacts on biodiversity, landscape and heritage. The following objectives relate to the delivery of renewable energy capacity across the region.

- **RPO 7.36** *“Planning policy at local authority level shall reflect and adhere to the principles and planning guidance set out in Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government publications relating to ‘Wind Energy Development’ and the DCCAE Code of Practice for Wind Energy Development in Ireland on Guidelines for Community Engagement and any other relevant guidance which may be issued in relation to sustainable energy provisions.”*

8.18 In relation to the EMRSES topic of Environment and Climate, while the majority of these objectives relate to actions on the part of the relevant authority, the Proposed Development is consistent with or supportive of the relevant RPOs on the basis of the following: the following is considered relevant:

- In respect of stakeholder engagement, the applicant engaged with and sought the views of key stakeholders during the preparation of this Application. This engagement allowed for collaboration with relevant stakeholders in the maritime environment to ensure its long-term sustainable growth and protection, including against coastal erosion, flooding and other threats. The Proposed Development aligns with RPO 7.3.
- In respect of the integration of land and maritime planning, the Proposed Development complies with all applicable national and regional planning policy for the maritime area, thereby aligning with the integrated land and maritime planning framework that is in place as required by RPO 7.1.
- In respect of water quality, details of the development’s adherence with water quality standards and protection of the wider ecological environment are provided within the EIAR and NIS submitted as part of this Application. This demonstrates that the Proposed Development aligns with RPO 7.2.
- Turning to matters of heritage (including underwater heritage), air quality, noise, and light, the Application provides for the assessment and protection of marine heritage assets, and the management of noise and light pollution with details set out in the EIAR, including the Environmental Management Plan and Construction Noise Management Plan, and the NIS. This approach is consistent with the objectives on local authorities to reduce impacts of this nature, which are set out in RPO 7.6, 7.7, 7.8 and 7.9.

- The Application is supported by an assessment of impact on water quality and the maritime environment within the EIAR and NIS and a WFD compliance assessment has also been undertaken (see Appendix 7.1 of Volume III of the EIAR). The WFD assessment confirms that the activities associated with the Proposed Development are not considered to hinder the achievement of 'Good Environmental Status', as prescribed under the water quality policies. The Proposed Development will not result in a deterioration of the current status of the Southwestern Irish Sea - Brittas Bay (HA 10) or Southwestern Irish Sea - Killiney Bay (HA 10) coastal water bodies, nor jeopardise the attainment of 'Good' status. This demonstrates that the development can be implemented in an environmentally sensitive way, ensuring the protection of water bodies in the region, thereby consistent with the objectives on local authorities under RPO 7.10 and 7.11.
- The Application assesses the Proposed Development against the requirements of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives and relevant local authority development plans, consistent with the local authority objective RPO 7.16.
- The EIAR submitted with the Application includes an assessment of the Proposed Development's contribution and vulnerability to climate change, including its contribution to emissions. This is consistent with the general local authority and EMRA objectives set out in RPO 7.31 and 7.32.
- A considerable benefit of the Proposed Development is the delivery of a new sustainable source of large scale renewable energy. This supports the principles of RPO 7.36.

Infrastructure

- 8.19 Energy is a key area of development within the EMRSES. The plan recognises that overreliance on non-indigenous supplies of energy is still a pressing issue for the Region, as well as the need to improve energy efficiency. The plan notes that the transition and diversification of the region's energy supply away from GHG emitting fuels to green energy, such as wind energy, requires the development of a different form of energy grid.
- **RPO 10.24:** *"Support the sustainable development of Ireland's offshore renewable energy resources in accordance with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources 'Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan' and any successor thereof including any associated domestic and international grid connection enhancements.*
- 8.20 In relation to RPO 10.24, the Proposed Development supports the diversification of energy generation away from fossil fuels while making a significant contribution to Ireland's offshore renewable energy portfolio. This remains a significant benefit of the Proposed Development which complies with RPO 10.24.
- 8.21 In summary the Proposed Development is consistent with the EMRSES taken as a whole and assessed against each of its relevant RSOs and RPOs.

Southern Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

- 8.22 The Southern Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (SRSES) provides a long-term, strategic development framework for the future physical, economic and social development of the Southern Region including Co Wexford.
- 8.23 The SRSES is a 12 year strategic regional development framework to guide change in the region. It establishes a broad framework for the way in which the society, environment and economy and use of land should evolve in the region.
- 8.24 The SRA supports the implementation of the Governments Climate Action Plan, and the SRSES has identified three priority areas for action to address climate change and to bring about a transition to a low carbon economy and society. These include decarbonisation, resource efficiency and climate resilience.
- 8.25 The SRSES's vision for the Southern Region is led by the need for transformative change and this is reinforced by the SRSES's Strategy to build a strong, resilient and sustainable region. The SRSES's Strategy comprises 11 Statements of the Strategy, which include:
- **5 - A Strong Economy:** *Building a competitive, innovative and productive economy*
 - **8 - Low Carbon, Climate Resilient and Sustainable Society:** *Safeguarding and enhancing our environment through sustainable development, prioritising action on climate change across the Region, driving the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.*
- 8.26 The SRSES notes the NPF's 10 National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) including 'NSO 8 - the Transition to Sustainable Energy' which '*...requires harnessing the considerable on-shore and offshore energy sources and the roll-out of the National Smart Grid Plan*'.

Economy

- 8.27 The SRSES supports the transition to a low carbon future through investment in the delivery of renewable energy. The following policy reflects the SRSES's commitment to a low carbon economy.
- **RPO 56 - Low Carbon Economy:**
 - a) *'The SRSES recognises the urgency to transition to a low carbon future and it is therefore an objective to accelerate the transition towards low carbon economy and circular economy through mechanisms such as the Climate Action Competitive Fund.*
 - b) *It is an objective to develop enterprises that create and employ green technologies.*
 - c) *Local authorities should ensure that the development of green industry and technologies incorporates careful consideration of potential environmental*

impacts at project level including the capacity of receiving environment and existing infrastructure to serve new industries.'

- 8.28 The SRSES recognises the need to prioritise infrastructure development across the region.
- 8.29 The following objective relates to the delivery of infrastructure in the southern region.
- **RPO 68 - Regional Investment:** *It is an objective to develop and coordinate the regional investment plan, to enable:*
 - *'Sustainable development of infrastructure that creates a platform for enterprise creation and innovation in the Southern Region;*
 - *Initiatives that protect and strengthen the qualities that distinguish the Southern Region as a high quality of life destination on the global stage;*
 - *All proposals for investment in infrastructure shall be subject to robust site selection and environmental feasibility/assessment including Flood Risk Assessment. This should include explicit consideration of the likely significant effects on European sites and potential for adverse effects on the integrity of European sites in advance of any development.'*
- 8.30 The SRSES acknowledges the region is ideally placed to improve economic growth through the sustainable use of its marine resource. The following objective relates to the marine economy:
- **RPO 76 - Marine Economy:** *'It is an objective to ensure alignment, and consistency between land use and ocean-based planning, and to ensure co-ordination, which supports the protection of the marine environment and the growth of the marine economy.'*
- 8.31 The SRSES draws from the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) baseline report published in September 2018 by identifying a number of strategic high-level objectives for marine planning, which are supported by the RSES, including:
- *Promote the sustainable development of a thriving ocean economy.*
 - *Robust governance and meaningful public and stakeholder participation.*
 - *Address land and sea interactions.*
 - *Promote vibrant, accessible and sustainable coastal and island communities.*
 - *Adapt ecosystems-based approaches and ensure the pressure of human activities take into account the precautionary principle and moves towards achievement of good environmental status.*
 - *Realise the potential of marine resources in an integrated fashion.*

- *Promote preservation and enjoyment of marine related cultural and heritage assets.*
- *Strengthen our marine identity.*
- *Develop a sound marine evidence base.*
- *Contribute towards climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.*
- *Consult and coordinate on transboundary issues.*

8.32 The following Regional Policy Objectives relate to supporting the development of offshore wind energy:

- **RPO 77 - Maritime Spatial Planning – Consistency and Alignment:** *‘It is an objective to support the integration of different uses in the marine environment and ensure consistency and alignment between high-level plans such as the National Marine Planning Framework, regional based approaches to maritime spatial planning and localised coastal management plans and local integrated coastal zone management plans. It is important to be cognisant of the need to promote cross boundary management of coastal areas within the Region. Any development of plans in coastal zones should be informed by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.’*
- **RPO 78 - First Mover under the National Marine Planning Framework:** *‘It is an objective to support the sustainable development of the potential of the marine environment, to foster opportunities for innovation in the maritime economy and drive forward the Region as a first mover under marine spatial planning while preserving the environmental and ecological conservation status of our marine natural resource. Initiatives arising from this objective shall be subject to robust feasibility and site selection, which includes flood risk assessments and explicit consideration of likely significant effects on European sites and potential for adverse effects on their integrity in advance of any development. The SRSES encourages close interaction between higher education, state agencies, and enterprise to position the Region as a leader in this field.’*
- **RPO 80 - Marine Resource and Blue Economy:** *‘It is an objective to support the development of new coalitions amongst productive sector enterprises, coastal communities and public agencies to support the sustainable development of the marine resource and Blue Economy. Any supports arising, which result in further expansion of, or new enterprise will be subject to the outcomes of the required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment process.’*

8.33 The SRSES supports the development of Ireland’s offshore renewable energy potential, including domestic and international grid connectivity through the OREDP. The plan notes that the OREDP specified that the south-east coast is suitable for the development of offshore and tidal wind energy.

- **RPO 85 - Renewable Offshore Energy:** *‘To promote regional cooperation in terms of offshore renewable energy development, environmental monitoring and*

awareness of the benefits of realising the Region's offshore energy potential. Initiatives arising from this objective shall be subject to robust feasibility and site selection, which includes explicit consideration of likely significant effects on European Sites and potential for adverse effects on the integrity of European sites in advance of any development.'

8.34 'In relation to 'Section 4 - Economy' of the SRSES, while the majority of these objectives relate to actions on the part of the relevant authority, the Proposed Development is consistent with or supportive of the relevant RPOs on the basis of the following:

- The Proposed Development supports the urgent need to transition to a low carbon economy by delivering a large scale renewable energy development, which aligns with RPO 56.
- In respect of Regional Investment, the Proposed Development represents a sustainable investment in infrastructure which complies with RPO 68.
- In respect of the Marine Economy, the Proposed Development works within the national, regional, and local frameworks for land-use and marine planning and thereby aligns with RPO 76.
- In relation to consistency and alignment with Marine Spatial Planning, the National Marine Planning Framework and Marine Resources and the Blue Economy, the development is consistent with the National Marine Planning Framework (see **Appendix 1** of this Report), preserves the environment and ecological interest as described in the EIAR and NIS and is supported by significant engagement with key parties involved in marine resources and blue economy. This complies with RPO 77, 78, and 80.
- In respect of renewable offshore energy, the development has been supported by regional-level engagement key bodies, feasibility, and site selection as a well as assessment of impact on European Sites within the EIAR and NIS provided with this application. This approach complies with the requirements of RPO 85.

Environment

8.35 The SRSES is committed to transposing the Climate Action Plan into policies applicable to the region. The plan's key objectives are decarbonisation, climate resilience and resource efficiency. The following objectives relate to the Proposed Development and the key objectives within the SRSES.

- **RPO 87 - Low Carbon Energy Future:** *'The RSES is a committed to the implementation of the Government's policy under Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-30 and Climate Action Plan 2019. It is an objective to promote change across business, public and residential sectors to achieve reduced GHG emissions in accordance with current and future national targets, improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy sources across the key sectors of electricity supply, heating, transport and agriculture.'*

- **RPO 89 - Building Resilience to Climate Change:** *‘(a) It is an objective to support measures to build resilience to climate change throughout the Region to address impact reduction, adaptive capacity, awareness raising, providing for nature-based solutions and emergency planning.’*
- 8.36 The SRSES recognises the importance of developing alternative renewable energy sources with greater interconnection to energy resources and infrastructure. This will enable the transition away from GHG emitting energy sources.
- 8.37 The SRSES identifies the potential for continued growth of wind as a major source of renewable energy across the region. Opportunities for both commercial and community wind energy projects are supported within the SRSES to deliver feasible, clean and local electricity production for and in the southern region.
- **RPO 95 - Sustainable Renewable Energy Generation:** *“It is an objective to support implementation of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), and the Offshore Renewable Energy Plan and the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in their respective SEA and AA and leverage the Region as a leader and innovator in sustainable renewable energy generation.”*
 - **RPO 99 - Renewable Wind Energy:** *“It is an objective to support the sustainable development of renewable wind energy (on shore and offshore) at appropriate locations and related grid infrastructure in the Region in compliance with national Wind Energy Guidelines.”*
- 8.38 The SRSES recognises the environmental pressures on water bodies due to increasing demands from human behaviour in relation to population growth, agricultural output, and energy resources. The SRSES states that water bodies will need to be carefully managed to ensure that further deterioration is prevented.
- **RPO 112 - Water Quality:** *“It is an objective to support the commitments to achieve and maintain “At Least Good” status, except where more stringent obligations are required, and no deterioration of status for all water bodies under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and its programme of measures, the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan. Key challenges include, inter alia, the need to address significant deficits in urban waste-water treatment and water supply, addressing flooding and increased flood risks from extreme weather events and increased intense rainfall because of climate change.”*
- 8.39 The Region’s varied marine and coastal habitats from the Atlantic Ocean to the Celtic Sea and the Irish Sea, is home to diverse habitats and species. The following objective relates to biodiversity within the region:
- **RPO 126 - Biodiversity:** The following part applies to the Proposed Development:
 - a) *“Promote biodiversity protection and habitat connectivity both within protected areas and in the landscape through promoting the integration of green infrastructure and ecosystem services, including landscape, heritage, biodiversity and management of invasive and alien species in the preparation*

of statutory and non-statutory land-use plans. The SRSES recognises the role of the National Biodiversity Data Centre through its Citizen Science initiatives.”

- 8.40 In relation to ‘Section 5 - Environment’ of the RSES, while the majority of these objectives relate to actions on the part of the relevant authority, the Proposed Development is consistent with or supportive of the relevant RPOs on the basis of the following:
- In respect of a low carbon energy future and building resilience to climate change, the Proposed Development makes a significant contribution to meeting carbon energy goals. The Proposed Development’s contribution and vulnerability to climate change is assessed in the EIAR submitted with the Application. In this manner, the Proposed Development is consistent with RPO 87 and 89.
 - In respect of sustainable renewable energy, renewable energy sources and wind energy, the Proposed Development supports RPOs 95 and 99 at all levels by creating resilience to climate change in the delivery of new, large scale and sustainable wind energy development.
 - The assessment of water quality is provided as part of the EIAR and NIS in this application. Taken together this demonstrates that the Proposed Development supports RPO 112.
 - In relation to ecology, the application is supported by an EIAR and NIS which outline how the Proposed Development supports the objectives of RPO 126.

Strategic Energy Grid

- 8.41 The SRSES Strategic Energy Grid section confirms the commitment to transposing the Climate Action Plan into policies applicable to the region. The plan’s key objectives are decarbonisation, climate resilience and resource efficiency. The following objectives relate to the Proposed Development:
- **RPO 219 New Energy Infrastructure:** *“It is an objective to support the sustainable reinforcement and provision of new energy infrastructure by infrastructure providers (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) to ensure the energy needs of future population and economic expansion within designated growth areas and across the Region can be delivered in a sustainable and timely manner and that capacity is available at local and regional scale to meet future needs.”*
 - **RPO 222 Electricity Infrastructure:** *“It is an objective to support the development of a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity and to support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity networks and facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects that might be brought forward in the lifetime of this plan under EirGrid’s (2017) Grid Development Strategy (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) to serve the existing and future needs of the Region and strengthen all-island energy infrastructure and interconnection capacity.”*

- 8.42 In relation to 'Section 8 - Strategic Energy Grid' of the RSES, while the majority of these objectives relate to actions on the part of the relevant authority, the Proposed Development is consistent with or supportive of the relevant RPOs on the basis of the following:
- The Proposed Development supports new energy infrastructure delivery through the provision of new large-scale, sustainable energy infrastructure in support of RPO 219.
 - In respect of electricity infrastructure, the Proposed Development will, when completed, support the safe, secure, and reliable supply of energy infrastructure into the national grid in support of RPO 222.
- 8.43 The SRSES supports renewable industries and requirements for transmission and distribution infrastructure, delivered in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner. The SRSES recognises the potential to harness renewable energy across the Region to achieve climate change emission reduction targets. The SRSES is supportive of the future growth of renewable energy technologies in the region and its contribution to the decarbonisation of the region.
- 8.44 In summary and taking the SRSES as a whole, the Proposed Development aligns with the relevant topic areas in the SRSES including Economy, Environment and Strategic Energy Grid and is consistent with the SRSES when assessed against the relevant RSOs and RPOs.

9. Local Planning Policy

Overview

9.0 This section of the Report outlines, and assesses the Proposed Development against, the relevant local planning policy context, which includes:

- Wicklow County Development Plan 2022 – 2028.
- Arklow and Environs Local Area Plan 2018 – 2024; and
- Wexford County Development Plan 2022 – 2028.

Wicklow County Development Plan 2022- 2028

Introduction

- 9.1 The Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (WCDP) (as varied) sets out a strategic spatial framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Wicklow for the period between 2022 and 2028. The Plan came into effect in October 2022, and was varied in November 2023.
- 9.2 The WCDP provides for, and controls, the physical, economic and social development of the County, in the interests of the overall common good and in compliance with environmental controls. It also includes a set of development objectives and standards, which set out where land is to be developed, and for what purpose.

Vision and Strategy

- 9.3 The overarching strategic vision for the County is set out in Section 2.4.1 of the WCDP, which is reproduced below:

*‘To guide and facilitate the **sustainable growth** of the County in a manner which supports a deep respect for its unique natural heritage, capitalises on the potential of our towns and villages to deliver compact growth, facilitates healthy placemaking, supports the creation of self-sustaining settlements and rural areas that are attractive places to live in, work in and visit, **provides for new job opportunities, embraces climate action and enables the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy**, improves sustainable mobility and conserves our heritage.’ [our emphasis]*

- 9.4 Chapter 2 also identifies three overarching and cross-cutting themes that inform and shape all aspects of the County Development Plan, these being: Healthy Placemaking; Climate Action; and Economic Opportunity.
- 9.5 Section 2.4.2 of the WCDP sets out the following objective with respect to ‘Climate Action’:

*‘Integrate climate change objectives into the County Development Plan to facilitate the sustainable growth of the County, **enhance climate resilience and enable the***

transition to a low carbon, environmentally sustainable economy...'. [our emphasis]

9.6 Section 2.4.3 of the WCDP outlines 10 Strategic County Outcomes and the following are of note with respect to the Proposed Development:

- **SCO4 Sustainable Healthy Communities:** *Places should facilitate a high quality of life for all regardless of age or ability. Access to quality housing, employment, childcare, education, health services, community facilities and a clean unpolluted, environment including clean air and water, are defining elements of healthy, attractive and successful places. Investment in a well-designed public realm which includes public spaces, parks, playgrounds, streets and recreational and sport infrastructure to cater for all ages is essential.*

Consideration: The Proposed Development will comply with SCO4 as it will help to reduce both Ireland's and Wicklow's reliance on fossil fuels by providing energy from a clean and renewable source, which in turn, will help to reduce pollution levels and improve air quality.

- **SCO6 Natural Heritage & Biodiversity:** *Natural heritage and biodiversity is the cornerstone of Wicklow's identity – 'The Garden of Ireland'. It is essential that we conserve and enhance the County's rich natural heritage and biodiversity for the benefit of current and future generations.*

Consideration: An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. This assesses potential significant adverse impacts on species adaptation or migrations, or on natural habitat connectivity in Volume II, Chapters 6 Coastal Processes, 7 Marine Water and Sediment Quality, 9 Benthic, Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology, 10 Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology, 11 Marine Mammals, 12 Offshore Ornithology and 13 Offshore Bats.

A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of these Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored - In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors, alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives.

While it has been concluded that there are not expected to be significant effects to migrating bats, the assessment currently shows a potential significant effect from collision and barotrauma to foraging bat species within the Array Area during the operational and maintenance phase. This conclusion is however, based on a highly precautionary approach and the assumption that the ecological conditions within the Array Area once construction of the Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs) is complete will change significantly to what is being assessed as the baseline and bat activity recorded during pre-construction surveys may not reflect activity levels post-construction. Therefore, understanding bat activity around operational WTGs and quantifying mortality is

essential in determining whether the Proposed Development gives rise to a significant effect to foraging bats and whether mitigation is required and/or effective.

The Factored-in measures such as fewer turbines than originally considered and lower blade tip height above lowest astronomical tide (LAT) will reduce the likelihood of impacts.

It is unlikely the population abundance of the species will be adversely affected due to the Proposed Development, such that the populations long-term viability will be ensured. The Proposed Development is also committed to participating in the 'East Coast Monitoring Group' (ECMG), to discuss and agree potential strategic monitoring initiatives in relation to offshore bats.

In light of the conclusions of the EIAR for all other biodiversity related topics (excluding Bats) no additional mitigation is required in relation to impacts on species adaptation or migration or natural native habitat connectivity. Potential adverse impacts on species adaptation or migration, or on natural native habitat connectivity have been avoided.

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. The NIS concludes that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of any European sites.

Therefore, taking account of the conclusions within the EIAR and NIS, the overarching strategic and statutory policy support for the Proposed Development along with the need for it, and its associated public benefits, the Proposed Development complies with SC06.

- ***SC07 Climate Resilience & the Transition to a Low Carbon Economy:*** Support the transition to low carbon clean energy by facilitating renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations and supporting the development of offshore renewable energy enabling infrastructure especially at ports and harbours. Facilitate the sustainable management of waste including the circular economy. Restrict development in areas that are at risk of flooding and protect the natural landscape and biodiversity.

Consideration: The Proposed Development will comply with SC07 as it will support the transition to low carbon clean energy by facilitating renewable energy use and generation at an appropriate location.

- ***SC08 A Strong Economy:*** Strengthen and broaden the economic base, harness opportunities for economic growth to build economic resilience, strengthen enterprise ecosystems and create quality jobs that align with population growth, ensure a good standard of living and reduce the need for long-distance commuting. Support place making improvements that will generate economic confidence and in turn make settlements more attractive to employers and a skilled workforce. Support community wealth building as a transformative approach which is about creating a better and more sustainable economy that

strengthens our communities through local job creation, sustainable development and local business networks.

Consideration: The Proposed Development will comply with SC08 as it will: support the strengthening and broadening of Wicklow's economic base; enable opportunities for economic growth; and help to create a more sustainable economy. This is supported by the Economic Impact Assessment report which is appended to the EIAR at Appendix 21.1 of Volume 3. Please refer to for further details.

- ***SCO9 Tourism:*** Capitalise on Wicklow's location within Ireland's Ancient East and facilitate a year round tourism industry that harnesses Wicklow's natural amenities and vast recreational opportunities. Ensure that tourism development respects and protects the very assets it depends upon.

Consideration: The proposed development is an offshore windfarm and is not therefore a tourism development. However, Chapter 21 – Population and Human Health of the EIAR assesses the Proposed Development against a number of human health and population related factors, including tourism. The EIAR concludes that there will be no significant adverse effects on tourism from the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development therefore complies with SC09.

- ***SCO10 Education & Skills:*** Recognising the important link between education and skills and employment opportunities, it is necessary to continue to improve the opportunities for education and skills within the County and to further develop Wicklow County Campus Centre of Excellence as a third level education facility for enterprise, education, training, research and development.

Consideration: The Proposed Development complies with SC10 as it will indirectly facilitate continual education, skills development and training in marine sectors, thereby improving the sustainability, social benefits and economic resilience within the County.

Applicable Chapters and Objectives

9.7 The following Chapters of the WCDP contain objectives which are relevant for the assessment of the Proposed Development:

- Chapter 8 - Built Heritage
- Chapter 9 - Economic Development
- Chapter 15 - Waste and Environmental Emissions
- Chapter 16 - Energy and Information Infrastructure
- Chapter 17 - Natural Heritage and Biodiversity
- Chapter 19 - Marine Spatial Planning & Coastal Zone Management

- 9.8 The below sections of this Report outline the relevant objectives and accompanying background/contextual text contained in each applicable Chapter and then assesses the Proposed Development against the relevant objectives.
- 9.9 'Chapter 16 - Energy and Information Infrastructure' and 'Chapter 19 - Marine Spatial Planning & Coastal Zone Management' of the WCDP are of particular relevance to the Proposed Development.
- Built Heritage**
- 9.10 Chapter 8 of the WCDP sets out strategies and objectives with respect to the built heritage of the County. 'Section 8.2 – Archaeology' of the WCDP is of note with respect to the Proposed Development.
- 9.11 The WCDP describes archaeological heritage as '*...structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, underwater sites, moveable objects and monuments of other kinds, as well as their context, whether situated on land or under water.*' [**our emphasis**].
- 9.12 The WCDP notes that '*Under the National Monuments Acts 1930-1994 all shipwrecks over one hundred years old, underwater archaeological structures, features and objects are protected. The quantification of the underwater archaeological resource is at a preliminary stage with the National Shipwreck Inventory currently being compiled. This source indicates areas of high archaeological potential within marine environments. The Record of Monuments and Places does not include all underwater archaeological sites. As a result the potential exists for development to impact negatively on our underwater cultural resource.*'
- 9.13 The following objectives are relevant for the Proposed Development:
- 9.14 The following 'Built Heritage' objectives are relevant with respect to the assessment of the Proposed Development and have been considered in its siting and design:
- **CPO 8.1:** *To secure the preservation of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, and of sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally. In the development management process, there will be a presumption of favour of preservation in-situ or, as a minimum, preservation by record. In securing such preservation, the Planning Authority will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.*
 - **CPO 8.2:** *No development in the vicinity of a feature included in the Record of Monuments & Places (RMP) or any other site of archaeological interest will be permitted which seriously detracts from the setting of the feature or which is seriously injurious to its cultural or educational value.*
 - **CPO 8.3:** *Any development that may, due to its size, location or nature, have implications for archaeological heritage (including both sites and areas of archaeological potential / significance as identified in Schedules 08.01 & 08.02*

and Maps 8.01 & 8.02 of this plan) shall be subject to an archaeological assessment.

Consideration: ‘Chapter 18 - Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage’ of the EIAR provides a detailed analysis of the Proposed Development with respect to marine archaeology and cultural heritage.

Chapter 18 concludes that there will be no significant effects with respect to marine archaeology or cultural heritage arising from the Proposed Development during the Construction, Operational and Maintenance or Decommissioning phases.

However, the EIAR notes that there will be a significant cumulative effect arising from the Proposed Development alongside other projects/plans, such as Codling Wind Park and Dublin Array, for indirect impact on the setting of terrestrial cultural heritage assets during the Construction and Operational and Maintenance phases which cannot be mitigated.

It is noted that the cultural assets identified and considered in the EIAR are located between 6.8 km and 40 km from the Array Area.

‘Appendix 18.2 - Cultural Heritage Visual Impact Assessment Report’ of the EIAR provides an assessment of the degree to which settings and views from recorded cultural heritage sites may be affected by the Proposed Development, based on the 60km ‘Zone of Theoretical Visibility’ (ZTV) identified in Volume II, Chapter 17: Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

The Cultural Heritage Visual Impact Assessment Report concludes that the presence of the Proposed Development will not detract from the ability to understand and appreciate the cultural heritage assets.

Taking account of the above and the overarching strategic and statutory policy support for the Proposed Development along with the need for, and associated public benefits, the Proposed Development complies with CPO 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3.

Economic Development

- 9.15 Chapter 9 of the WCDP sets out objectives for the sustainable development of Wicklow’s economy and identifies key economic sectors for the County which includes ‘Maritime’ economy.
- 9.16 The WCDP acknowledges that *‘The marine economy is a key enabler of effective economic growth...’* and that *‘The maritime sector in Wicklow benefits from a host of assets and activities capable of expansion and development including: servicing of the off-shore renewable energy industry, etc’.*
- 9.17 The WCDP further notes that established ocean and coastal economic sectors include energy exploration and production and that Wicklow County Council supports the identification and realisation of the economic opportunities within the Maritime sector.

- 9.18 Indeed, the WCDP identifies *‘Off-shore wind energy is a significant opportunity area for the County’* and acknowledges that the *‘County has already established itself as a location for off-shore wind’*.
- 9.19 The WCDP recognises that in the future, *‘Wicklow could face significant changes with the potential development of marine renewable energy, more specifically wind, following the identification of the Assessment Zone 2 – Wind and Tidal in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPP)’*.
- 9.20 The WCDP notes that *‘The Government is committed to generating at least 80% of energy from renewable sources by 2030’* and it also makes specific reference to the Proposed Development as follows: *‘There are 3 major offshore wind projects at various stages of planning off the County Wicklow Coast. The Arklow Bank Project is proceeding under an extant permission...’*.
- 9.21 The following ‘Economic Development’ objective is relevant with respect to the assessment of the Proposed Development:

- **CPO 9.21** *To encourage and facilitate the ‘circular economy’ and the development of ‘green’ industries, including industries relating to renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies, material / waste recycling and conservation.*

Consideration: The Proposed Development complies with CPO 9.21 as it will: support the ‘circular economy’ and ‘green’ industries by delivering a new renewable offshore wind energy development.

Waste and Environmental Emissions

- 9.22 Chapter 15 of the WCDP sets out relevant objectives in relation to solid and hazardous waste management, emissions to the air, as well as noise and light pollution. This Chapter is informed by EU and national legislation in relation to waste and pollution.
- 9.23 The WCDP is committed to supporting development that will produce minimal waste and not produce pollution through GHG emissions, noise, and light pollution. All forms of pollution are linked to the degradation of biodiversity and have a direct impact on human and wildlife health.
- 9.24 The following Waste and Environmental Emissions objectives are relevant with respect to the Proposed Development:

Solid Waste Management Objectives

- **CPO 15.1:** *seeks to require all developments likely to give rise to significant quantities of waste, either by virtue of the scale of the development or the nature of the development (e.g. one that involves demolition) to submit a construction management plan, which will outline, amongst other things, the plan to minimise waste generation and the plan to protect the environment with the safe and efficient disposal of waste from the site.*

- **CPO 15.2:** *requires all new developments, whether residential, community, agricultural or commercial to make provision for storage and recycling facilities (in accordance with the standards set out in Development & Design Standards of this plan).*

Consideration: In compliance with CPO 15.1 and 15.2, a Resource and Waste Management Plan has been submitted with the Application (Volume III, Appendix 25.1: Environmental Management Plan, Annex 5). The Resource and Waste Management Plan provides the information necessary to guide and support the compliant and efficient management of wastes associated with the Proposed Development including storage and reuse/recycling. That information includes estimating the types and quantities of wastes to arise and establishing the controls and procedures that will be applied in managing the wastes in compliance with the relevant regulations, policy and guidance.

Air Pollution Objectives

- **CPO 15.9:** *To regulate and control activities likely to give rise to emissions to air (other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA).*
- **CPO 15.10:** *To require proposals for new developments with the potential for the accidental release of chemicals or dust generation, to submit and have approved by the Local Authority construction and/or operation management plans to control such emissions.*
- **CPO 15.11:** *To require activities likely to give rise to air emissions to implement measures to control such emissions, to undertake air quality monitoring and to provide an annual air quality audit.*

Consideration: Chapter 20 of the EIAR assesses the potential impacts of the Proposed Development with respect to air quality and climate. Chapter 20 concludes that there will be a slight adverse effect (which is not deemed significant in EIA terms) during the construction and decommissioning phases and a major beneficial effect (significant in EIA terms) during the operational phase of the Proposed Development. Chapter 20 also confirms that there will be a net beneficial impact to climate arising from the Proposed Development on a local, national and global basis during the construction, operational and maintenance or decommissioning phases. An Environmental Management Plan is also submitted with the Application to ensure that the construction, operational and maintenance and decommissioning phases will be carried out in accordance with relevant standards. Therefore, the Proposed Development complies with CPO 15.9 to 15.11.

Noise Pollution Objectives

- **CPO 15.12:** *To implement the Wicklow County Council Noise Action Plan 2018-2023 (and any subsequent Plan) in order to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to environmental noise exposure.*
- **CPO 15.13:** *To enforce, where applicable, the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acts 1992 and 2003, and EPA Noise Regulations 2006.*

- **CPO 15.14:** *To regulate and control activities likely to give rise to excessive noise (other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA).*
- **CPO 15.15:** *To require proposals for new developments with the potential to create excessive noise to prepare a construction and/or operation management plans to control such emissions.*
- **CPO 15.16:** *To require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures to undertake noise monitoring and to provide an annual monitoring audit.*

Consideration: The EIAR submitted with the Application confirms that the Proposed Development will not result in significant effects with respect to noise. A Construction Noise Management Plan is submitted along with the Application. The Proposed Development therefore complies with CPO 15.15 and 15.16. Please refer to the EIAR for further details, particularly 'Chapter 8 - Airborne Noise', 'Chapter 11 - Marine Mammals', 'Appendix 8.1 - Airborne Noise Technical Report', 'Appendix 11.2 - Underwater Noise Assessment' and 'Appendix 25.8 - Construction Noise Management Plan'. CPO 15.12 - 15.14 relate to local authority actions but the Proposed Development is aligned with these objectives insofar as it minimises its potential noise impacts.

Light Pollution Objectives

- **CPO 15.17:** *To ensure that all external lighting whether free standing or attached to a building shall be designed and constructed so as not to cause excessive light spillage, glare, or dazzle motorists, and thereby limiting light pollution into the surrounding environment and protecting the amenities of nearby properties, traffic and wildlife.*
- **CPO 15.18:** *To require proposals for new developments with the potential to create light pollution or light impacts on adjacent residences to mitigate impacts, in accordance with the Development & Design Standards set out in this plan.*
- **CPO 15.19:** *To promote the use of low energy LED (or equivalent) lighting.*
- **CPO 15.20:** *To require the design and implementation of a hierarchy of light intensity zones in development schemes to ensure that environmental impact is minimised as far as possible particularly in areas proximate to ecological corridors.*

Consideration: 'Chapter 17 - Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' of Volume II of the EIAR assesses the nighttime impact of the proposed aviation lighting. An assessment of the effects of night-time lighting associated with the Proposed Development is undertaken from four representative viewpoints. These viewpoints have been selected to enable consideration of the effects of night-time lighting on a range of receptors and locations which feature different levels of baseline lighting.

The layout of WTGs and Offshore Substation Platforms (OSPs) have been designed in such a way to minimise the impacts on Seascape, Landscape, Visual

Impacts Assessment (SLVIA) where possible. White aviation lights will be fully cut off so that practically no light will be emitted below the horizon.

The EIAR identifies significant effects with respect to visual receptors experiencing views of nighttime lighting at three of the four representative viewpoints assessed.

It is noted that the proposed lighting is required for safety/warning purposes to comply with relevant Irish Aviation Authority requirements. A Lighting and Marking Plan (LMP) is also submitted with the Application (see Appendix 25.6 of Volume III of the EIAR). The LMP has been informed by Irish Lights and will be in compliance with the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) G1162 (IALA, 2021). Therefore, taking account of the purpose of the proposed lighting and the conclusions within the EIAR, as well as the overarching strategic and statutory policy support for the Proposed Development along with the need for it, and its associated public benefits, the Proposed Development complies with CPOs 15.17 – 15.20.

Energy and Information Infrastructure

- 9.25 Chapter 16 of the WCDP focuses primarily on ‘energy infrastructure’ associated with the production, distribution and use of energy.
- 9.26 The WCDP notes that *‘Ireland’s energy requirements have increased significantly over the past two decades due to growth in energy consumption for transport, electricity and heating. Linked with increasing economic growth, Ireland’s overall demand for energy continues to rise.’*
- 9.27 However, despite the increase in energy demand, the WCDP advises that *‘...energy-related CO2 emissions fell slightly, mainly due to a reduction in the amount of coal used for electricity generation, along with increased contributions from wind generation’.*
- 9.28 The WCDP cites SEAI’s ‘Renewable Energy in Ireland 2020 Update’ report which found that Ireland was not on track to meet its 2020 targets with overall renewable energy supply at 11% of gross final consumption short of the 16% target and the share of renewable electricity (RES-E) was 33.2%, short of the 40% electricity demand target.
- 9.29 In light of this shortfall, the WCDP advises that *‘It is therefore imperative that further progress is made in this area and that alternative renewable sources are further expanded and developed’.* Consequently, the WCDP sets out the following general energy objective:
- **CPO 16.01:** *To support and facilitate to the highest degree possible the development of alternative and renewable sources of energy, particularly in the generation of electricity / heating and for use as transport fuel.*

Consideration: The Proposed Development complies with CPO 16.01 as it will deliver a renewable source of energy that will generate electricity.

- 9.30 Section 16.3 of the WCDP sets out a number of other 'Energy Infrastructure & Communications Objectives', however, these objectives relate specifically to onshore wind energy projects as well as the onshore components of offshore wind energy projects. As such, these objectives are not relevant to the Proposed Development.

Chapter 17 - Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

- 9.31 Chapter 17 of the WCDP sets out strategies and objectives with regard to the natural heritage and biodiversity in the County. This chapter of the WCDP also addresses landscape issues not solely related to nature conservation, such as landscape characterisation and identification of views and prospects worthy of protection.
- 9.32 The WCDP notes that *"Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and landscapes is vital for the health, well-being and quality of life of communities today and it has a vital role to play in our response to the climate emergency."*
- 9.33 The WCDP contains the following definitions for natural heritage, biodiversity and landscape:
- *Natural heritage includes the variety of life, often referred to as biodiversity, its physical or geological foundation, and the landscapes which form the surrounding environment.*
 - *Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on earth. It includes the habitats and ecosystems, which support this life and how life-forms interact with each other and the rest of the environment. Biodiversity covers plants, animals and micro-organisms both on land and in water. It relates to both wildlife and domesticated crops and animals.*
 - *Ireland signed and ratified the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention (ELC) which came into effect on 1 March 2004. The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as '...an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'.*
- 9.34 The WCDP notes that *'The Council has an important role to play when it comes to promoting a reasonable balance between conservation measures and development needs, in order to avoid negative impacts upon the natural environment, mitigate the effects of harm where it cannot be avoided, and to promote the appropriate enhancement of the natural environment as an integral part of any development'.*
- 9.35 The following 'Natural Heritage and Biodiversity' objectives are relevant with respect to the assessment of the Proposed Development and have been considered in its siting and design:

General

- **CPO 17.1:** *To protect, sustainably manage and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, geological heritage, landscape and environment of County Wicklow in recognition of its importance for nature conservation and biodiversity and as a non-renewable resource.*

- **CPO 17.2:** *Ensure the protection of ecosystems and ecosystem services by integrating full consideration of these into all decision making.*
- **CPO 17.3:** *To support and promote the implementation of the County Wicklow Heritage Plan and the County Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan.*

Protected Sites and Species

- **CPO 17.4:** *To contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection of designated ecological sites including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs); Wildlife Sites (including proposed Natural Heritage Areas); Salmonid Waters; Flora Protection Order sites; Wildfowl Sanctuaries (see S.I. 192 of 1979); Freshwater Pearl Mussel catchments; and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). To contribute towards compliance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable National Legislation, Policies, Plans and Guidelines, including but not limited to the following and any updated/superseding documents:*
 - (a) *EU Directives, including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended) , the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) , the Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC) , the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU, as amended), the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), EU Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC); EU ‘Guidance on integrating ecosystems and their services into decision-making’ (European Commission 2019);*
 - (b) *National legislation, including the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2010 (as amended) , European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018, the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011), the European Communities (Environmental Liability) Regulations 2008 (as amended) and the Flora Protection order 2015;*
 - (c) *National policy guidelines (including any clarifying circulars or superseding versions of same), including ‘Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment’ (2018), ‘Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-Threshold Development’ (2003), ‘Tree Preservation Guidelines’, ‘Landscape and Landscape Assessment’ (draft 2000), ‘Appropriate Assessment Guidance’ (2010);*
 - (d) *Catchment and water resource management plans, including the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 (including any superseding versions of same);*
 - (e) *Biodiversity plans and guidelines, including National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021 (including any superseding versions of same) and the County Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan;*

(f) *Ireland's Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020 (EPA), including any superseding versions of same, and to make provision where appropriate to address the report's goals and challenges.*

- **CPO 17.5:** *Projects giving rise to adverse effects on the integrity of European sites (cumulatively, directly or indirectly) arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommission or from any effects shall not be permitted on this basis of this plan Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. there must be: a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and c) adequate compensatory measures in place.*
- **COP 17.6:** *Ensure that development proposals, contribute as appropriate towards the protection and where possible enhancement of the ecological coherence of the European Site network and encourage the retention and management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the EU Habitats directive, All projects and plans arising from the WCDP will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.*
- **CPO 17.7:** *To maintain the conservation value of all proposed and future Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and to protect other designated ecological sites in Wicklow.*
- **CPO 17.8:** *Ensure ecological impact assessment is carried out for any proposed development likely to have a significant impact on proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna, Annex I habitats, or rare and threatened species including those species protected by law and their habitats. Ensure appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated into development proposals as part of any ecological impact assessment.*

Consideration: An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. This assesses potential significant adverse impacts on species adaptation or migrations, or on natural habitat connectivity in Volume II, Chapters 6 Coastal Processes, 7 Marine Water and Sediment Quality, 9 Benthic, Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology, 10 Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology, 11 Marine Mammals, 12 Offshore Ornithology and 13 Offshore Bats.

A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of these Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored - In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors, alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives.

While it has been concluded that there are not expected to be significant effects to migrating bats, the assessment currently shows a potential significant effect from collision and barotrauma to foraging bat species within the Array Area during the operational and maintenance phase. This conclusion is however, based on a highly precautionary approach and the assumption that the ecological conditions within the Array Area once construction of the Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs) is complete will change significantly to what is being assessed as the baseline and bat activity recorded during pre-construction surveys may not reflect activity levels post-construction. Therefore, understanding bat activity around operational WTGs and quantifying mortality is essential in determining whether the Proposed Development gives rise to a significant effect to foraging bats and whether mitigation is required and/or effective.

The Factored-in measures such as fewer turbines than originally considered and lower blade tip height above lowest astronomical tide (LAT) will reduce the likelihood of impacts.

It is unlikely the population abundance of the species will be adversely affected due to the Proposed Development, such that the population's long-term viability will be ensured. The Proposed Development is also committed to participating in the 'East Coast Monitoring Group' (ECMG), to discuss and agree potential strategic monitoring initiatives in relation to offshore bats.

In light of the conclusions of the EIAR for all other biodiversity related topics (excluding Bats) no additional mitigation is required in relation to impacts on species adaptation or migration or natural native habitat connectivity. Potential adverse impacts on species adaptation or migration, or on natural native habitat connectivity have been avoided.

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. The NIS concludes that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites.

Therefore, taking account of the conclusions within the EIAR and NIS, the overarching strategic and statutory policy support for the Proposed Development along with the need for it, and its associated public benefits, the Proposed Development complies with CPOs 17.1 – 17.8.

Sites & Corridors of Ecological & Biodiversity Value

- ***CPO 17.12:*** To protect non-designated sites from inappropriate development, ensuring that ecological impact assessment is carried out for any proposed development likely to have a significant impact on locally important natural habitats, species or wildlife corridors. Ensure appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated into development proposals as part of any ecological impact assessment.
- ***CPO 17.17:*** To work with statutory authorities to prevent and control the spread of invasive plant and animal species and require, where appropriate Invasive

Species Management Plans to be prepared as part of the development management process where necessary.

Consideration: 'Chapter 9 - Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology' and 'Chapter 10 - Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology' of the EIAR and 'Appendix 25.4 - Invasive Non-Indigenous Species Management Plan' address the components outlined in objectives 17.12 and 17.17. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has also been prepared for, and submitted with, the Application for the Proposed Development. The NIS concludes that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of any European sites. Noting the conclusions of the EIAR and NIS as well as the proposed mitigation measures, it is considered that the Proposed Development complies with objectives 17.12 and 17.7.

Water Systems

- **CPO 17.24:** *seeks to ensure and support the implementation of the EU Groundwater Directive and the EU Water Framework Directive and associated River Basin and Sub-Basin Management Plans and Blue Dot Catchment Programme, to ensure the protection, improvement and sustainable use of all waters in the County, including rivers, lakes, ground water, coastal and estuarine waters, and to restrict development likely to lead to a deterioration in water quality. The Council will also have cognisance of, where relevant, the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Documents No. 20 and 36 which provide guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive.*

Consideration: The EIAR assesses the potential impact on marine water and sediment quality from the Proposed Development. Activities associated with the Proposed Development will give rise to suspended sediment plumes and may cause a deterioration in water quality. However, the increased concentrations of sediment is not expected to last more than a matter of days, with impacts similar to that experienced during storm activity. The relevant receptors are expected to fully recover from the development activities which results in a conclusion that none of the activities will be significant in EIA terms. The implementation of an EMP and Marine Pollution Contingency Plan (MPCP) will significantly reduce the likelihood of an accidental spill occurring.

A WFD compliance assessment has also been undertaken (see Appendix 7.1 of Volume III of the EIAR) to consider the potential effects of the Proposed Development and ensure that the proposed activities will not cause or contribute to the deterioration of waterbodies status under the WFD or jeopardise the potential for water bodies to achieve 'Good' status.

The conclusions reached through the WFD assessment are also applicable for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The WFD assessment confirms that the activities associated with the Proposed Development are not considered to hinder the achievement of 'Good Environmental Status', as prescribed under the water quality policies. The Proposed Development will not result in a deterioration of the current status of the Southwestern Irish Sea - Brittas Bay

(HA 10) or Southwestern Irish Sea - Killiney Bay (HA 10) coastal water bodies, nor jeopardise the attainment of 'Good' status.

The WFD assessment also concludes that the cumulative impacts of the Proposed Development with other projects are not anticipated to result in the deterioration of current status, nor jeopardise attainment of 'Good' status for the Southwestern Irish Sea - Brittas Bay (HA 10) or Southwestern Irish Sea - Killiney Bay (HA 10) coastal water bodies. Noting the above, the Proposed Development complies with CPO 17.24.

Landscape, Views & Prospects

- **CPO 17.35:** *All development proposals shall have regard to the County landscape classification hierarchy in particular the key landscape features and characteristics identified in the Wicklow Landscape Assessment (set in Volume 3 of the 2016 County Development Plan) and the 'Key Development Considerations' set out for each landscape area set out in Section 5 of the Wicklow Landscape Assessment.*
- **CPO 17.38:** *To protect listed views and prospects from development that would either obstruct the view / prospect from the identified vantage point or form an obtrusive or incongruous feature in that view / prospect. Due regard will be paid in assessing development applications to the span and scope of the view / prospect and the location of the development within that view / prospect.*

Consideration: A 'Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (SLVIA) has been undertaken for the Proposed Development (see Chapter 17 of Volume II of the EIAR). All of the identified Landscape impacts; Seascape impacts; Landscape designation impacts; and Visual impacts within the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development have been assessed for potential impact of the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning phases.

The SLVIA concludes that moderate to major significant effects have been predicted to occur for all viewpoints that were assessed for each phase of the Proposed Development. 15 of the viewpoints were predicted to have moderate to major effects with 10 of those having significant effects. Major to profound and significant effects were predicted at 7 viewpoints, which were those viewpoints in closest proximity to the Proposed Development.

'Chapter 18 - Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage' of the EIAR identifies a significant cumulative effect on indirect impact on the setting of terrestrial cultural heritage sites arising from the Construction, Operational and Maintenance phases of the Proposed Development which cannot be mitigated.

The SLVIA concludes that although the Proposed Development extends the influence of the wind farm characteristics of the seascape beyond the existing ABWP1 and results in some significant effects on the character and views from the coast, in close proximity only, there is scope for the Proposed Development to be accommodated in this location without unacceptable effects on seascape, landscape character and visual amenity.

The SLVIA also concludes that the Proposed Development would not result in the key characteristics of the surrounding area being affected to such a degree that it would unacceptably dominate the wider seascape and landscape character and it would remain characterised locally as a 'seascape with wind farm' as it is at present with the influence of the existing ABWP1.

The layout of WTGs and Offshore Substation Platforms (OSPs) have been designed to minimise the impacts on Seascape, Landscape, Visual Impacts Assessment (SLVIA) where possible. White aviation lights will be fully cut off so that practically no light will be emitted below the horizontal.

Noting the above, and taking account of the overarching strategic and statutory policy support for the Proposed Development along with the need for, and associated public benefits of, the Proposed Development, it is considered that it complies with CPO 17.35 and 17.38.

Taking account of the above, the conclusions within the EIAR, the overarching strategic and statutory policy support for the Proposed Development along with the need for it, and its associated public benefits, the Proposed Development complies with CPO 17.35 and CPO 17.38.

Marine Spatial Planning & Coastal Zone Management

- 9.36 Chapter 19 of the WCDP is relevant to the Proposed Development identifying that it is located within the 'marine area'.
- 9.37 The WCDP notes that *'The coastal areas of County Wicklow are amongst the most scenic, sensitive and valuable resources in the County'* and that the *'The sea itself is also an important resource for the County and many of the activities that take place off-shore have an impact on the land and coastal areas and therefore it is important to take into consideration such impacts'*.
- 9.38 The WCDP acknowledges that *'Planning in our coastal and marine areas is changing in Ireland with new procedures and government policy emerging for marine spatial planning and the management of development in our maritime areas.'* It describes marine spatial planning as:
- '...a new way of looking at how we use the marine area; it is about planning when and where human activities take place at sea. It aims to balance the different demands for using the sea including the need to protect the marine environment. It's about ensuring these uses and activities are as efficient and sustainable as possible.'*
- 9.39 The WCDP advises that the protection and appropriate development of our coastal zone and marine environment will contribute to numerous goals across the WCDP's three pillars of 'sustainable healthy communities', 'climate action' and 'economic opportunity' by:
- *'conserving and enhancing coastal and marine biodiversity, protected habitats and species.'*

- *identifying, protecting and enhancing coastal green and blue infrastructure and ecosystem services and promote the sustainable management of strategic natural assets such as coastlines, farmlands, peatlands, uplands woodlands and wetlands.*
- *building resilience to increased risks of extreme weather events, changes in sea level and patterns of coastal erosion to protect property, critical infrastructure and food security.*
- *reduction and management of coastal and estuarine flood risk.*
- **supporting and appropriately managing the impacts of the development of alternative and renewable sources of electricity including offshore wind, wave and tidal energy.**
- *supporting employment growth around Wicklow's natural resources and supporting key sectors for growth particularly the maritime industry including support services for offshore wind energy, tourism and recreation.*
- *ensuring access to coastal areas for active and passive uses to support physical and mental health and well-being within the community.'* **[our emphasis]**

9.40 In setting out the relevant legislative and strategic context, the WCDP recognises that **'There is a significant opportunity for Wicklow to take advantage of the Offshore Wind Sector** and any associated spin offs such as on-shore 'operations and maintenance' facilities and the creation of a 'local offshore wind enterprise zones.' **[our emphasis]**

9.41 Chapter 19 of the WCDP sets out the following objectives are relevant with respect to the assessment of the Proposed Development and have been considered in its siting and design:

9.42 The following 'Marine Spatial Planning & Coastal Zone Management' objectives are relevant with respect to the assessment of the Proposed Development and have been considered in its siting and design:

Marine Planning Objectives

- **CPO 19.3:** *To support the development of the Marine Economy / Blue Economy sector, particularly in the renewable energy, shipping and fishing / aquaculture sectors. To support the work of the Wicklow Maritime Business Development Group and the implementation of strategies and projects related to enhancing the marine economy.*

Consideration: The Proposed Development complies with CPO 19.3 as it will deliver a new renewable source of energy to support the Marine/Blue Economy.

Coastal Zone Management Objectives

- **CPO 19.8:** *To protect the character and visual potential of the coast and conserve the character and quality of seascapes.*

- **CPO 19.9:** *To strictly control the nature and pattern of development within coastal areas and ensure that it is designed and landscaped to the highest standards, and sited appropriately so as not to detract from the visual amenity of the area. Development shall be prohibited where the development poses a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and/or where the development is likely to result in undesirable patterns of erosion or deposition elsewhere along the coast.*

Consideration: Compliance with CPO 19.8 and 19.9 is already confirmed in this Report, through the assessment for CPO 17.35 and 17.38 at para. 9.36 above.

- **CPO 19.13:** *Projects giving rise to adverse effects on the integrity of European sites (cumulatively, directly or indirectly) arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall not be permitted on the basis of this plan. Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. there must be: a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and c) adequate compensatory measures in place. Ensure that development proposals, contribute as appropriate towards the protection and where possible enhancement of the ecological coherence of the European Site network and encourage the retention and management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the EU Habitats Directive. All projects and plans arising from this Plan will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.*

Consideration: Compliance with CPO 19.13 is already confirmed in this Report through the assessment for CPO 17.1 – 17.8 at para. 9.36 above.

- 9.43 Having assessed the Proposed Development against the relevant objectives of the WCDP and taking account of the need for, and benefits of, the Proposed Development, outlined in this Planning Report, it is considered that the Proposed Development complies with the overarching Vision, Strategic County Outcomes, Core Strategy and Objectives of the WCDP.

Arklow and Environs Local Area Plan 2018 – 2024

- 9.44 The Arklow and Environs Local Area Plan (the LAP/Plan) 2018 to 2024 sets out a land use framework to guide the future sustainable development of the settlement of Arklow town and its environs. The LAP, in conjunction with the County Development Plan, will inform and manage the future development of the area.
- 9.45 The LAP reflects that Arklow is already leading in offshore energy development in Ireland and already has a key role in electricity transmission and distribution with seven no. offshore wind turbines in operation as part of Arklow Bank 1, several high voltage electricity lines crossing the plan area, and the electricity station at Killiniskysduff.

- 9.46 The LAP acknowledges that *'The maritime sector in Arklow benefits from a host of assets and activities capable of expansion and development including: shore-side services, shipping services, repair and maintenance, fishing, tourism and leisure, servicing of the off-shore renewable energy industry, maritime financial services etc.'*
- 9.47 Noting this, the LAP advises that *'Wicklow County Council supports the identification and realisation of the economic opportunities within this sector'*.
- 9.48 The LAP advises *'...all lands located outside the LAP are considered to be within the 'rural area'. Within this rural area planning applications shall be assessed having regard to the objectives and standards for the rural area, as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan'*. Notwithstanding, the following objectives are relevant with respect to the assessment of the Proposed Development and have been considered in its siting and design:

Vision for Arklow

- **6 Employment Activity:** *To facilitate and encourage the growth of a broad range of employment, enterprise and economic activity in the settlement, to support the port and manufacturing employment tradition in the settlement.*
- **9 Unique Heritage:** *To recognise, protect and strengthen the unique character, built heritage, seaside location, maritime history and natural environment of the area, ensuring that this heritage can continue to contribute positively to the overall quality of life, biodiversity, recreation and tourism role of the settlement.*
- **10 Adapt to Climate Change:** *To address the climate change challenge, directly in the areas of flooding and renewable energy, and indirectly by integrating adaptation to climate change and sustainable development into the plan objectives.*

Infrastructure Strategy for Arklow

- Facilitate and promote the delivery of reliable and effective water, drainage, energy, waste management and communications infrastructure to service the existing and future development needs of the settlement.

Heritage Strategy for Arklow

- To protect the natural, architectural, archaeological and maritime heritage of Arklow and its environs. To enhance the quality of the natural and built environment, to enhance the unique character of the town and environs as a place to live, visit and work.

Tourism and Recreation Objectives

- *TR1 - To facilitate and support the development of the tourism industry in Arklow and maximise the town's location as a gateway between the tourism assets within Co. Wicklow.*

Heritage Objectives

- *HT2 - To protect the listed prospect of special amenity (from the R750/coast road towards the sea) from development that would either obstruct the prospect from the identified vantage point or form an obtrusive or incongruous feature in that*

prospect. Due regard will be paid in assessing development applications to the span and scope of the prospect and the location of the development within that prospect.

- *HT3 - Protect and enhance the character, setting and environmental quality of natural, architectural and archaeological heritage, and in particular those features of the natural landscape and built structures that contribute to its special interest. The natural, architectural and archaeological heritage of the area shall be protected in accordance with the objectives set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan.*
- *HT9 - To maintain the conservation value of all proposed and future Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and to protect other designated ecological sites in Arklow and Environs.*

- 9.49 It is considered that the Proposed Development complies with, and will make a positive contribution towards the abovementioned objectives of the LAP. A detailed assessment has been provided within the preceding section in respect of the WCDP objectives, which address the abovementioned objectives within the LAP and have not been repeated to avoid duplication. Please refer to the section above in respect of employment/economy, infrastructure, heritage, climate change and tourism.

Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028

Introduction

- 9.50 The Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 (WxCDP) sets out the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Wexford for the plan period and beyond. The Plan came into effect on Monday, 25th July 2022.
- 9.51 The Plan addresses a wide range of interrelated economic, social and environmental issues set within an overall framework of achieving sustainable development, social inclusion, adapting to climate change and a healthy county where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential.
- 9.52 The Plan seeks to protect, mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change and notes that *‘Climate action is integrated into every chapter and strategy in the plan. Each chapter includes a sub-section outlining how the spatial strategy and objectives of that chapter have been climate proofed and/or will contribute to mitigation and adaptation to climate change’*.

Core Strategy

- 9.53 The overarching strategic vision for the County is set out in Section 3.1 of the WxCDP, and is reproduced below:

‘By 2028 County Wexford will:

- *Be a self-sustaining, low carbon, climate resilient and healthy county where people want to live, work and play.*

- *Offer high quality sustainable employment opportunities and high-quality residential developments.*
- *Have sustainable urban and rural environments supported by excellent physical and social infrastructure.*
- *Continue to value its unique natural environment, built and cultural heritage, be a county where biodiversity is restored and flourishes and which offers a range of high- quality experiences to both residents and visitors.'*

9.54 The development approach of the Core Strategy includes a focus on facilitating '*...the transition to a low carbon economy*'.

Applicable Chapters and Objectives

9.55 The following Chapters of the WxCDP contain objectives which are relevant for the assessment of the Proposed Development:

- Chapter 2 - Climate Change
- Chapter 6 - Economic Development Strategy
- Chapter 9 - Infrastructure Strategy
- Chapter 10 - Environmental Management
- Chapter 11 - Landscape and Green Infrastructure
- Chapter 12 - Coastal Zone Management & Marine Spatial Planning
- Chapter 13 - Heritage and Conservation

9.56 The following sections of this Report outline the relevant objectives and accompanying background/contextual text contained in each applicable Chapter and then assesses the Proposed Development against the relevant objectives.

9.57 'Chapter 9 – Infrastructure Strategy' and 'Chapter 12 - Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning' of the WxCDP are of particular relevance to the Proposed Development.

Climate Action

9.58 Chapter 2 of the WxCDP relates to climate action addressing the impacts of climate change at a local level. This Chapter recognises that Wexford has been at the forefront of renewable energy development having a Wind Energy Strategy in place since 2007 and has (at the time of writing the WxCDP) has made a significant contribution to the states installed renewable energy capacity (182MW).

9.59 The WxCDP states that climate change has been an underlying theme in the County Development Plan and Local Area Plans in Wexford and notes that '*Climate mitigation refers to efforts to reduce or prevent emission of greenhouse gases. Mitigation can mean using new technologies and renewable energies, making older equipment more*

energy efficient, or changing practices and behaviours e.g. encouraging more walking and cycling by providing footpaths and cycle paths' **[our emphasis]**.

- 9.60 The overarching goal of this Chapter is to '*...protect the people, buildings, infrastructure, businesses and ecosystems in County Wexford against the negative impacts of climate change, build resilience to climate change, change our behaviours and patterns of development to lessen the extent of climate change and take advantage of any opportunities that climate change may bring.*'
- 9.61 The WXCDP '*...is focused on reducing GHG emissions, using sustainable renewable energy sources and moving to a low carbon economy*' and in this regard the WXCDP seeks to '*...**facilitate the transition to a low carbon economy** which is focused on clean, low carbon technologies and **promote the development of sustainable renewable energy sources such as wind**, tidal and solar energy as a means of reducing dependencies on fossil fuels...*' **[our emphasis]**.
- 9.62 The WXCDP sets out the following 'Climate Action' objectives which support the Proposed Development:
- **CA01:** *To ensure that the spatial planning of County Wexford provides for a county that is resilient to climate change, encourages development along existing transport corridors, enables the decarbonisation of the county's economy and reduces the county's carbon footprint in support of national targets for climate mitigation and adaptation objectives as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.*
 - **CA04:** *To implement the Energy Strategy contained in Volume 10 of the Wexford County Development Plan to facilitate the transition to a low carbon county.*
 - **CA06:** *To continue to reduce energy related CO₂ emissions of Wexford County Council, to improve energy efficiencies and to achieve the commitment under the European Climate Alliance to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 10% every five years.*
 - **CA13:** *To require new developments to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change by ensuring they are appropriately located, sited and designed to accommodate predicted future climate change impacts.*

Economic Development Strategy

- 9.63 Chapter 6 of the WXCDP sets out the Council's broad Economic Development Strategy and provides details on how this will be supported by the Council's functions and activities and the planning process.
- 9.64 The WXCDP notes that '*Technological advances and the transition to a low carbon economy present challenges but also numerous opportunities as our businesses and workers adapt in a changed economy.*'
- 9.65 The WXCDP advises that Wexford County Council will '*Support the development of the green economy including appropriate renewable energy and bioenergy economic*

developments that will assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and assist with the transition to a low carbon economy.'

9.66 The following 'Economic Development Strategy' objectives are relevant with respect to the assessment of the Proposed Development and have been considered in its siting and design:

- **Objective ED03:** *To sustainably develop, deepen and enhance the county's regional economic resilience by widening economic sectors and boosting innovation, export diversification, and productivity and increasing access to new markets.*
- **Objective ED34:** *To facilitate the development of enterprises related to the identified pillars for growth at appropriate locations and facilitate the provision of facilities and infrastructure which will enable clustering and specialisation in the county as set out in Section 6.7 (locations for economic development).*

Consideration: The Proposed Development complies with ED03 and ED34 as it will: support the strengthening and broadening of Wexford's economic base, enable opportunities for economic growth; help to create a more sustainable economy; and deliver a new renewable offshore wind energy development at an appropriate location to support a number of Wexford's 'Pillars of Growth' including 'Sustainable Construction and Energy' and 'Maritime and Coastal'.

Infrastructure Strategy

9.67 Chapter 9 of the WXCDP provides the spatial framework and objectives for the planning and provision of infrastructure, either directly by the Council, or by other agencies or operators.

9.68 The overarching goal of this Chapter is to '*...ensure that Wexford has high quality infrastructure to facilitate and sustain the growth of the county over the lifetime of the plan and beyond whilst having regard to, and complying with, all relevant EU Directive and national legislation and enhancing the environmental quality of the county.*'

9.69 The following 'Infrastructure Strategy' objectives are relevant with respect to the assessment of the Proposed Development and have been considered in its siting and design:

- **IS06:** *To promote the circular economy and facilitate best practice in the prevention, re-use, recovery, recycling and disposal of all waste produced in the county.*
- **WM01:** *To sustainably manage waste generation, support the investment in different types of waste treatment and support circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, to support a sustainable and healthy environment, economy and society.*
- **WM09:** *Construction and Demolition Waste Management Plans will be required for developments specified in Volume 2 Development Management Manual or as otherwise may be requested by the Planning Authority.*

- **WM15:** *To require the appropriate provision for the management of waste within developments, including the provision of facilities for the storage, separation and collection of such waste in accordance with the relevant development management standards set out in Volume 2*

Consideration: In compliance with objectives IS06, WM01, WM09 and WM15, a Resource and Waste Management Plan has been submitted with the Application (see Volume III, Appendix 25.1: Environmental Management Plan, Annex 5). The Resource and Waste Management Plan provides the information necessary to guide and support the compliant and efficient management of wastes associated with the Proposed Development. That information includes estimating the types and quantities of wastes to arise and establishing the controls and procedures that will be applied in managing the wastes in compliance with the relevant regulations, policy and guidance.

Environmental Management

- 9.70 Chapter 10 of the WXCDP sets out, from a spatial planning perspective, the framework to sustainably manage our environment by ensuring that land use and future developments protect and enhance, where possible, environmental quality and contribute to the health and wellbeing of our county.
- 9.71 With respect to the environment, the WXCDP notes that climate action in the Plan includes a focus on *‘Promoting renewable energy and green industries to reduce GHGs and improve air quality.’*
- 9.72 The overarching goal of this Chapter is to *‘ensure that the natural resources and environmental conditions that are fundamental for the social and economic wellbeing of the current and future generations of our county are sustainably managed and protected.’*
- 9.73 The following ‘Environmental Management’ objectives are relevant with respect to the assessment of the Proposed Development and have been considered in its siting and design:
- **EM01:** *To ensure that proposed projects/developments comply with the requirements of EIA Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014, amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, and as transposed into Irish law under national legislation, including in Schedule 5 Part 1 and Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). In accordance with Article 3 of Directive 2014/52/ EU, where EIA is required the environmental impact assessments presented in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) shall identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, the direct, indirect and cumulative significant effects of a project on the following factors: population and human health; biodiversity (with particular attention to species and habitats protected under Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC); land, soil, water, air and climate, material assets, cultural heritage, and the landscape, and the interaction between the foregoing factors.*

- **EM02:** *To ensure that planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that, either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on a European site, or where such a development proposal is likely or might have such a significant effect (either alone or in combination), the planning authority will, as required by law, carry out an 442 Environmental Management WXCDP 2022 - 2028 appropriate assessment as per requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of the 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as transposed into Irish legislation. Only after having ascertained that the development proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, will the planning authority agree to the development and impose appropriate mitigation measures in the form of planning conditions. A development proposal which could adversely affect the integrity of a European site may only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as transposed into Irish legislation. Objective EM03 To ensure that proposed plans and programmes comply with the requirements of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, as transposed into Irish law under national legislation.*
- **EM05:** *To implement the provisions of EU and National legislation and other relevant legislative requirements on protecting and improving surface and ground water quality, air quality and climate, and on reducing adverse noise and light nuisance, as appropriate and in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders in the interests of the protection of the environment, public health and the sustainable development of the county.*

Consideration: An EIAR has been submitted with the Application. This assesses potential significant adverse impacts on species adaptation or migrations, or on natural habitat connectivity in Volume II, Chapters 6 Coastal Processes, 7 Marine Water and Sediment Quality, 9 Benthic, Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology, 10 Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology, 11 Marine Mammals, 12 Offshore Ornithology and 13 Offshore Bats.

A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of these Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored - In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors. alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives.

While it has been concluded that there are not expected to be significant effects to migrating bats, the assessment currently shows a potential significant effect from collision and barotrauma to foraging bat species within the Array Area during the operational and maintenance phase. This conclusion is however, based on a highly precautionary approach and the assumption that the ecological conditions within the Array Area once construction of the Wind

Turbine Generators (WTGs) is complete will change significantly to what is being assessed as the baseline and bat activity recorded during pre-construction surveys may not reflect activity levels post-construction. Therefore, understanding bat activity around operational WTGs and quantifying mortality is essential in determining whether the Proposed Development gives rise to a significant effect to foraging bats and whether mitigation is required and/or effective.

The Factored-in measures such as fewer turbines than originally considered and lower blade tip height above lowest astronomical tide (LAT) will reduce the likelihood of impacts.

It is unlikely the population abundance of the species will be adversely affected due to the Proposed Development, such that the populations long-term viability is ensured. The Proposed Development is also committed to participating in the 'East Coast Monitoring Group' (ECMG), to discuss and agree potential strategic monitoring initiatives in relation to offshore bats.

In light of the conclusions of the EIAR for all other biodiversity related topics (excluding Bats) no additional mitigation is required in relation to impacts on species adaptation or migration or natural native habitat connectivity. Potential adverse impacts on species adaptation or migration, or on natural native habitat connectivity have been avoided.

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. The NIS concludes that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites.

Taking account of the above, the conclusions within the EIAR and NIS, the overarching strategic and statutory policy support for the Proposed Development along with the need for it, and its associated public benefits, the Proposed Development complies with EM05.

Water Quality

- **WQ01:** *To protect existing and potential water resources for the county, in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/ EC), the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and any updated version, the Pollution Reduction Programmes for designated shellfish waters, the provisions of a Groundwater Protection Scheme for the county and any other protection plans for water supply sources, with an aim to improving all water quality.*
- **WQ05:** *To strive to achieve and maintain at least 'Good' status except where more stringent obligations are required, and no deterioration of status for all water bodies including protected areas, under the Marine Strategy Framework and its programme of measures, the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan.*
- **WQ08:** *To achieve compliance with the objectives and standards under which the individual protected areas have been established.*

- **WQ15:** *To ensure that development permitted would not negatively impact on water quality and quantity, including surface water, ground water, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands, estuarine waters, coastal and transitional waters.*

Consideration: 'Chapter 7 - Marine Water and Sediment Quality' of the EIAR considers the potential changes in marine water and sediment quality as a result of the Proposed Development during the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. Chapter 7 concludes that following the implementation of factored in measures, including an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) and Marine Pollution Contingency Plan (MPCP), the significance of effect for this impact has been assessed as imperceptible for the wider marine environment and not significant on designated coastal, transitional, and bathing waters for all phases of the Proposed Development. Therefore, it is considered that the Proposed Development complies with objectives WQ01, WQ05, WQ08 and WQ15.

Air Quality

- **AQ01:** *To have regard to the Air Quality Standards Regulation 2011 (S.I. No. 180 of 2011) when assessing planning applications for development which may have effects on air quality.*
- **AQ04:** *To require the submission of measures to prevent and reduce dust and airborne particulate emissions for activities that may have a negative effect on air quality.*

Consideration: Chapter 20 of the EIAR assesses the potential impacts of the Proposed Development with respect to air quality and climate. Chapter 20 concludes that there will be a slight adverse effect (which is not deemed significant in EIA terms) during the construction and decommissioning phases and a major beneficial effect (significant in EIA terms) during the operational phase of the Proposed Development. Chapter 20 also confirms that there will be a net beneficial impact to climate arising from the Proposed Development on a local, national and global basis during the construction, operational and maintenance or decommissioning phases. An EMP is also submitted with the Application to ensure that the construction and decommissioning phases will meet relevant construction and operational standards. Although Air Quality Standards Regulation 2011 (S.I. No. 180 of 2011) is no longer in force, the assessment carried out at Chapter 20 of the EIAR is compliant with the relevant legislation and guidance, thereby enabling the relevant authority to carry out the requisite assessment. As such, the Proposed Development is consistent with the overall objective of AQ01 and AQ04.

Noise

- **N01:** *To promote the pro-active management of noise where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life and support the aims of the Environmental Noise Regulations through national planning guidance and Noise Actions Plans.*

- **N02:** *To have regard to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acts 1992 and 2003 and the Environmental Protection Agency Act (Noise) Regulations 1994 when assessing planning applications.*
- **N06:** *To ensure new development does not cause an unacceptable increase in noise levels affecting noise sensitive properties. Proposals for new development with the potential to create excessive noise will be required to be accompanied by a construction and/or operation management plan to control such emissions.*
- **N08:** *To require activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors. The provision of a noise audit may be required where appropriate.*
- **N12:** *To ensure that future developments are designed and constructed in accordance with best practice to minimise noise disturbances through good acoustic design.*

Consideration: The EIAR submitted with the Application confirms that the Proposed Development will not result in significant effects with respect to noise. A Construction Noise Management Plan is submitted along with the Application. Please refer to the EIAR for further details, particularly 'Chapter 8 - Airborne Noise', 'Chapter 11 - Marine Mammals', 'Appendix 8.1 - Airborne Noise Technical Report', 'Appendix 11.2 - Underwater Noise Assessment' and 'Appendix 25.8 - Construction Noise Management Plan'. The Proposed Development therefore complies with N06, N08 and N12. N01 and N02 relate to local authority actions but the Proposed Development is aligned with these objectives insofar as it minimises its potential noise impacts.

External Lighting

- **EL01:** *To require developments providing external lighting to clearly demonstrate that the lighting scheme is the minimum needed for security and working purposes.*
- **EL02:** *To ensure that external lighting and lighting schemes are designed so that light spillage is minimised thereby protecting the amenities of nearby properties and wildlife, including protected species.*

Consideration: In compliance with EL01, the Proposed Development will include the minimum amount of lighting required to ensure security and safe working/operation conditions as well as for navigation purposes in accordance with the relevant standards/guidance.

In compliance with EL02, the impact of the proposed lighting on wildlife, including protected species, has been assessed in the EIAR, which confirms that adverse significant effects will be avoided.

However, it is noted that 'Chapter 17 - Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' of Volume II of the EIAR assesses the nighttime impact of the proposed aviation lighting. The EIAR identifies significant effects with respect to

visual receptors experiencing views of nighttime lighting at three of the four representative viewpoints assessed.

The proposed lighting is required for safety/warning purposes to comply with relevant Irish Aviation Authority requirements. A Lighting and Marking Plan (LMP) is also submitted with the Application (see Appendix 25.6 of Volume III of the EIAR). The LMP has been informed by Irish Lights and will be in compliance with the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) G1162 (IALA, 2021).

The layout of WTGs and Offshore Substation Platforms (OSPs) have been designed in such a way as to minimise the impacts on Seascape, Landscape, Visual Impacts Assessment (SLVIA) where possible. White aviation lights will be fully cut off so that practically no light will be emitted below the horizon to minimise the amount of light spillage to protect the amenities of nearby properties in accordance with EL02.

Taking account of the above, the conclusions within the EIAR, the overarching strategic and statutory policy support for the Proposed Development along with the need for it, and its associated public benefits, the Proposed Development complies with EL01 and EL02.

Landscape and Green Infrastructure

9.74 Chapter 11 of the WXCDP sets out the spatial framework and objectives with respect to landscape and green infrastructure.

9.75 The overarching goal of this Chapter is to *‘protect the inherent beauty of our landscape and to promote and enable appreciation and enjoyment of the County’s landscapes and to protect, restore and enhance the County’s green infrastructure and biodiversity for the benefit of all.’*

9.76 The WXCDP advises that the landscape strategy is:

- *To protect the inherent characteristics and quality of our landscape both in their own right and for the economic benefits derived from them.*
- *To sustain the natural and cultural heritage of our landscapes while respecting that it is a changing landscape.*
- *To ensure that development is respectful and appropriate to its landscape context.*
- *To promote enjoyment and appreciation of our landscapes.*
- *To protect the elements of our landscapes which perform important functions such as regulating floods, carbon sinks, green infrastructure and ecosystem services.*

9.77 Importantly, the Plan recognises the fact that *‘...all landscapes are living and changing, and therefore in principle a development on such a route would not necessarily be*

prohibited’, however, the Plan also notes that ‘...development, where permitted, should not hinder or obstruct these views and prospects, should not have significant negative impacts either individually or cumulatively and should be designed and located to minimise their impact’.

9.78 This Chapter confirms support for ‘...appropriate renewable energy developments in appropriate landscapes that will assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.’

9.79 The following landscape objectives are of note with respect to the assessment of the Proposed Development, and have been considered in its siting and design:

- **L01:** *To have regard to the Landscape Character Units and their assigned Landscape Sensitivity, the Draft Landscape and Landscape Assessment-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2000) and any updated versions of these guidelines published during the lifetime of the Plan, and any National Landscape Character Assessment prepared when assessing planning applications or when carrying out local authority own development.*
- **L04:** *To require all developments to be appropriately sited, designed and landscaped having regard to their setting in the landscape, ensure that any potential adverse visual impacts are minimised and that natural features and characteristics of the site are retained.*
- **L06:** *To ensure that developments are not unduly visually obtrusive in the landscape, in particular, in or adjacent to the Upland, River Valley, Coastal or Distinctive Landscape Character Units.*
- **L11:** *To protect views worthy of protection, including views to and from the sea, rivers, landscape features, mountains, tourism sites and landmark structures such as bridges and urban settlements from inappropriate development that by virtue of design, scale, character or cumulative impact would block or detract from such views.*
- **L16:** *To require Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Reports to be submitted for developments which may have a significant negative impact on the landscape.*

Consideration: A Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA) has been undertaken for the Proposed Development. All the identified Landscape impacts; Seascape impacts; Landscape designation impacts; Visual impacts within the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development have been assessed for potential impact of the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development.

The SLVIA concludes that moderate to major significant effects have been predicted to occur for all viewpoints that were assessed for each phase of the Proposed Development. 15 of the viewpoints were predicted to have moderate to major effects with 10 of those having significant effects. Major to profound and significant effects were predicted at seven viewpoints, which were those viewpoints in closest proximity to the Proposed Development.

The SLVIA concludes that although the Proposed Development extends the influence of the wind farm characteristics of the seascape beyond the existing ABWP1 and results in some significant effects on the character and views from the coast, in close proximity only, there is scope for the Proposed Development to be accommodated in this location without unacceptable effects on seascape, landscape character and visual amenity.

The SLVIA also concludes that the Proposed Development would not result in the key characteristics of the surrounding area being affected to such a degree that it would unacceptably dominate the wider seascape and landscape character and it would remain characterised locally as a 'seascape with wind farm' as it is at presently with the influence of the existing ABWP1.

Taking account of the overarching strategic and statutory policy support for the Proposed Development along with the associated benefits, it is considered that the Proposed Development complies with the WXCDP's overall goal, strategy and objectives L01, L04, L06, L11, L16 with respect to landscape.

Chapter 12 - Coastal Zone Management & Marine Spatial Planning

- 9.80 Chapter 12 of the WXCDP sets out the spatial planning framework for future development in the county's coastal areas.
- 9.81 The Plan states that *'Our coastal areas are home to vibrant coastal communities, attractive coastal settlements, coastal landscapes and seascapes of intrinsic natural amenity value and a diverse range of coastal habitats, some of which are of international and national importance protected by conservation designations.'*
- 9.82 It recognises that *'These areas are also home to a variety of land uses including ports, harbours, fishing and aquaculture, tourism, leisure and amenity all of which make a valuable economic contribution to local communities and the county.'* However, the Plan advises that *'...these areas are facing many challenges with competing demands on limited resources. The pressures include vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, residential and holiday home development, balancing the demands of tourism with the need to protect the tourism product and protecting our coastal natural and cultural heritage.'*
- 9.83 The sea is identified as a *'...very important asset for the county and region, offering significant economic potential, particularly, in the areas of fishing and aquaculture, transport, shipping, tourism and offshore energy production'.*
- 9.84 Section 12.2 of the WXCDP confirms that Wexford County Council will *'Support appropriate renewable energy developments that will assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including appropriate infrastructure to facilitate offshore renewable energy development in appropriate locations.'*
- Coastal Zone Management Spatial Strategy**
- 9.85 The WXCDP advises that the *'...policies and objectives of this chapter refer to the entire coastal area of our County. It includes the foreshore and the areas within any of our coastal towns and villages. It will also include the new nearshore once defined. The area to which these policies apply are not defined on a map'.*

- 9.86 The overarching goal for the coastal zone and maritime area is *'...to ensure that it is protected and managed to balance social, economic and environmental interests while allowing these areas to be used in a planned and sustainable manner.'*
- 9.87 The WXCDP sets out a number of ways the overarching goal will be achieved including *'Implementing and managing the land/sea interactions and facilitating development which is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, in the maritime area in accordance with the draft NMPF'* and *'Maximising the economic potential of the coastal and maritime areas and its resources in a sustainable manner.'*
- 9.88 The following 'Coastal Zone Management Strategic Objectives' are of note with respect to the assessment of the Proposed Development, and have been considered in its siting and design:
- **CZM01:** *To ensure the sustainable development of the county's coastal areas and the maritime area for the long term benefit of coastal communities and the economic well-being of these areas and the county whilst protecting and enhancing environmental quality and managing and restoring biodiversity.*
 - **CZM03:** *To maximise the economic development potential of the county's coastal and maritime areas subject to compliance with the objectives of the County Development Plan with regard to the location of economic development, the protection of the scenic amenity and views associated with coastal areas and the maritime area which is crucial to the tourism industry, the protection of the amenity, livelihood and cultural well-being of coastal communities, the protection and restoration of coastal features, habitats and species, compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria and the proper planning and sustainable development of these areas.*
 - **CZM11:** *To support the sustainable growth and development of the maritime area and the maritime economy in accordance with the objectives of this chapter and the relevant objectives in Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy, Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy, Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy, Chapter 11 Landscape and Green Infrastructure, Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation and Volume 10 Energy Strategy as referred to in Table 12-1 and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.*
 - **CZM14:** *To support development in the coastal zone and maritime area that will facilitate a transition to a low carbon economy such as carbon capture and storage and renewable energy developments including offshore tidal and wind energy subject to compliance with Objective CZM46 and the proper planning and sustainable development of these areas.*

Consideration: The Proposed Development, by its very nature, i.e. a new renewable wind energy development, complies with the objectives CZM01, CZM03, CZM11 and CZM14 as it will: facilitate a transition to a low carbon economy; ensure the sustainable development of the county's coastal areas and the maritime area; and maximise the economic development potential of the county's coastal and maritime areas. It is further noted that CZM14 makes

specific reference to supporting offshore wind energy. Please also note the assessment undertaken in this Report in relation to the Chapters 6, 9, 11 and 13 and Volume 10 of the WXCDP.

Managing the Coastal Zone and Maritime Area

- 9.89 This Section of Chapter 12 sets out objectives relating to the coastal zone and the maritime area that need to be considered in all developments. The WXCDP advises that development proposals will be required to demonstrate compliance with these objectives, where relevant.
- 9.90 This Section of the WXCDP confirms that *‘Offshore renewable energy has a key role to play in the transformation to a clean, low carbon system. It also minimises the amount of energy that has to be generated on land’* and that the Council will support offshore renewable energy developments.
- 9.91 The following ‘Managing the Coastal Zone and Maritime Area General Objectives’ are of note with respect to the assessment of the Proposed Development, and have been considered in its siting and design:

- ***CZM21:*** *To support proposals for new development or activities in coastal and maritime areas that enhance or promote social benefits for the local communities, and where considered necessary an applicant will be required to demonstrate that adverse impacts on local communities will be avoided, mitigated or minimised appropriately.*

Consideration: The Proposed Development is an offshore wind park, and while its purpose is to supply renewable energy to the community of Ireland, it does not constitute a ‘community development’ as defined in the WXCDP. Notwithstanding, it is noted that a community benefit fund of €3m per annum will be provided as part of the Proposed Development which is an important social benefit. Furthermore, the EIAR assesses the impacts of the Proposed Development on the community factors such as population, economy, tourism, human health (e.g. see Chapter 21 - Population and Human Health). The EIAR confirms that significant effects will be avoided/mitigated. Therefore, the Proposed Development complies with CZM21.

- ***CZM28:*** *To support the development of updated national modelling of coastal erosion and in the absence of such adopt a precautionary approach to development in the coastal area.*

Consideration: ‘Chapter 6 - Coastal Processes’ of the EIAR undertakes a detailed assessment with respect to this environmental factor. Indeed, Chapter 6 considers a wide range of potential changes to ‘Coastal Processes’, including short-term sediment disturbance due to construction activities and the potential for changes to the coast and sandbank systems, arising from the blockage of waves and tides. Chapter 6 concludes, using a precautionary assessment approach, that for all receptor groups, the level of effect significance is either Negligible or Low for all phases of development (see Table 6.40 and Table 6.41 of Chapter 6 of the EIAR). Accordingly, all of the potential effects to Coastal Process

receptors are therefore considered Not Significant in EIA terms. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development complies with CZM28.

- ***CZM40:*** *To protect the environmental quality of our coastal and maritime areas by ensuring that new developments do not detract from water quality and ensuring that wastewater treatment and non-point sources are appropriately located.*

Consideration: ‘Chapter 7 - Marine Water and Sediment Quality’ of the EIAR considers the potential changes in marine water and sediment quality as a result of the Proposed Development during the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. Chapter 7 concludes that following the implementation of factored-in measures, including an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) and Marine Pollution Contingency Plan (MPCP), the significance of effect for this impact has been assessed as imperceptible for the wider marine environment and not significant on designated coastal, transitional, and bathing waters for all phases of the Proposed Development. Therefore, it is considered that the Proposed Development complies with CZM40.

- ***CZM41:*** *To apply an ecosystem approach to planning in the coastal and maritime areas to ensure the protection of biodiversity habitats and species and marine protected areas to ensure that development or activity in the coastal zone or maritime area does not give rise to displacement or disturbance of species, or does not adversely impact on coastal habitats, species and features such as wetlands and vegetated dunes which play an important role in flood relief and in protecting from coastal erosion, and are important in their own right.*

Consideration: Refer to the section of the Report below which reviews and assesses compliance of the Proposed Development against ‘Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation’. Refer also to the NIS and the following Chapters of the EIAR: ‘Chapter 6 - Coastal Processes’; ‘Chapter 9 - Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology’; ‘Chapter 10 - Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology’; ‘Chapter 11 - Marine Mammals’; ‘Chapter 12 - Offshore Ornithology’ and ‘Chapter 13 - Offshore Bats’. On the basis of that assessment and the conclusions of the NIS and EIAR, it is considered that the Proposed Development complies with CZM41.

- ***CZM42:*** *To protect heritage assets in the coastal zone and maritime area including underwater heritage in accordance with Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation and Volume 5 Record of Protected Structures and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.*

Consideration: ‘Chapter 18 - Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage’ of the EIAR provides a detailed analysis of the Proposed Development with respect to marine archaeology and cultural heritage.

Chapter 18 concludes that there will be no significant effects with respect to marine archaeology or cultural heritage arising from the Proposed Development

during the Construction, Operational and Maintenance or Decommissioning phases.

However, the EIAR notes that there will be a significant cumulative effect arising from the Proposed Development alongside other projects/plans, such as Codling Wind Park and Dublin Array, for indirect impact on the setting of terrestrial cultural heritage assets during the Construction and Operational and Maintenance phases.

It is noted that the cultural assets identified and considered in the EIAR are located between 6.8 km and 40 km from the Array Area.

‘Appendix 18.2 - Cultural Heritage Visual Impact Assessment Report’ of the EIAR provides an assessment of the degree to which settings and views from recorded cultural heritage sites may be affected by the Proposed Development, based on the 60km ‘Zone of Theoretical Visibility’ (ZTV) identified in Volume II, Chapter 17: Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

The Cultural Heritage Visual Impact Assessment Report’ concludes that the presence of the Proposed Development will not detract from the ability to understand and appreciate the cultural heritage assets.

Taking account of the above, the overarching strategic and statutory policy support for the Proposed Development along with the need, and associated public benefits, the Proposed Development complies with CZM42.

- ***CZM44: To protect water quality in our coastal and maritime areas and to ensure that development proposals would not result in adverse impacts on water quality in order to comply with objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the associated National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021, the EU Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC) and associated Pollution Reduction Programme, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive.***

Consideration: ‘Chapter 7 - Marine Water and Sediment Quality’ of the EIAR considers the potential changes in marine water and sediment quality as a result of the Proposed Development during the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. Chapter 7 concludes that following the implementation of factored in measures, including an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) and Marine Pollution Contingency Plan (MPCP), the significance of effect for this impact has been assessed as imperceptible for the wider marine environment and not significant on designated coastal, transitional, and bathing waters for all phases of the Proposed Development.

A WFD compliance assessment has also been undertaken (see Appendix 7.1 of Volume III of the EIAR) to consider the potential effects of the Proposed Development and ensure that the proposed activities will not cause or contribute to the deterioration of waterbodies status under the WFD or jeopardise the potential for water bodies to achieve 'Good' status.

The conclusions reached through the WFD assessment are also applicable for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The WFD assessment confirms that the activities associated with the Proposed Development are not considered to hinder the achievement of 'Good Environmental Status', as prescribed under the water quality policies. The Proposed Development will not result in a deterioration of the current status of the Southwestern Irish Sea - Brittas Bay (HA 10) or Southwestern Irish Sea - Killiney Bay (HA 10) coastal water bodies, nor jeopardise the attainment of 'Good' status.

The WFD assessment also concludes that the cumulative impacts of the Proposed Development with other projects are not anticipated to result in the deterioration of current status, nor jeopardise attainment of 'Good' status for the Southwestern Irish Sea - Brittas Bay (HA 10) or Southwestern Irish Sea - Killiney Bay (HA 10) coastal water bodies. Therefore, the Proposed Development complies with CZM44.

- **CZM45:** *To maintain, conserve and restore marine ecosystems in existing and future designated Marine Protected Areas in order to achieve or maintain good environmental status of the maritime area.*

Consideration: Refer to the section of the Report below which reviews and assesses compliance of the Proposed Development against 'Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation'. On the basis of that assessment, it is considered that the Proposed Development complies with CZM45.

- **CZM51:** *To support, within the context of the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPA) and its successors, the development of Ireland's offshore renewable energy potential, including domestic and international grid connectivity enhancements subject to compliance with the objectives of this County Development Plan, the protection of the scenic amenity and coastal views associated with coastal areas and the marine area which are crucial to the tourism industry, the protection of the amenity, livelihood and cultural well-being of coastal communities, the protection of coastal features, habitats and species and compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal.*

Consideration: This objective supports the Proposed Development, and it is noted that compliance with the objectives and components referred to in CZM51 is confirmed within the assessment on each of the respective WXCDP Chapters in this section of the Report.

Heritage and Conservation

- 9.92 Chapter 13 of the WXCDP sets out objectives to ensure the protection of the natural, built and cultural heritage of the county and provides the spatial framework and objectives for its protection either directly by the Council, or by supporting its protection through other responsible agencies.
- 9.93 The overarching goal of this Chapter is to '*protect, conserve and where appropriate enhance the natural, built and cultural heritage of the county and to encourage all to appreciate, enjoy, understand and care for our heritage to help enhance and secure it for future generations.*'

- 9.94 The following ‘Heritage and Conservation’ objectives are of note with respect to the assessment of the Proposed Development, and have been considered in its siting and design:

Natural Heritage

- **NH01:** *To ensure the protection of all designated ecological sites (as detailed in Section 13.2.1 to 13.2.11) in relevant Local Area Plans and in the assessment of planning applications and promote the restoration of sites where required.*
- **NH02:** *To protect and enhance the rich qualities of our natural heritage in a manner that is appropriate to its significance.*
- **NH03:** *To promote biodiversity protection, restoration, and habitat connectivity both within protected areas and in the landscape through promoting the integration of green infrastructure and ecosystem services, including landscape, heritage and biodiversity and management of invasive and alien species in the plan making and development management processes.*
- **NH05:** *In assessing planning applications located in and/or in proximity to Natura 2000 sites, whether hydraulically linked or otherwise linked or dependent (such as feeding, roosting or nesting grounds) to a designated site, regard shall be had to the detailed conservation management plans and data reports prepared by NPWS, where available, to the identified features of interest of the site, the identified conservation objectives to ensure the maintenance or restoration of the features of interests to favourable conservation status, the NPWS Article 17 current conservation status reports, the underlying site specific conditions, and the known threats to achieving the conservation objectives of the site.*
- **NH08:** *To ensure that any plan/project and any associated works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment to ensure there are no likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied. Where a plan/project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site or there is uncertainty with regard to effects, it shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. The plan/project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where, in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan/project is deemed by the competent authority imperative for reasons of overriding public interest.*
- **NH09:** *To ensure the protection of areas, sites and species and ecological networks/corridors of local biodiversity value outside the designated sites throughout the county and to require an ecological assessment to accompany development proposals likely to impact on such areas or species.*
- **NH19:** *To implement the requirements of EU Regulations 1143/2014 on the Prevention and Management of the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Alien Species and Regulation 49 and 50 of the EU (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011(S.I. No. 477/2011), as amended.*

- **NH25:** *To ensure that proposals for development do not lead to the spread or introduction of invasive species. If developments are proposed on sites where invasive species are or were previously present, the applicants will be required to submit a control and management program for the particular invasive species carried out by a competent and appropriately qualified expert as part of the planning process.*

Consideration: An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. This assesses potential significant adverse impacts on species adaptation or migrations, or on natural habitat connectivity in Volume II, Chapters 6 Coastal Processes, 7 Marine Water and Sediment Quality, 9 Benthic, Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology, 10 Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology, 11 Marine Mammals, 12 Offshore Ornithology and 13 Offshore Bats.

A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of these Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored - In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors, alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives.

While it has been concluded that there are not expected to be significant effects to migrating bats, the assessment currently shows a potential significant effect from collision and barotrauma to foraging bat species within the Array Area during the operational and maintenance phase. This conclusion is however, based on a highly precautionary approach and the assumption that the ecological conditions within the Array Area once construction of the Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs) is complete will change significantly to what is being assessed as the baseline and bat activity recorded during pre-construction surveys may not reflect activity levels post-construction. Therefore, understanding bat activity around operational WTGs and quantifying mortality is essential in determining whether the Proposed Development gives rise to a significant effect to foraging bats and whether mitigation is required and/or effective.

The Factored-in measures such as fewer turbines than originally considered and lower blade tip height above lowest astronomical tide (LAT) will reduce the likelihood of impacts.

It is unlikely the population abundance of the species will be adversely affected due to the Proposed Development, such that the population's long-term viability will be ensured. The Proposed Development is also committed to participating in the 'East Coast Monitoring Group' (ECMG), to discuss and agree potential strategic monitoring initiatives in relation to offshore bats.

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. The NIS concludes that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites.

In light of the conclusions of the EIAR for all other biodiversity related topics (excluding Bats) no additional mitigation is required in relation to impacts on species adaptation or migration or natural native habitat connectivity. Potential adverse impacts on species adaptation or migration, or on natural native habitat connectivity have been avoided.

Therefore, taking account of the conclusions within the EIAR and NIS, the overarching strategic and statutory policy support for the Proposed Development along with the need for it, and its associated public benefits, the Proposed Development complies with NH01, NH02, NH03, NH05, NH08, NH09, NH19 and NH25.

Archaeological and Cultural Heritage

- ***AH01:*** To conserve and protect archaeological sites, monuments (including their settings), underwater archaeology and objects including those listed or scheduled for inclusion on the Record of Monuments and Places and/or the Register of Historic Monuments or newly discovered sub-surface archaeological remains.
- ***AH03:*** To protect the heritage of groups of important archaeological sites and monuments, inclusive of their contextual setting and interpretation, in the operation of development management.
- ***AH04:*** To fully consider the protection of archaeological heritage when undertaking, approving or authorising development. In considering such protection the Council will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Service and the principles set out in Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, 1999).
- ***AH05:*** To require an archaeological assessment and/or investigation by qualified persons for development that may, due to its size, location or nature, have a significant effect upon archaeological heritage and to take appropriate measures to safeguard this archaeological heritage. In all such cases the Planning Authority shall consult with the National Monuments Service in the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- ***AH06:*** To promote a presumption in favour of preservation in-situ of archaeological remains and settings when dealing with proposals for development that would impact upon archaeological sites and/or features. Where preservation in-situ is not possible the Council will consider preservation by record in appropriate circumstances.
- ***CH02:*** To safeguard the cultural heritage of the county and facilitate the expansion and development of appropriate facilities suitably located adjacent to points of interest subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

Consideration: ‘Chapter 18 - Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage’ of the EIAR provides a detailed analysis of the Proposed Development with respect to marine archaeology and cultural heritage.

Chapter 18 concludes that there will be no significant effects with respect to marine archaeology or cultural heritage arising from the Proposed Development during the Construction, Operational and Maintenance or Decommissioning phases.

However, the EIAR notes that there will be a significant cumulative effect arising from the Proposed Development alongside other projects/plans, such as Codling Wind Park and Dublin Array, for indirect impact on the setting of terrestrial cultural heritage assets during the Construction and Operational and Maintenance phases.

It is noted that the cultural assets identified and considered in the EIAR are located between 6.8 km and 40 km from the Array Area.

‘Appendix 18.2 - Cultural Heritage Visual Impact Assessment Report’ of the EIAR provides an assessment of the degree to which settings and views from recorded cultural heritage sites may be affected by the Proposed Development, based on the 60 km ‘Zone of Theoretical Visibility’ (ZTV) identified in Volume II, Chapter 17: Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

The Cultural Heritage Visual Impact Assessment Report concludes that the presence of the Proposed Development will not detract from the ability to understand and appreciate the cultural heritage assets.

Taking account of the above, the overarching strategic and statutory policy support for the Proposed Development along with the need for, and associated public benefits of, the Proposed Development complies with objectives AH01, AH03, AH04, AH05, AH06 and CH02.

Energy Strategy

- 9.95 Volume 10 of the WXCDP contains the County ‘Energy Strategy’ which sets out renewable energy resource targets for County Wexford by 2030 to contribute to both national renewable energy targets and the transition to a low carbon economy.
- 9.96 The Strategy notes that the ‘...*revised Renewables Directive establishes a binding renewable energy target for the EU for 2030 of at least 32% with a clause for a possible upwards revision by 2023*’. The Strategy sets out 2 scenarios in terms of how Wexford can help Ireland achieve these binding targets. Based on the analysis contained in the Strategy, it is stated that ‘...*the generation of renewable energy will increase by 200% up to 2030*’.
- 9.97 The Proposed Development will assist Wexford County Council in growing the quantum of renewable energy and help it to achieve the binding European/National targets and the targets outlined in the Energy Strategy.
- 9.98 Section 7.1.3 of the Strategy relates specifically to Offshore Wind Farms and states that ‘*Offshore wind is the most technically advanced of the marine renewables*’. It also notes that ‘*The advantage of offshore over onshore wind farms is that larger and more efficient turbines can be used at sea and wind availability is typically higher*’.

9.99 However, the Strategy acknowledges that *‘...offshore wind presents challenges in terms of construction, grid connection, planning and visual/environmental impacts, requiring the input of a wide range of stakeholders. Careful consideration needs to be given to the impact of such developments on the seascape, designated sites and other marine activities.’*

9.100 Despite these challenges, the Strategy advises that *‘Offshore wind energy is expected to contribute to the national 2030 renewable energy targets’* and cites the Climate Action Plan 2019 which stated that *‘...achieving the national 70% renewable electricity target by 2030 will include a number of measures, including the development of at least 3.5 GW of offshore renewable energy of mainly offshore wind’*.

9.101 Consequently, the Energy Strategy sets out the following objective.

- **ES24:** *To support the development of offshore renewable energy in accordance with the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, 2014), the Climate Action Plan 2019 and any Maritime Spatial Plan that is adopted for Ireland.*

Consideration: The Proposed Development complies with objective ES24 as it will support the development of offshore renewable energy in accordance with the documents cited by delivering a new offshore renewable energy park.

9.102 Having assessed the Proposed Development against the relevant objectives of the WxCDP and taking account of the need for, and benefits of, the Proposed Development, outlined in this Planning Report, it is considered that the Proposed Development complies with the overarching Vision, Strategy, Core Strategy, Goals and Objectives of the WxCDP.

10. Conclusion

- 10.0 This Planning Report sets out the strategic European, national, regional and local policies/ strategies/ frameworks/ plans for renewable energy projects in Ireland and demonstrates significant strategic policy support for renewable energy projects, such as ABWP2, which is a significant material consideration in the assessment of the Application.
- 10.1 The Proposed Development, if approved, would be able to export power to the Irish grid from 2029 at a capacity of 800MW which is 16% of the CAP24 national target for offshore wind of at least 5GW Offshore Wind by 2030 and would also make a significant contribution to achieving legally binding targets for the reduction GHG emissions.
- 10.2 The Proposed Development will assist in achieving the following ambitions/objectives/outcomes of the relevant national, regional and local planning policy context:
- transitioning to a competitive, low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy.
 - ensuring a more distributed, renewables-focused energy generation system.
 - harnessing the considerable offshore potential from wind energy sources.
 - increasing the quantum of our electricity needs from renewable sources.
 - increasing renewable energy deployment in line with EU targets.
 - progressively develop Ireland's offshore renewable energy potential; and
 - strengthen Ireland's energy security and resilience.
- 10.3 The Proposed Development will deliver significant economic benefits during the construction, operational and maintenance and decommissioning phases, with an estimated spend of €4.9 billion over the lifetime of the Project. This investment will deliver the following benefits to Ireland, the south east regional area and Counties Wicklow and Wexford:
- Create 1,720 annualised Full Time Equivalent (aFTE) jobs during the development and construction phase, 430 of which will be in the regional area.
 - Employment that will generate €111 million Gross Value Added (GVA) for the Irish economy.
 - Employment generating €25 million (GVA) for the regional economy.
 - Generate €16 million for the Irish economy of which €11 million will benefit the regional economies during the operational phase of the development; and

- Generate over €500 million GVA over the 36.5 year operational lifespan of the development.
- 10.4 This Planning Report assesses the Proposed Development against the relevant national, regional and local statutory planning policy, including the National Marine Planning Framework (see **Appendix 1** for a detailed assessment of compliance). It is noted that whilst the Proposed Development will result in significant effects on a small number of factors assessed in the accompanying EIAR, these have been mitigated where possible.
- 10.5 Taking account of the overarching strategic and statutory policy support for the Proposed Development along with the need for, and associated public benefits of, the Proposed Development, it is considered that it complies with relevant planning policy and is acceptable in respect of its likely effects on the environment and its likely consequences for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Appendix 1: NMPF Compliance Table prepared by GoBe Consultants

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
Environmental – Ocean Health Policy 1	<p>Compliance with NMPF policies relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity • Non-Indigenous Species • Water Quality • Sea-floor and Water Column Integrity • Marine litter • Underwater Noise <p>should include demonstration of contribution to the relevant MSFD targets identified.</p>	<p>Compliance with NMPF policies has been embedded into the design of the Proposed Development in so far as possible . In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors, alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives. Where this has not been possible, additional mitigation and monitoring measures are proposed in order to comply with certain NMPF policies.</p> <p>The MSFD targets are of relevance to and have been considered in the following chapters of the EIAR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity targets (including food webs and sea-floor integrity) are addressed in the following chapters: Volume II, Chapters 6 Coastal Processes, 7 Marine Water and Sediment Quality, 9 Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology, 10 Fish and Shellfish, 11 Marine Mammals, 12 Offshore Ornithology and 13 Offshore Bats. No significant effects have been concluded in the EIAR for the relevant biodiversity targets. • Commercial fish & shellfish targets are addressed in Volume II, Chapter 14 Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture. No significant effects have been concluded in the EIAR for the relevant commercial fish and shellfish targets. • Eutrophication targets are addressed in the following chapter: Volume II, Chapter 7 Marine Water and Sediment Quality. No source-receptor-pathways are identified for a deterioration of dissolved oxygen, phytoplankton blooms or eutrophication, as a result of the proposed construction activities. • Contaminants targets are addressed in the following chapter: Volume II, Chapter 7, Marine Water and Sediment Quality. No significant effects have been concluded in the EIAR for the relevant contaminant's targets. • In respect of Marine Litter targets a Resource and Waste Management Plan has been submitted with the Application (Volume III, Appendix 25.1 Annex 4). • Non-indigenous species targets are addressed in the following chapter: Volume II, Chapters 9 Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology. An Invasive Non-Indigenous Species Management Plan has been submitted with the Application (Volume III, Appendix 25.4). No significant effects have been concluded in the EIAR for the relevant Non-indigenous species targets. • Hydrographical conditions targets are addressed in the following Chapters of the EIAR: Volume II, Chapters 6 Coastal Processes and 7 Marine Water and Sediment Quality. No significant effects have been concluded in the EIAR for the relevant hydrographical condition's targets. • Energy (including underwater noise) targets have been addressed in the following chapters of the EIAR: Volume II, Chapters 9 Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology, 10 Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology and 11 Marine Mammals. An Underwater Noise Assessment Report has also been submitted with the Application (Volume III, Appendix 11.1). No significant effects have been concluded in the EIAR for the relevant energy targets.
Biodiversity Policy 1	<p>Proposals incorporating features that enhance or facilitate species adaptation or migration, or natural native habitat connectivity will be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority, and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. Proposals that may have significant adverse impacts on species adaptation or migration, or on natural native habitat connectivity must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid, b) minimise, or c) mitigate <p>significant adverse impacts on species adaptation or migration, or on natural native habitat connectivity.</p>	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. This assesses potential significant adverse impacts on species adaptation or migrations, or on natural habitat connectivity in Volume II, Chapters 6 Coastal Processes, 7 Marine Water and Sediment Quality, 9 Benthic, Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology, 10 Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology, 11 Marine Mammals, 12 Offshore Ornithology and 13 Offshore Bats.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of these Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored -In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors. alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives.</p> <p>While it has been concluded that there are not expected to be significant effects to migrating bats, the assessment currently shows a potential significant effect from collision and barotrauma to foraging bat species within the Array Area during the operational and maintenance phase with no proposed mitigation This conclusion is however, based on a highly precautionary approach and the assumption that the ecological conditions within the Array Area once construction of the Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs) is complete will change significantly to what is being assessed as the baseline and bat activity recorded during pre-construction surveys may not reflect activity levels post-construction. Therefore, understanding bat activity around</p>

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		<p>operational WTGs and quantifying mortality is essential in determining whether the Proposed Development gives rise to a significant effect to foraging bats and whether mitigation is required and/or effective. Factored-in measures such as fewer turbines than originally considered and lower blade tip height above lowest astronomical tide (LAT) will reduce the likelihood of impacts.</p> <p>It is unlikely the population abundance of the species will be adversely affected due to the Proposed Development, such that the populations long-term viability is ensured. The Proposed Development is also committed to participating in the 'East Coast Monitoring Group' (ECMG), to discuss and agree potential strategic monitoring initiatives in relation to offshore bats.</p> <p>In light of the conclusions of the EIAR for all other biodiversity related topics (excluding Bats) no additional 'paragraph (c)' mitigation is required in relation to impacts on species adaptation or migration or natural native habitat connectivity. Potential adverse impacts on species adaptation or migration, or on natural native habitat connectivity have been avoided.</p> <p>A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. The NIS concludes that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites.</p> <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Biodiversity Policy 1.</p>
Biodiversity Policy 2	Proposals that protect, maintain, restore and enhance the distribution and net extent of important habitats and distribution of important species will be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority, and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. Proposals must avoid significant reduction in the distribution and net extent of important habitats and other habitats that important species depend on, including avoidance of activity that may result in disturbance or displacement of habitats.	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. This assesses potential significant disturbance or displacement of habitats in Volume II, Chapters 6 Coastal Processes, 7 Marine Water and Sediment Quality, 9 Benthic, Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology, 10 Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology, 11 Marine Mammals and 12 Offshore Ornithology.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-In measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored in Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors. alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives.</p> <p>In light of the conclusions of the EIAR, the Proposed Development will avoid significant reduction in the distribution and net extent of important habitats and other habitats that important species depend on, including avoidance of activity that may result in disturbance or displacement of habitats.</p>
Biodiversity Policy 3	<p>Where marine or coastal natural capital assets are recognised by Government:</p> <p>Proposals must seek to enhance marine or coastal natural capital assets where possible.</p> <p>Proposals must demonstrate that they will in order of preference, and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid, b) minimise, or c) mitigate significant adverse impacts on marine or coastal natural capital assets, or d) if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts on marine or coastal natural capital assets proposals must set out the reasons for proceeding. 	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. This assesses potential significant adverse impacts on marine or coastal natural capital assets in Volume II, Chapters 6 Coastal Processes, 7 Marine Water and Sediment Quality, 9 Benthic, Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology, 10 Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology, 11 Marine Mammals and 12 Offshore Ornithology.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-In measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored in Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors. alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives.</p> <p>In light of the conclusions of the EIAR, no 'paragraph (c)' mitigation is required in relation to impacts on marine or coastal natural capital assets. Potential significant adverse impacts on marine or coastal natural capital assets have been avoided.</p> <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Biodiversity Policy 3.</p>

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Biodiversity Policy 4	<p>Proposals must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid, b) minimise, or c) mitigate <p>significant disturbance to, or displacement of, highly mobile species.</p>	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. This assesses disturbance to or displacement of highly mobile species in Volume II, Chapters 10 Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology, 11 Marine Mammals, 12 Offshore Ornithology and 13 Offshore Bats.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-In measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors, alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives.</p> <p>While it has been concluded that there are not expected to be significant effects to migrating bats, the assessment currently shows a potential significant effect from collision and barotrauma to foraging bat species within the Array Area during the operational and maintenance phase with no proposed mitigation. This conclusion is however, based on a highly precautionary approach and the assumption that the ecological conditions within the Array Area once construction of the Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs) is complete will change significantly to what is being assessed as the baseline and bat activity recorded during pre-construction surveys may not reflect activity levels post-construction. Therefore, understanding bat activity around operational WTGs and quantifying mortality is essential in determining whether the Proposed Development gives rise to a significant effect to foraging bats and whether mitigation is required and/or effective. Factored-in measures such as fewer turbines than originally considered and lower blade tip height above lowest astronomical tide (LAT) will reduce the likelihood of impacts.</p> <p>It is unlikely the population abundance of the species will be adversely affected due to the Proposed Development, such that the populations long-term viability is ensured. The Proposed Development is also committed to participating in the 'East Coast Monitoring Group' (ECMG), to discuss and agree potential strategic monitoring initiatives in relation to offshore bats.</p> <p>In light of the conclusions of the EIAR, no 'paragraph (c)' mitigation is required in relation to disturbance or displacement of highly mobile species. Potential significant disturbance to, or displacement of, highly mobile species, have been avoided.</p> <p>An NIS has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. The NIS concludes that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites and therefore no adverse effects on any highly mobile species supported by such European sites.</p> <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Biodiversity Policy 4.</p>
Protected Marine Sites Policy 1	<p>Proposals must demonstrate that they can be implemented without adverse effects on the integrity of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Where adverse effects from proposals remain following mitigation, in line with Habitats Directive Article 6(3), consent for the proposals cannot be granted unless the prerequisites set by Article 6(4) are met.</p>	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. SACs and SPAs have been considered in Volume II, Chapters 6 Coastal Processes, 7 Marine Water and Sediment Quality, 9 Benthic, Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology, 10 Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology, 11 Marine Mammals and 12 Offshore Ornithology.</p> <p>In addition to above, an NIS has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. The NIS concludes that following the implementation of impact avoidance and the application of mitigation, there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Protected Marine Sites Policy 1.</p>
Protected Marine Sites Policy 2	<p>Proposals supporting the objectives of protected marine sites should be supported and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be informed by appropriate guidance must demonstrate that they are in accordance with legal requirements, including statutory advice 	<p>An NIS has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. The NIS has been informed by appropriate guidance and demonstrates accordance with legal requirements, including statutory advice provided by authorities relevant to protected marine sites.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Protected Marine Sites Policy 2.</p>

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
	provided by authorities relevant to protected marine sites	
Protected Marine Sites Policy 3	<p>Proposals that enhance a protected marine site's ability to adapt to climate change, enhancing the resilience of the protected site, should be supported and:</p> <p>be informed by appropriate guidance</p> <p>must demonstrate that they are in accordance with legal requirements, including statutory advice provided by authorities relevant to protected marine sites.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm and is not located in a protected marine site. Although this policy is not directly applicable to the Proposed Development, it will make a significant contribution to the Government's target of achieving at least 5GW of offshore wind by 2030. The Proposed Development will contribute to reducing emissions from fossil fuels resulting in a positive impact on climate change and therefore a positive indirect impact on protected sites.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Protected Marine Sites Policy 3.</p>
Protected Marine Sites Policy 4	<p>Until the ecological coherence of the network of protected marine sites is examined and understood, proposals should identify, by review of best available evidence (including consultation with the competent authority with responsibility for designating such areas as required), the features, under consideration at the time the application is made, that may be required to develop and further establish the network. Based upon identified features that may be required to develop and further establish the network, proposals should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> avoid, minimise, or mitigate significant impacts on features that may be required to develop and further establish the network, or if it is not possible to mitigate significant impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding 	<p>An NIS has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. The NIS concludes that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites.</p> <p>The Developer has engaged with National Parks and Wildlife Service (the competent authority for the designation and management of protected sites) over the course of the Application.</p> <p>Environmental data contained in the Government's Ecological Sensitivity Analysis of Irish Sea has also been reviewed within the EIAR.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is not located within a protected site. All SACs, SPAs and candidate sites as of May 2024 have been assessed in the NIS.</p> <p>In light of the conclusions of the EIAR no 'paragraph (c)'mitigation is required in respect of the Proposed Development. Potential adverse impacts on features that may be required to develop and further establish the network connectivity have been avoided. The Proposed Development therefore complies with Protected Marine Sites Policy 4.</p>
Non-Indigenous Species Policy 1	<p>Reducing the risk of the introduction and / or spread of non-indigenous species is a requirement of all proposals. Proposals must demonstrate a risk management approach to prevent the introduction of and / or spread of non-indigenous species, particularly when:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> moving equipment, boats or livestock (for example fish or shellfish) from one water body to another, introducing structures suitable for settlement of non-indigenous species, or the spread of non-indigenous species known to exist in the area of the proposal. 	<p>The EIAR has assessed the risk of introduction and spread of invasive and non-native species (Volume II, Chapter 9 Benthic, Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology).</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 2:5 Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring.</p> <p>An Invasive Non-Indigenous Species Management Plan has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development (Volume III, Appendix 25.4).</p> <p>As demonstrated in the EIAR, the Proposed Development will demonstrate a risk management approach to prevent the introduction and or/spread of non-indigenous species.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Non-Indigenous Species Policy 1.</p>
Water Quality Policy 1	<p>Proposals that may have significant adverse impacts upon water quality, including upon habitats and species beneficial to water quality, must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> avoid, 	<p>The EIAR has assessed potential significant adverse effects on water quality (Volume II, Chapter 7 Marine Water and Sediment Quality, Volume III, Appendix 7.1 Water Framework Directive).</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) minimise, or c) mitigate significant adverse impacts 	<p>Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring.</p> <p>In light of the conclusions of the EIAR, no ‘paragraph (c)’ mitigation is required in respect of the Proposed Development. Potential adverse impacts on water quality and the habitats and species beneficial to water quality have been avoided.</p> <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Water Quality Policy 1.</p>
Water Quality Policy 2	Proposals delivering improvements to water quality, or enhancing habitats and species, which can be of benefit to water quality, should be supported.	The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm, this policy is therefore not of relevance to this Application.
Sea-floor and Water Column Integrity Policy 1	<p>Proposals that incorporate measures to support the resilience of marine habitats will be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. Proposals which may have significant adverse impacts on marine, particularly deep sea, habitats must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid, b) minimise, or c) mitigate significant adverse impacts on marine habitats, or d) if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts on marine habitats must set out the reasons for proceeding. 	<p>The EIAR has assessed potential significant adverse effects marine habitats (Volume II, Chapters 6 Coastal Processes, 9 Benthic, Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology and 10 Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology).</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors. alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives.</p> <p>In light of the conclusions of the EIAR, no ‘paragraph (c)’ mitigation is required in respect of the Proposed Development. Potential adverse impacts on marine habitats been avoided.</p> <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Sea-floor and Water Column Integrity Policy 1.</p>
Sea-floor and Water Column Integrity Policy 2	<p>Proposals, including those that increase access to the maritime area, must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid, b) minimise, or c) mitigate <p>adverse impacts on important habitats and species.</p>	<p>The EIAR has assessed potential adverse impacts on important habitats and species in Volume II, Chapters 6 Coastal Processes, 9 Benthic, Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology , 10 Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology, 11 Marine Mammals and 12 Offshore Ornithology.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors. alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives</p> <p>In light of the conclusions of the EIAR, no ‘paragraph (c)’ mitigation is required in respect of the Proposed Development. Potential adverse impacts on important habitats and species have been avoided.</p> <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Sea-floor and Water Column Integrity Policy 2.</p>
Sea-floor and Water Column Integrity Policy 3	Proposals that protect, maintain, restore and enhance coastal habitats for ecosystem functioning and provision of ecosystem services will be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority, and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. Proposals must take account of the space required for coastal habitats, for ecosystem functioning and provision of ecosystem services, and demonstrate that they will, in	<p>The EIAR has assessed loss of coastal habitat in Volume II, Chapter 6 Coastal Processes</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25 Factored in Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors. alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives</p>

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	<p>order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid, b) minimise , or c) mitigate <p>for net loss of coastal habitat.</p>	<p>In light of the conclusions of the EIAR, no ‘paragraph (c)’ mitigation is required in respect of the Proposed Development, net loss of coastal habitats has been avoided.</p> <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Sea-floor and Water Column Integrity Policy 3.</p>
Marine Litter Policy 1	<p>Proposals that facilitate waste re-use or recycling, or that reduce marine and coastal litter will be supported, where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. Proposals that could potentially increase the amount of litter that is discharged into the maritime area, either intentionally or accidentally, must include measures (such as development of a waste management plan) to, in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid, b) minimise, or c) mitigate <p>the litter.</p> <p>Demonstration of these measures must provide satisfactory evidence that the proposal is able to manage all waste without creation of litter.</p>	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>In compliance with Marine Litter Policy 1, a Resource and Waste Management Plan has been submitted with the Application (Volume III, Appendix 25.1: Environmental Management Plan, Annex 4).</p> <p>The Resource and Waste Management Plan provides the information necessary to guide and support the compliant and efficient management of wastes associated with the Proposed Development. That information includes estimating the types and quantities of wastes to arise and establishing the controls and procedures that will be applied in managing the wastes in compliance with the relevant regulations, policy and guidance.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Marine Litter Policy 1.</p>
Underwater Noise Policy 1	<p>Proposals must take account of spatial distribution, temporal extent, and levels of impulsive and / or continuous sound (underwater noise) that may be generated and the potential for significant adverse impacts on marine fauna.</p> <p>Where the potential for significant impact on marine fauna from underwater noise is identified, a Noise Assessment Statement must be prepared by the proposer of development. The findings of the Noise Assessment Statement should demonstrably inform determination(s) related to the activity proposed and the carrying out of the activity itself.</p> <p>The content of the Noise Assessment Statement should be relevant to the particular circumstances and must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of compliance with applicable legal requirements, such as necessary assessment of proposals likely to have underwater noise implications, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate Assessment (AA); • Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); • Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA); • Specific response to ‘strict protection’ requirements of Article 12 of the Habitats Directive in relation to certain species listed in Annex IV of the Directive; and • Species protected under the Wildlife Acts. 	<p>The EIAR has assessed the spatial distribution, temporal extent and levels of impulsive and/or continuous sound (underwater noise) in Volume II, Chapters 9 Benthic, Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology , 10 Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology and 11 Marine Mammals.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring.</p> <p>In light of the conclusions of the EIAR, no ‘paragraph (c)’ mitigation is required in respect of the Proposed Development. Potential adverse impacts on marine fauna due to the spatial distribution, temporal extent and levels of impulsive and/or continuous sound have been avoided. The Proposed Development therefore complies with Underwater Noise Policy 1.</p> <p>The assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development in the EIAR and NIS took account of spatial distribution, temporal extent, and levels of impulsive and / or continuous sound (underwater noise) that may be generated and the potential for significant adverse impacts on marine fauna. This included a Noise Assessment Statement (Volume III, Appendix 11.2) The assessments concluded that there will be no significant adverse effects from underwater noise. The Proposed Development therefore complies with Underwater Noise Policy 1.</p>

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An assessment of the potential impact of the development or use on the affected species in terms of environmental sustainability; Demonstration that significant adverse impacts on marine fauna resulting from underwater noise will, in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoided, b) minimised, or c) mitigated, or d) if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts on marine fauna, the reasons for proceeding must be set out. <p>This policy should be included as part of statutory environmental assessments where such assessments require consideration of underwater noise.</p>	
Air Quality Policy 1	<p>Proposals that support a reduction in air pollution should be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority, and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. Proposals must demonstrate consideration of their contribution to air pollution, both direct and cumulative.</p>	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Potential effects on air quality from the Proposed Development have been scoped out of the EIAR with the following justification:</p> <p>The assessment of potential impacts on air quality typically addresses the potential for impacts from dust and traffic/plant emissions on nearby sensitive receptors. As the Proposed Development relates to the construction of offshore infrastructure only there is no potential for dust impacts. Furthermore, due to the distance between the Array Area and the shore (minimum 6 km), any potential impacts that might arise from emissions associated with plant or marine vessels are unlikely to give rise to likely significant effects due to the dispersal of emissions. There is unlikely to be potential for significant air quality impacts during the operational and maintenance or decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. Therefore, the assessment of potential effects on air quality are not included in the scope of the EIAR.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will make a significant contribution to the Government's target of achieving at least 5GW of offshore wind by 2030. The Proposed Development will contribute to reducing emissions from fossil fuels resulting in a positive impact indirect effect on air pollution.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Air Quality Policy 1.</p>
Air Quality Policy 2	<p>Where proposals are likely to result in or facilitate an increase in air pollution, proposals should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference in accordance with legal requirements and standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid, b) minimise, or c) mitigate <p>air pollution.</p>	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Potential effects on air quality from the Proposed Development have been scoped out of the EIAR with the following justification:</p> <p>The assessment of potential impacts on air quality typically addresses the potential for impacts from dust and traffic/plant emissions on nearby sensitive receptors. As the Proposed Development relates to the construction of offshore infrastructure only there is no potential for dust impacts. Furthermore, due to the distance between the Array Area and the shore (minimum 6 km), any potential impacts that might arise from emissions associated with plant or marine vessels are unlikely to give rise to likely significant effects due to the dispersal of emissions. There is unlikely to be potential for significant air quality impacts during the operational and maintenance or decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. Therefore, the assessment of potential effects on air quality are not included in the scope of the EIAR.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will make a significant contribution to the Government's target of achieving at least 5GW of offshore wind by 2030. The Proposed Development will contribute to reducing emissions from fossil fuels resulting in a positive impact indirect effect on air pollution.</p>

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
		Air Quality Policy 2 is therefore not applicable to the Proposed Development.
Climate Change Policy 1	<p>Proposals should demonstrate how they: avoid contribution to adverse changes to physical features of the coast; enhance, restore or recreate habitats that provide a flood defence or carbon sequestration ecosystem services where possible. Where potential significant adverse impacts upon habitats that provide a flood defence or carbon sequestration ecosystem services are identified, these must be in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> avoided, minimised, mitigated, if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, the reasons for proceeding must be set out. <p>This policy should be included as part of statutory environmental assessments where such assessments are required.</p>	<p>The EIAR has assessed adverse changes to physical features of the coast and habitats that provide a flood defence or carbon sequestration ecosystem service in Volume II, Chapters 6 Coastal Processes and 9 Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors, alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives</p> <p>In light of the conclusions of the EIAR, the Proposed Development will avoid contribution to adverse changes to physical features of the coast and habitats that provide a flood defence or carbon sequestration ecosystem service.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Climate Change Policy 1.</p>
Climate Change Policy 2	<p>For the lifetime of the proposal, the following climate change matters must be demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> estimation of likely generation of greenhouse gas emissions, both direct and indirect; measures to support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions where possible; likely impact of climate change effects upon the proposal from factors including but not limited to: sea level rise, ocean acidification, changing weather patterns; measures incorporated to enable adaptation climate change effects; likely impact upon climate change adaptation measures adopted in the coastal area relevant to the proposal and/or adaptation measures adopted by adjacent activities; where likely impact upon climate change adaptation measures in the coastal area relevant to the proposal and/or adaptation measures adopted by adjacent activities is identified, these impacts must be in order of preference and in accordance with legal requirements: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> avoided, minimised, mitigated, if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, the reasons for proceeding must be set out. 	<p>The contributions to and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from the Proposed Development have been assessed in Volume II, Chapter 20 Air Quality and Climate.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm. Over its anticipated 36.5 year operational lifespan, the Proposed Development will result in a beneficial impact on greenhouse gas emissions. The Proposed Development will more than offset the emissions produced during construction and decommissioning. Based upon the predicted energy generation during its operational and maintenance phase, it will take the project approximately 71 - 74 months from the start of operation, to 'pay back' the predicted total carbon generation for construction, operation, and decommissioning. This is based upon the predicted Republic of Ireland grid intensity over the operational period. It would then deliver annual savings for each of the following years of operation.</p> <p>Predicted sea level rise has been factored into the design of the offshore infrastructure. Good engineering practice has been employed on the design, giving an appropriate safety margin where required (which will take into account increased storm frequency and intensity).</p> <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Climate Change Policy 2.</p>
Co-existence Policy 1	<p>Proposals should demonstrate that they have considered how to optimise the use of space, including through consideration of opportunities for co-existence and co-operation with other activities, enhancing other activities where appropriate. If proposals cannot avoid significant adverse impacts</p>	<p>The EIAR has assessed co-existence and co-operation with other activities in Volume II, 14 Commercial Fisheries, 15 Shipping & Navigation, 16 Civil and Military Aviation, 19 Infrastructure and Other Users and 21 Population and Human Health.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed</p>

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
	<p>(including displacement) on other activities they must, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) minimise significant adverse impacts, b) mitigate significant adverse impacts, or c) if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. 	<p>Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors. alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives.</p> <p>For Commercial Fisheries, specifically loss of grounds or restricted access to fishing grounds within the Cable Corridor and Working Area paragraph (b) mitigation has been applied in the form of cooperation agreements and associated payments, secured through the implementation of the Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS, Volume III, Appendix 25.3). In addition, SER operate within the agreed Seafood ORE Working Group Communications Protocol.</p> <p>The Developer commits to following Guidance on Dispute Resolution developed by the Seafood / ORE Working Group (2024). This includes use of the Dispute Resolution Mechanism (DRM) defined by the Seafood / ORE Working Group (2024) as a voluntary mediation process, which offers a timely and cost-effective means of resolving disputes.</p> <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Co-existence Policy 1.</p>
Infrastructure Policy 1	<p>Appropriate land-based infrastructure which facilitates marine activity (and vice versa) should be supported. Proposals for appropriate infrastructure that facilitates the diversification or regeneration of marine industries should be supported.</p>	<p>During the lifetime of ABWP2 , it is expected that €4.8billion will be spent on the development, construction, operation and decommissioning of the wind farm.</p> <p>During the development and construction phase, it is expected that ABWP2 will support 430 annualised fulltime equivalent (aFTEs) jobs across Wicklow and Wexford and 1,720 aFTEs in Ireland.</p> <p>During its operation phase it is expected that ABWP2 will support 60 jobs in Wicklow and Wexford per annum and 100 jobs in Ireland per annum.</p> <p>ABWP2 will indirectly facilitate the diversification or regeneration of marine industries and therefore complies with Infrastructure Policy 1.</p>
Access Policy 1	<p>Proposals, including in relation to tourism and recreation, should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid, b) minimise, or c) mitigate <p>significant adverse impacts on public access.</p>	<p>The EIAR has assessed impacts on tourism and recreation in Volume II, Chapter 21 Population and Human Health.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors. alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives</p> <p>In light of the conclusions of the EIAR, no ‘paragraph (c)’ mitigation is required in respect of the Proposed Development. Significant adverse impacts on public access are avoided. The Proposed Development therefore complies with Access Policy 1.</p>
Access Policy 2	<p>Proposals demonstrating appropriate enhanced and inclusive public access to and within the maritime area, and that consider the future provision of services for tourism and recreation activities, should be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority, and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development is not a tourism development; therefore Access Policy 2 is not of relevance.</p>
Employment Policy 1	<p>Proposals should demonstrate contribution to a net increase in marine related employment in Ireland, particularly where the proposals are:</p>	<p>A Socioeconomic Impact Report has been submitted with the Application (Volume III, Appendix 21.1).</p> <p>During the lifetime of ABWP2 it is expected that €4.8billion will be spent on the development, construction, operation and decommissioning of the wind farm.</p>

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
	<p>in line with the skills available in Irish coastal communities adjacent to the maritime area; improve the sustainable use of natural resources; diversify skills to enable employment in emerging industries.</p>	<p>During the development and construction phase it is expected that ABWP2 will support 430 annualised fulltime equivalent (aFTEs) jobs across Wicklow and Wexford and 1,720 aFTEs in Ireland.</p> <p>During its operation phase it is expected that ABWP2 will support 60 jobs in Wicklow and Wexford per annum and 100 jobs in Ireland per annum.</p> <p>ABWP2 will contribute to a net increase in marine related employment in Wicklow and Wexford and therefore complies with Employment Policy 1.</p>
Heritage Assets Policy 1	<p>Proposals that demonstrate they will contribute to enhancing the significance of heritage assets will be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority, and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. Proposals unable to contribute to enhancing the significance of heritage assets will only be supported if they demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid, b) minimise, or c) mitigate <p>harm to the significance of heritage assets, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) if it is not possible, to mitigate harm, then the public benefits for proceeding with the proposal must outweigh the harm to the significance of the heritage assets. (see definition of 'Public Benefits' in the Glossary) 	<p>The EIAR has assessed impacts heritage assets in Volume II, Chapter 18 Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring.</p> <p>It should be noted that the EIAR for the Proposed Development has concluded a significant effect on indirect impact on the setting of terrestrial cultural heritage sites within the cumulative impact assessment, which cannot be mitigated.</p> <p>To comply Heritage Assets Policy 1, the public benefits for proceeding withthe Proposed Development is provided in Volume II, Chapter 1: Introduction.</p> <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Heritage Assets Policy 1.</p>
Rural Coastal and Island Communities Policy 1	<p>Proposals contributing to access, communications, energy self-sufficiency or sustainability of rural coastal and / or island communities should be supported. Proposals should ideally be inclusive of continual education, skills development and training in marine sectors, thus improving the sustainability, social benefits and economic resilience of rural and island communities.</p>	<p>A Socioeconomic Impact Report has been submitted with the Application (Volume III, Appendix 21.1).</p> <p>During the lifetime of the ABWP2 it is expected that €4.8billion will be spent on the development, construction, operation and decommissioning of the wind farm.</p> <p>During the development and construction phase it is expected that ABWP2 will support 430 annualised fulltime equivalent (aFTEs) jobs across Wicklow and Wexford and 1,720 aFTEs in Ireland.</p> <p>During its operation phase it is expected that ABWP2 will support 60 jobs in Wicklow and Wexford per annum and 100 jobs in Ireland per annum.</p> <p>ABWP2 was not successful in the first round of the Government's Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (ORESS) scheme, however, SPL remains fully committed to delivering the Project and to providing a community benefit fund. Without an ORESS support contract, ABWP2 is not in a position to deliver a community fund in line with the ORESS scheme. However, SPL is pleased to be able to commit to providing a fund of €3m per annum for the duration of an alternative route to market (corporate power purchase agreement) contract (Volume III, Appendix 3.1, Consultation Report, Annex A).</p> <p>ABWP2 will indirectly facilitate continual education, skills development and training in marine sectors, thus improving the sustainability, social benefits and economic resilience of rural communities.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Rural Coastal and Island Communities Policy 1.</p>
Seascape and Landscape Policy 1	<p>Proposals should demonstrate how the likely significant impacts of a development on the seascape and landscape of an area have been considered.</p>	<p>The EIAR has assessed impacts on the seascape and landscape in Volume II, Chapter 17 SLVIA.</p>

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
	<p>Proposals will only be supported if they demonstrate that they, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid, b) minimise, or c) mitigate <p>significant adverse impacts on the seascape and landscape of the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) If it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals must set out the reasons for proceeding. <p>This policy should be included as part of statutory environmental assessments.</p>	<p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors. alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives</p> <p>The layout of WTGs and Offshore Substation Platforms (OSPs) have been designed in such a way as to minimise the impacts on Seascape, Landscape, Visual Impacts Assessment (SLVIA) where possible. White aviation lights will be fully cut off so that practically no light will be emitted below the horizontal. However, despite the use of factored in measures significant adverse impacts on the seascape and landscape of the area cannot be mitigated.</p> <p>To comply with Seascape and Landscape Policy 1, the public benefits of proceeding with the Proposed Development is provided in Volume II, Chapter 1: Introduction.</p> <p>In following the mitigation hierarchy and setting out the public benefits of proceeding with the Proposed Development, the Proposed Development complies with this Seascape and Landscape Policy 1.</p>
Social Benefits Policy 1	<p>Proposals that enhance or promote social benefits should be supported. Proposals unable to enhance or promote social benefits should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) minimise, or b) mitigate <p>significant adverse impacts which result in the displacement of other existing or authorised (but yet to be implemented) activities that generate social benefits.</p>	<p>During the lifetime of ABWP2 it is expected that €4.8billion will be spent on the development, construction, operation and decommissioning of the wind farm.</p> <p>During the development and construction phase it is expected that ABWP2 will support 430 annualised fulltime equivalent (aFTEs) jobs across Wicklow and Wexford and 1,720 aFTEs in Ireland.</p> <p>During its operation phase it is expected that ABWP2 will support 60 jobs in Wicklow and Wexford per annum and 100 jobs in Ireland per annum.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring. In order to minimise significant adverse impacts on receptors. alternative locations and designs for the Proposed Development were considered and these are presented in Volume II, Chapter 3 Consideration of Alternatives</p> <p>Impacts on activities that generate social benefits have been assessed in the EIAR in Volume II, Chapter 15: Shipping & Navigation, Chapter 19: Infrastructure and Other Users, and Chapter 21: Population and Human Health. The Proposed Development will not have adverse impacts activities that generate social benefits.</p> <p>ABWP2 was not successful in the first round of the Government's ORESS scheme, however, SPL remains fully committed to delivering the project and to providing a community benefit fund. Without an ORESS support contract, ABWP2 is not in a position to deliver a community fund in line with the ORESS scheme. However, SPL is pleased to be able to commit to providing a fund of €3m per annum for the duration of an alternative route to market (corporate power purchase agreement) contract.</p> <p>ABWP2 and the community benefit fund aligns with Social Benefits Policy 1.</p>
Social Benefits Policy 2	<p>Proposals that increase the understanding and enjoyment of the marine environment (including its natural, historic and social value), or that promote conservation management and increased education and skills, should be supported.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development is for an offshore wind farm. As such, Social Benefits Policy 2 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.</p>
Transboundary Policy 1	<p>Proposals that have transboundary impacts beyond the maritime area, on either the terrestrial environment or neighbouring international jurisdictions, must show evidence of consultation with</p>	<p>Transboundary stakeholders were consulted on the Proposed Development through the 2020 and 2023 scoping report consultation (Volume III, Appendix 3.1: Consultation Report).</p>

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
	the relevant public authorities, including terrestrial planning authorities and other country authorities. Proposals should consider transboundary impacts throughout the lifetime of the proposed activity.	<p>A screening for potential transboundary impacts has been undertaken for the Proposed Development (Volume III, Appendix 3.3: Transboundary Impact Screening). Where potential transboundary impacts have been screened in, an assessment of these impacts has been undertaken. The EIAR concludes that there are no significant transboundary effects arising from the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Transboundary Policy 1.</p>
Aquaculture Policy 1	<p>Proposals for sustainable development of aquaculture that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate use of innovative approaches, and / or • contribute to diversification of species being grown in a given locality, particularly proposals applying a multi-trophic approach, and / or • enhances resilience to the effects of climate change <p>should be supported.</p>	The Proposed Development is for an offshore wind farm. As such, Aquaculture Policy 1 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Aquaculture Policy 2	<p>Non-aquaculture proposals in aquaculture production areas must demonstrate consideration of, and compatibility with, aquaculture production. Where compatibility is not possible, proposals must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid; b) minimise; c) mitigate <p>significant adverse impacts on aquaculture.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> d) If it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts upon aquaculture, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. 	<p>The EIAR has assessed impacts on aquaculture in Volume II, Chapter 14 Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is not located within an aquaculture production area and is 5.3km away from the nearest production site. The EIAR concludes that there will be no significant impacts on aquaculture. The Proposed Development therefore complies with Aquaculture Policy 2.</p>
Aquaculture Policy 3	Land-based coastal infrastructure that is critical to and supports development of aquaculture should be supported, in accordance with any legal requirements and provided environmental safeguards contained within authorisation processes are fully met	The Proposed Development is for an offshore wind farm. As such, Aquaculture Policy 3 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Defence and Security Policy 1	<p>Any proposal that has the potential to interfere with the performance by the Defence Forces of their security and non-security related tasks must be subject to consultation with the Defence Organisation. This includes potential interference with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety of navigation and access to naval facilities; • Firing, test or exercise areas; • Communication, and surveillance systems; • Fishery protection functions. <p>Proposals should only be supported where, having consulted with the Defence Organisation, they are satisfied that it will not result in unacceptable interference with the performance by the Defence Forces of their security and non-security related tasks.</p> <p>Any proposal will be subject to the relevant Environmental Assessments, as set out in the introduction to this NMPF.</p>	The Department of Defence has been consulted throughout the development of the Application (Volume II, Chapter 16 Civil and Military Aviation). Impacts on defence and security have been assessed in Volume II, Chapter 15: Shipping and Navigation and Volume II, Chapter 16: Aviation and Radar. No significant effects have been concluded on the receptors assessed and it can be concluded that the Proposed Development does not have any potential to interfere with the performance by the Defence Forces of their security and non-security related tasks.
Natural Gas Storage Policy 1	Subject to assessments required for the protection of the environment, and only where in keeping with the	The Proposed Development is for an offshore wind farm. As such, Natural Gas Policy 1 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
	outcome of the review of the security of energy supply of Ireland's electricity and natural gas systems (which is being carried out by Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications), natural gas storage proposals should be supported.	
ORE Policy 1	Proposals that assist the State in meeting the Government's offshore renewable energy targets, including the target of achieving 5GW of capacity in offshore wind by 2030 and proposals that maximise the long-term shift from use of fossil fuels to renewable electricity energy, in line with decarbonisation targets, should be supported. All proposals will be rigorously assessed to ensure compliance with environmental standards and seek to minimise impacts on the marine environment, marine ecology and other maritime users.	<p>The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm. The Proposed Development will make a direct contribution (16%) to the Government's target of achieving 5GW of capacity in offshore wind by 2030 and maximise the long-term shift from use of fossil fuels to renewable electricity energy, in line with decarbonisation targets. Volume II of the EIAR presents a rigorous assessment to ensure compliance with environmental standards. Through the implementation of Factored-in measures and additional mitigation for some impacts, impacts on the marine environment, marine ecology and other maritime users are minimised.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with ORE Policy 1.</p>
ORE Policy 2	Proposals must be consistent with national policy, including the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPA) and its successor. Relevant Projects designated pursuant to the Transition Protocol and those projects that can objectively enable delivery on the Government's 2030 targets will be prioritised for assessment under the new consenting regime. Into the future, areas designated for offshore energy development, under the Designated Marine Area Plan process set out in the Maritime Area Planning Bill, will underpin a planned approach to consenting (or development of our marine resources) (Note – see Appendix D on Spatial Designation Process).	<p>Volume II, Chapter 1 Introduction and Chapter 2 Policy and Legislation sets out how the Proposed Development complies with national policy including Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPA). The Proposed Development is included in the OREDPA Assessment Area 2 (East Coast South).</p> <p>The Proposed Development is a Phase 1 project under the Transition Protocol.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with ORE Policy 2.</p>
ORE Policy 3	<p>Any non-ORE proposals that are in or could affect sites held under a permission or that are subject to an ongoing permitting or consenting process for renewable energy generation (wind, wave or tidal) should demonstrate that they will in order of preference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> avoid, minimise, mitigate adverse impacts, or if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. <p>Applicants for non-ORE proposals in or affecting ORE sites should engage ORE developers in consultation during the pre-application processes as appropriate.</p>	The Proposed Development is for an offshore wind farm. As such, ORE Policy 3 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
ORE Policy 4	Decisions on ORE developments should be informed by consideration of space required for other activities of national importance described in the NMPF.	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development has been assessed alongside other activities of national importance through the cumulative impact assessments.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with ORE Policy 4.</p>
ORE Policy 5	Proposals for activity that may adversely impact ORE test projects by virtue of being within or adjacent to ORE test sites, or between site and landfall of ORE test projects that may adversely impact ORE test site	The Proposed Development is for an offshore wind farm and will not affect other ORE test projects. As such, ORE Policy 5 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
	projects, should demonstrate that they will in order of preference: a) avoid, b) minimise, c) mitigate adverse impacts.	
ORE Policy 6	Proposals for infrastructure enabling local use of excess energy generated from emerging marine technologies (wave, tidal, floating wind) should be supported.	The Proposed Development is a fixed bottom offshore wind farm. As such, ORE Policy 6 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
ORE Policy 7	Where potential for ports to contribute to ORE is identified, plans and policies related to this port must encourage development in such a way as to facilitate ORE and related supply chain activity.	ORE Policy 7 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
ORE Policy 8	Proposals for ORE must demonstrate consideration of existing cables passing through or adjacent to areas for development, making sure ability to repair and carry out cable-related remedial work is not significantly compromised. This consideration should be included as part of statutory environmental assessments where such assessments are required.	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>An assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development on the existing Arklow Bank Wind Park 1 infrastructure (which is surrounded by the Proposed Development) has been carried out in Volume II, Chapter 19 Infrastructure and Other Users. This assessment has concluded that remedial works for ABWP1 will not be significantly compromised by the Proposed Development. There are no other existing cables passing through or adjacent to areas for development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with ORE Policy 7.</p>
ORE Policy 9	A permission for ORE must be informed by inclusion of a visualisation assessment that supports conditions on any development in relation to design and layout. Where a development consent is applied for in an area already subject to permission, proposals must include a visualisation assessment to inform design and layout. Visualisation assessments should demonstrate consultation with communities that may be able to view the proposal, in addition to any other ORE development, which had received consent to proceed at a given site at the time the consent application is made, with the aim of minimising impact. Visualisation assessments will be informed by specific emerging guidelines (detailed in the actions set out in Annexes to this NMPF). Prior to specific guidelines being available, policy and best practice relating to visualisation assessment should be used. This consideration must be included as part of statutory environmental assessments where such assessment is required.	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A visual assessment has been undertaken as part of the EIAR in Volume II, Chapter 17 Seascape, Landscape and Impact Assessment. Visualisations have also been produced as part of the EIAR and to inform the visual assessment (Volume III, Appendices 17.3 and 17.4 SLVIA Visuals, Project Design Option One and 2, respectively).</p> <p>The visual assessment has been carried out using best practice guidance.</p> <p>The Developer has also engaged extensively with local and national stakeholders over the last number of years in preparation for submitting the Application (Volume III, Appendix 3.1: Consultation Report).</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with ORE Policy 9.</p>
ORE Policy 10	Opportunities for land-based, coastal infrastructure that is critical to and supports development of ORE should be prioritised in plans and policies, where possible.	The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm. As such, ORE Policy 10 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
ORE Policy 11	Where appropriate, proposals that enable the provision of emerging renewable energy technologies and associated supply chains will be supported.	The Proposed Development has received a design flexibility opinion from ABP. This flexibility will allow for the Proposed Development to avail of emerging WTG technology in advance of construction.
Petroleum Policy 1	Proposals in areas where petroleum activities or petroleum production infrastructure have already been approved, or where applications consistent with the Government's prohibition on new exploration activity are under consideration, should only be authorised where compatibility with the existing, authorised or proposed activity can be satisfactorily	The Proposed Development is for an offshore wind farm. The Proposed Development is not within or near any authorised or proposed petroleum activity sites. As such, Petroleum Policy 1 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
	<p>demonstrated or the proposal is clearly of strategic or national importance.</p> <p>Compatibility should be achieved, in order of preference, through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> avoiding, or minimising, or mitigating adverse impacts. If it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. 	
Petroleum Policy 2	<p>Proposals potentially affecting future potential activity in areas (blocks) subject to existing petroleum authorisations should avoid sterilisation of that area for future petroleum-related activity consistent with Government policy, and demonstrate how they, in order of preference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> avoid, or minimise, or mitigate potential adverse impacts on those activities. If it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. 	<p>The Proposed Development is for an offshore wind farm. The Proposed Development is not within or near any authorised or proposed petroleum activity sites. As such, Petroleum Policy 2 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.</p>
Transmission Policy 1	<p>Subject to the appropriate environmental assessments, electricity transmission proposals that maintain or improve the security and diversity of Ireland's energy supply should be supported, including interconnectors, relevant EU Projects of Common Interest (PCIs), and projects in receipt of relevant alternative EU priority energy infrastructure classification provided for by the EU TEN-E regulations.</p> <p>This should include development of the offshore transmission system and connection with the onshore transmission system necessary to meet the Government's target of 5 GW of offshore renewables by 2030, as well as development of associated transmission system / interconnector infrastructure for hybrid offshore projects, connecting offshore renewable energy installations with Ireland and one or more other electricity transmission systems.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm. The Proposed Development will make a direct contribution (16%) to the Government's target of achieving 5GW of capacity in offshore wind by 2030. As a source of domestic renewable energy, the Proposed Development will improve the security and diversity of Ireland's electricity supply.</p> <p>In May 2022, the Developer received planning approval for the onshore grid infrastructure (OGI) (Case Reference: 310090).</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Transmission Policy 1.</p>
Transmission Policy 2	<p>Proposals for activities that are in or could affect energy transmission proposals in sites held under a permission or that are subject to an ongoing permitting or consenting process for energy transmission proposals should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> avoid, minimise, mitigate adverse impacts, or if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. 	<p>The Proposed Development is for an offshore wind farm. The Proposed Development is not within or near any transmission sites that are subject to ongoing permission or consenting.</p> <p>An assessment of the Proposed Development's potential impact on an existing offshore wind farm which is surrounded by the Proposed Development (ABWP1) has been carried out in Volume II, Chapter 19 Infrastructure and Other Users. This assessment has concluded no significant adverse effects on the existing ABWP1 infrastructure.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Transmission Policy 2.</p>

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
Transmission Policy 3	Decisions on transmission developments should be informed by consideration of space required for other activities of national importance described in the NMPF.	The Proposed Development is for an offshore wind farm. The Proposed Development is not a transmission development. As such, Transmission Policy 3 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Transmission Policy 4	Where possible, opportunities for land-based, coastal infrastructure that is critical to and supports energy transmission should be prioritised in plans and policies. Designation of land-based zones for the purposes of co-ordination and integration with relevant Marine Plans must be considered, where appropriate.	The Proposed Development is for an offshore wind farm. The Proposed Development does not facilitate transmission development. Transmission Policy 4 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Transmission Policy 5	Proposals for construction or operation activities within one nautical mile of either of the two existing natural gas interconnector pipelines shall be avoided. If construction or operation activities are proposed to take place within one nautical mile of either of the two existing natural gas interconnector pipelines, the views of Gas Networks Ireland in relation to how such activities could impact the pipelines shall be taken into account and either appropriate mitigation measures put in place or the proposed activities altered. If construction or operation activities involve the crossing of either of the two existing natural gas interconnector pipelines by other pipelines or cables, the views of Gas Networks Ireland in relation to how such activities could impact the pipelines shall be taken into account and either appropriate mitigation measures be put in place or the proposed activities altered.	The Proposed Development is not located within one nautical mile of the either of the two existing natural gas interconnector pipelines. As such, Transmission Policy 5 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Transmission Policy 6	Subject to required assessments for the protection of the environment, and only where in keeping with the outcome of the review of the security of energy supply of Ireland's electricity and natural gas systems (which is being carried out by Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications), and not involving the importation of fracked gas, additional proposals for natural gas transmission/ import infrastructure should be supported.	The Proposed Development is for an offshore wind farm. As such, Transmission Policy 6 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Fisheries Policy 1	Proposals that may have significant adverse impacts on access for existing fishing activities, must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid, b) minimise, or c) mitigate such impacts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) If it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts on fishing activity, the public benefits for proceeding with the proposal that outweigh the significant adverse impacts on existing fishing activity must be demonstrated. 	<p>The EIAR has assessed potential significant adverse impacts on fishing activity in Volume II, Chapter 14 Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. A number of factored-in measures of relevance to Fisheries Policy 1 will be implemented including but not limited to, implementation of a Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS) (Volume III, Appendix 25.3) (which also provides for claim for loss or damage to gear), fisheries liaison (as set out in Volume III, Appendix 25.1: Environmental Management Plan (EMP), Cable Burial Risk Assessment (to be produced pre construction), Advisory safety zones and clearance distances (Volume III, Appendix 25.7: Vessel Management Plan (VMP)) and pre- and post-construction surveys.</p> <p>Through the implementation of the Factored-in measures the majority of impacts on existing fisheries have been minimised and paragraph c mitigation is not required in respect of the Proposed Development. One impact (Loss of grounds or restricted access to fishing grounds within the Cable Corridor and Working Area) requires additional mitigation (paragraph c), the proposed mitigation is cooperation agreements and associated payments.</p>

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
		<p>The Proposed Development will minimise and mitigate significant adverse impacts on access for existing fishing activities.</p> <p>As such, the Proposed Development complies with Fisheries Policy 1.</p>
Fisheries Policy 2	<p>Where significant impact upon fishing activity arising from any proposal is identified, a Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS) should be prepared by the proposer of development or other maritime area use, in consultation with local fishing interests and other interests as appropriate. All efforts should be made to agree the FMMS with those interests. Those interests should also undertake to engage with the proposer and provide best available, transparent and accurate information and data in a timely manner to help complete the FMMS. The FMMS should be drawn up as part of readying a proposal prior to submission, with measures identified to be considered in finalising conditions of any authorisations granted. Development of the strategy should be coordinated with other relevant assessments such as EIA where possible. The content of the Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS) should be relevant to the particular circumstances and could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An assessment of the potential impact of all stages of the development or other suggested use on the affected fishery or fisheries, both in socio-economic terms and in relation to environmental sustainability. This assessment should include consideration of any impact upon cultural identity within fishing communities, as well as identifying indirect / in-combination matters. • A recognition that the disruption to existing fishing opportunities / activity should be minimised as far as possible. • Demonstration of the public benefit(s) that outweigh the significant impacts identified. • Reasonable measures to mitigate any constraints which the proposed development or use may place on existing or proposed fishing activity. • Reasonable measures to mitigate any potential impacts on sustainability of fish stocks (e.g. impacts on spawning grounds or areas of fish or shellfish abundance) and any socio-economic impacts. <p>Where it does not prove possible to agree the FMMS with all interests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divergent views and the reasons for any divergence of views between the parties should be fully explained in the FMMS, and dissenting views should be given a platform within the said FMMS to make their case. • Where divergent views are identified, relevant public authorities should be engaged to identify 	<p>An FMMS has been submitted with the Application (Volume III, Appendix 25.3).</p> <p>In line with the requirements of the NMPF, industry standards and good practice, the FMMS has the following key primary functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that appropriate liaison channels with the fishing industry are established and that effective liaison is maintained throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development; and • To define appropriate management and mitigation measures to minimise potential impacts on fishing activities and facilitate co-existence throughout the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. <p>The Developer commits to following the Seafood / Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Working Group Summary guidance (Seafood/ORE Working Group, 2023), including the principles for engagement.</p> <p>The Developer commits to effective engagement built upon mutual respect, best endeavours to reach agreement and recognition of the importance of the seafood/fisheries sector.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Fisheries Policy 2.</p>

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
	informal and formal steps designed to enable proposal(s) to progress.	
Fisheries Policy 3	Proposals that enhance the sustainability of fisheries or support a sustainable fishing industry, including the industry's diversification and or enhanced resilience to the effects of climate change, should be supported provided they fully meet the environmental safeguards contained within authorisation processes.	The Proposed Development is not a proposal to enhance fisheries sustainability. As such, Fisheries Policy 3 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Fisheries Policy 4	Infrastructural proposals that enable access to fishing activities should be supported provided they fully meet the environmental safeguards contained within authorisation processes.	The Proposed Development is not a proposal to enhance access to fishing. As such, Fisheries Policy 4 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Fisheries Policy 5	<p>Proposals, regardless of the type of activity they relate to, enhancing essential fish habitat, including spawning, nursery and feeding grounds, and migratory routes should be supported. If proposals cannot enhance essential fish habitat, they must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> avoid; minimise; mitigate <p>significant adverse impact on essential fish habitat, including spawning, nursery and feeding grounds, and migration route</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> If it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impact on essential fish habitat, proposals must set out the reasons for proceeding 	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring.</p> <p>The impact of the Proposed Development on fish habitat, spawning, nursery and feeding grounds and migratory routes has been assessed in Volume II, Chapter 10: Fish, Shellfish and Sea Turtle Ecology.</p> <p>In light of the conclusions of the EIAR, no 'paragraph (c)' mitigation is required in respect of the Proposed Development. Potential adverse impacts on fish habitat, spawning, nursery and feeding grounds and migratory routes have been avoided. The Proposed Development therefore complies with Fisheries Policy 5.</p>
Fisheries Policy 6	<p>Ports and harbours should seek to engage with fishing and other relevant stakeholders at an early stage to discuss any changes in infrastructure that may affect them.</p> <p>Any port or harbour developments should take account of the needs of the dependent fishing fleets with a view to avoiding commercial harm where possible.</p> <p>Where a port or harbour has reached a minimum level of infrastructure required to support a viable fishing fleet, there should be a presumption in favour of maintaining this infrastructure, provided there is an ongoing requirement for it to remain in place and that it continues to be fit for purpose.</p>	The Proposed Development is not a port or harbour development. As such, Fisheries Policy 6 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Mineral Exploration and Mining Policy 1	Only proposals which are in line with national policy on mineral exploration and mining should be considered, provided they fully meet the environmental safeguards contained within the mineral exploration and mining consent processes.	The Proposed Development is not a proposal for mineral exploration or mining. As such, Mineral Exploration and Mining Policy 1 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 1	<p>To provide for shipping activity and freedom of navigation the following factors will be taken into account when reaching decisions regarding development and use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which the locational decision interferes with existing or planned routes used by shipping, access to ports and harbours and navigational safety. This includes commercial 	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Impacts on shipping, navigation, ports and anchorages are assessed in Volume II, Chapter 15: Shipping and Navigation. A Navigational Risk Assessment has been submitted with the Application (Volume III, Appendix 15.1).</p> <p>The following Factored-in Measures have been applied:</p>

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
	<p>anchorage and approaches to ports as well as key littoral and offshore routes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mandatory Navigation Risk Assessment; • Where interference is likely: whether reasonable alternatives can be identified; and • Where there are no reasonable alternatives: whether mitigation through measures adopted in accordance with the principles and procedures established by the International Maritime Organisation can be achieved at no significant cost to the shipping or ports sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of 'rolling'/temporary 500 m advisory safe passing distances surrounding the location of all proposed/fixed structures where work is being undertaken by a construction or maintenance vessel; • Use of 'rolling'/temporary 500 m advisory clearance distances around installation/maintenance vessels; • Use of 50 m advisory safe passing distances around all surface structures up until the point of commissioning; • Appropriate vessel health and safety including IMO conventions and HSE requirements; • Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA) undertaken pre-construction including consideration of under keel clearance and appropriate cable protection applied based upon the outcomes; • Charting of all structures associated with the Proposed Development on relevant nautical and electronic charts; • Compliance from all project vessels with Irish Law, international maritime regulations as adopted by the relevant flag state including the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs) (IMO, 1972/77) and International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) (IMO, 1974); • Consideration of MGN 654 (MCA, 2021) guidance with respect to WTG design and construction; • Creation and implementation of an Emergency Response Cooperation Plan (ERCoP) (Volume III, Appendix 25.5: Emergency Response Cooperation Plan); • Implementation of a buoyed construction/decommissioning area around the Array Area during the respective phases; • Lighting and marking in accordance with IALA Guidance G1162 (IALA, 2021) and Irish Lights requirements during both the construction and operational and maintenance phases (Volume III, Appendix 25.6: Lighting and Marking Plan); • Marine pollution contingency planning; • Marine coordination; • Creation and implementation of a Vessel Management Plan (VMP), including operational procedures such as the use of entry/exit points to manage the movement of project vessels (Volume III, Appendix 25.7: Vessel Management Plan); • Minimum WTG blade clearance above Mean High Water Spring (MHWS) of at least 22 m in line with UK MCA and RYA Guidance; • Circulation of information via Notice to Mariners (NtM) and other appropriate means including a Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO); Provision of self-help capability; • Use of a temporary guard vessel where justified by risk assessment, e.g. to protect unlit structures and/or unprotected cable prior to burial; • Vessel traffic monitoring by Automatic Identification System (AIS) during the construction phase; and • Any water depths reductions from subsea project infrastructure that of more than 5% referenced to chart datum will be consulted on with the MSO. <p>With the implementation of the Factored in measures, the Proposed Development will provide for shipping activity and freedom of navigation. The Proposed Development therefore complies with Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 1.</p>
<p>Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 2</p>	<p>Proposals that may have a significant impact upon current activity and future opportunity for expansion of port and harbour activities should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> avoid, minimise, or mitigate <p>significant adverse impacts, and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts on current activity and future opportunity for expansion of port and harbour activities, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. 	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Port access restrictions have been assessed Volume II, Chapter 15: Shipping and Navigation. The conclusions of the EIAR are that through the implementation of the following factored-in measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulation of information • Marine coordination • Implementation of VMP • the significance of effect is broadly acceptable, which is not significant in EIA terms. <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 2.</p>

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 3	Proposals that may have a significant impact upon current activity and future opportunity for expansion of port and harbour activities must demonstrate consideration of the National Ports Policy, the National Planning Framework, and relevant provisions related to the TEN-T network.	<p>Port access restrictions have been assessed Volume II, Chapter 15: Shipping and Navigation. The significance of effect on port access restrictions is broadly acceptable, which is not significant in EIA terms.</p> <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 3.</p>
Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 4	<p>Proposals within ports limits, beside or in the vicinity of ports, and / or that impact upon the main routes of significance to a port, must demonstrate within applications that they have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • been informed by consultation at pre-application stage or earlier with the relevant port authority; • have carried out a navigational risk assessment including an analysis of maritime traffic in the area; and • have consulted Department of Transport, MSO and Commissioners of Irish Lights. <p>Applicants must continue to engage parties identified in pre-application processes as appropriate during the decision-making process</p>	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development. A Navigational Risk Assessment has been submitted with the Application (Volume III, Appendix 15.1).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ports, harbours and shipping stakeholders were consulted throughout the development of the EIAR. The consultees included: • Port of Cork Company (POCC) • Dublin port • IRCG • Irish Chamber of Shipping • Irish Ferries • Irish Lights • MSO • IAA • Arklow Sea Scouts; and • RNLI • Stena Line <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 4.</p>
Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 5	Proposals for capital dredging will be supported where it is necessary to safeguard national port capacity and Ireland's international connectivity, and where required compliance assessments associated with authorisations have been carried out and incorporated into subsequent competent authority decision(s).	The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm and not a capital dredging project. As such, Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 5 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 6	In areas of authorised dredging activity, including those subject to navigational dredging, proposals for other activities will not be supported unless they are compatible with the dredging activity.	<p>An existing dredging licence for operational and maintenance dredging associated with ABWP1 is in close proximity to the Proposed Development. The impact of the Proposed Development on ABWP1 has been assessed in Volume II, Chapter 19: Infrastructure and Other Users. The Proposed Development will not have a significant adverse impact on the existing ABWP1 infrastructure or operations. There are no other areas of authorised dredging which may be affected by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 6.</p>
Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 7	<p>Proposals for maintenance dredging activity will be supported where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relevant decisions by competent authorities incorporate the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes, as well as necessary compliance assessments associated with authorisations, including in relation to the planning process; • there will be no significant adverse impact on marine activities or uses or the maritime area. Any potential adverse impact will be, in order of preference, avoided, minimised or mitigated; 	The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm and not a maintenance dredging project. As such, Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 7 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dredged waste is managed in accordance with internationally agreed hierarchy of waste management options for sea disposal; • if disposing of dredged material at sea, existing registered disposal sites are used, in preference to new disposal sites; and where they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF 	
Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 8	<p>Proposals that cause significant adverse impacts on licensed disposal areas should not be supported. Proposals that cannot avoid such impact must, in order of preference</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> minimise, mitigate, or if it is not possible to mitigate the significant adverse impacts, proposals must set out the reasons for proceeding. 	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring.</p> <p>An existing dredging licence for operational and maintenance dredging associated with ABWP1 and dumping location is located in close proximity to the Proposed Development. The impact of the Proposed Development on ABWP1 has been assessed in Volume II, Chapter 19: Infrastructure and Other Users.</p> <p>Arklow Energy Limited secured a permit for seabed levelling undertaken via plough dredging in an area to the east of ABWP1 that is approximately 700m in length and 100m in width (Permit Number: S0027-01). The application relates to the dumping of up to 99,999 tonnes of material over an 8-year period from 1 July 2017 to 31 May 2025. As per the Licence and Enforcement Access Portal on the Environmental Protection Agency website, “Arklow Energy Ltd” have not undertaken any activity under the permit Reg. S0027-01 over the reporting calendar year 2022 and reported no plans to undertake any activity during 2023. As the permit has been granted until 2025, cessation of activities will occur before construction of the Proposed Development is anticipated to begin.</p> <p>In light of the conclusions of the EIAR, no ‘paragraph (b)’ mitigation is required in respect of the Proposed Development. Significant adverse impacts on licenced disposal areas are minimised.</p> <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 8.</p>
Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 9	<p>Proposals for the management of dredged material must demonstrate that they have been assessed against the waste hierarchy (see Glossary).</p>	<p>During the construction and operational and maintenance phase of the Proposed Development, localised dredging and management of dredged material is expected to occur. The environmental impact of this material has been assessed in the EIAR.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will require a Dumping at Sea (DAS) licence from the EPA prior to construction. The assessment of the dredged material against the waste hierarchy will be presented within the DAS application.</p> <p>The Proposed Development therefore complies with Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 9.</p>
Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 10	<p>Proposals identifying new dredge disposal sites which are subject to best practice and guidance from previous studies should be supported where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> competent authority decisions incorporate necessary compliance assessments associated with authorisations; and they contribute to the policies and objectives of this NMPF. <p>Proposals must include an adequate characterisation study, be assessed against the waste hierarchy and must be informed by consultation with all relevant stakeholders.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development identifies an indicative location for the dumping of dredged material (associated with the Proposed Development). The proposed location is within the boundary of the Proposed Development and has been assessed in the EIAR (Volume II, Chapter 6 Coastal Processes and Volume III, Appendix 6.1 Marine Physical Processes Numerical Modelling).</p> <p>A dumping at sea licence will be required for the Proposed Development in advance of construction.</p>

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
Safety at Sea Policy 1	<p>Proposals for installation, operation, and decommissioning of Offshore Wind Farms must demonstrate how they will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise navigational risk between commercial vessels arising from an increase in the density of vessels in maritime space as a result of wind farm layout; and Allow for recreational vessels within the Offshore Wind Farm (including consideration of turbine height) or redirect recreational vessels, minimising navigational risk arising between recreational and commercial vessels. 	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Impacts on commercial and recreational vessels are assessed in Volume II, Chapter 15: Shipping and Navigation. A Navigational Risk Assessment has been submitted with the Application (Volume III, Appendix 15.1).</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring.</p> <p>The following Factored-in Measures have been applied in order to minimise navigational risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of 'rolling'/temporary 500 m advisory safe passing distances surrounding the location of all proposed/fixed structures where work is being undertaken by a construction or maintenance vessel; Use of 'rolling'/temporary 500 m advisory clearance distances around installation/maintenance vessels; Use of 50 m advisory safe passing distances around all surface structures up until the point of commissioning; Appropriate vessel health and safety including IMO conventions and HSE requirements; Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA) undertaken pre-construction including consideration of under keel clearance and appropriate cable protection applied based upon the outcomes; Charting of all structures associated with the Proposed Development on relevant nautical and electronic charts; Compliance from all project vessels with Irish Law, international maritime regulations as adopted by the relevant flag state including the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs) (IMO, 1972/77) and International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) (IMO, 1974); Consideration of MGN 654 (MCA, 2021) guidance with respect to WTG design and construction; Creation and implementation of an Emergency Response Cooperation Plan (ERCoP) (Volume III, Appendix 25.5: Emergency Response Cooperation Plan); Implementation of a buoyed construction/decommissioning area around the Array Area during the respective phases; Lighting and marking in accordance with IALA Guidance G1162 (IALA, 2021) and Irish Lights requirements during both the construction and operational and maintenance phases (Volume III, Appendix 25.6: Lighting and Marking Plan); Marine pollution contingency planning; Marine coordination; Creation and implementation of a Vessel Management Plan (VMP), including operational procedures such as the use of entry/exit points to manage the movement of project vessels (Volume III, Appendix 25.7: Vessel Management Plan); Minimum WTG blade clearance above Mean High Water Spring (MHWS) of at least 22 m in line with UK MCA and RYA Guidance; Circulation of information via Notice to Mariners (NtM) and other appropriate means including a Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO); Provision of self-help capability; Use of a temporary guard vessel where justified by risk assessment, e.g. to protect unlit structures and/or unprotected cable prior to burial; Vessel traffic monitoring by Automatic Identification System (AIS) during the construction phase; and Any water depths reductions from subsea project infrastructure that of more than 5% referenced to chart datum will be consulted on with the MSO. <p>Internal navigational is possible, with recreational navigation being at the discretion of each individual users. The EIAR concludes that this risk is ALARP, not significant in EIA terms.</p>

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
		The Proposed Development complies with Safety at Sea Policy 1.
Safety at Sea Policy 2	<p>Proposals for infrastructure that have the potential to significantly reduce under-keel clearance must demonstrate how they will, in order of preference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> avoid, minimise mitigate <p>adverse impacts, or</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. 	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring.</p> <p>Of relevance to Safety at Sea Policy 2, a CBRA will be undertaken pre-construction including consideration of under keel clearance and appropriate cable protection applied based upon the outcomes. Cable will be buried to 0.5 m where possible, cable protection will be utilised where identified as necessary. The implementation of this factored-in measure will ensure cable protection is sufficient to limit cable interaction and under keel clearance risks.</p> <p>In light of the conclusions of the EIAR, no ‘paragraph (b)’mitigation is required in respect of the Proposed Development. Potential to significantly reduce under-keel clearance is minimised.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Safety at Sea Policy 2.</p>
Safety at Sea Policy 3	All proposals for temporary or permanent fixed infrastructure in the maritime area must ensure navigational marking in accordance with appropriate international standards and ensure inclusion in relevant charts where applicable.	<p>Lighting and marking as directed by Irish Lights and in compliance with the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) G1162 (IALA, 2021) and charting have been committed to by the Developer as factored in measures.</p> <p>A Lighting and Marking Plan (LMP) has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development (Volume III, Appendix 25.6).</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Safety at Sea Policy 3.</p>
Safety at Sea Policy 4	Establishing, changing or disestablishing Aids to Navigation (AtoN) must be sanctioned, in advance of works, by the Commissioners of Irish Lights.	<p>A Lighting and Marking Plan (LMP) has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development (Volume III, Appendix 25.6).</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Safety at Sea Policy 4.</p>
Safety at Sea Policy 5	<p>Proposals must identify their potential impact, if any, on Maritime Emergency Response (Search and Rescue (SAR), Maritime Casualty and Pollution Response) operations. Where a proposal may have a significant impact on these operations it must demonstrate how it will, in order of preference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> avoid, minimise, mitigate <p>adverse impacts, or</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> if it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding, supported by parties responsible for maritime SAR. 	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring.</p> <p>Vessel traffic data assessed in Volume II, Chapter 15: Shipping & Navigation includes the capture of data relating to military vessels.</p> <p>Of relevance to Maritime Emergency Response factored-in measures include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of self-help capability Implementation of ERCoP Implementation of MPCP <p>The Developer also commits to an additional measure of consultation with the IRCG on SAR access. The Proposed Development (in compliance with paragraph c) has mitigated impacts, on Maritime Emergency Response (Search and Rescue (SAR), Maritime Casualty and Pollution Response) operations.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Safety at Sea Policy 4.</p>

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
Sport and Recreation Policy 1	Proposals that promote sustainable development of water-based sports and marine recreation, while enhancing community health, wellbeing and quality of life, should be supported, provided that due consideration is given to environmental carrying capacities and tourism pressures.	The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm and not a project for promotion of the development of water-based sports and marine recreation. As such, Sport and Recreation Policy 1 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Sport and Recreation Policy 2	<p>Proposals should demonstrate the following in relation to potential impact on recreation and tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the proposal is likely to adversely impact sports clubs and other recreational users, including the extent to which proposals may interfere with facilities or other physical infrastructure. • The extent to which any proposal interferes with access to and along the shore, to the water, use of the resource for recreation or tourism purposes and existing navigational routes or navigational safety. • The extent to which the proposal is likely to adversely impact on the natural environment. 	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring.</p> <p>Of relevance to Sports and Recreation Policy 2, factored-in measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of a Vessel Management Plan (VMP) (Volume III, Appendix 25.7), • Circulation of information via Notice to Mariners (NtM), • Use of 'rolling'/temporary 500 m advisory safe passing distances surrounding the location of all proposed/fixed structures where work is being undertaken by a construction or maintenance vessel; • Use of 'rolling'/temporary 500 m advisory clearance distances around installation/maintenance vessels; • Use of 50 m advisory safe passing distances around all surface structures up until the point of commissioning. <p>Impacts on recreational vessels, navigational safety, recreational users and tourism are assessed in Volume II, Chapter 15: Shipping & Navigation, Chapter 19: Infrastructure and Other Users, and Chapter 21: Population and Human Health. The Proposed Development will not have adverse impacts on recreation and tourism.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Sports and Recreation Policy 2.</p>
Sport and Recreation Policy 3	Opportunities to promote inclusive development of water-based sports and marine recreation should be supported, where appropriate and at the applicable scale, with a focus on facilities for people with disabilities	The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm and not a project for promotion of the development of water-based sports and marine recreation. As such, Sport and Recreation Policy 3 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development
Sport and Recreation Policy 4	Proposals that improve access to marine and coastal resources for tourism activities, and sport and recreation should be supported, where appropriate, at the applicable scale and aligned with existing development plans	The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm and not a to increase access to marine and coastal resources for sport and recreation. As such, Sport and Recreation Policy 4 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development
Sport and Recreation Policy 5	Proposals should seek to enhance water safety through provision of appropriate International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and European Committee for Standardization (CEN) compliant safety signage. In general the safety of persons should be a key consideration for planners and due consideration should be given to best practice guidance for marine and coastal recreation areas endorsed by the Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group.	<p>Lighting and marking as directed by CIL and in compliance with the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) G1162 (IALA, 2021) and charting have been committed to by the Developer as factored-in measures.</p> <p>A Lighting and Marking Plan (LMP) has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development (Volume III, Appendix 25.6).</p> <p>The Proposed Development will also utilise the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of 'rolling'/temporary 500 m advisory safe passing distances surrounding the location of all proposed/fixed structures where work is being undertaken by a construction or maintenance vessel; • Use of 'rolling'/temporary 500 m advisory clearance distances around installation/maintenance vessels; • Use of 50 m advisory safe passing distances around all surface structures up until the point of commissioning; • Information will be circulated via Notice to Mariners (NtM).

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
		<p>Further information of health and safety protocols can be found in Volume II, Chapter 4: Description of Development and Volume III, Appendix 25.10: Environmental Management Plan.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Sports and Recreation Policy 5.</p>
Telecommunications Policy 1	Proposals that guarantee existing and future international telecommunications connectivity which is critically important to support the future needs of society, Government, the provision of Public Services and enterprise in Ireland, should be supported	The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm. The Proposed Development is not designed to guarantee existing and future telecommunications connectivity. As such, Telecommunications Policy 1 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Telecommunications Policy 2	<p>Preference should be given to proposals where evidence is provided of an integrated approach to development and activity, such as the bundling of cables (electricity and communications) where suitable, as well as pipelines for multiple activities, to minimise impacts on the marine environment, infrastructures and other users.</p> <p>Compatibility should be achieved, in order of preference, through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> avoiding, or minimising, or mitigating adverse impacts, or If it is not possible to mitigate significant adverse impacts, proposals should set out the reasons for proceeding. 	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring.</p> <p>The existing ABWP1 export cable is the only existing submarine cable in close proximity to the Proposed Development. There is limited potential for an integrated approach with the existing submarine cable for ABWP1 due to the fact that it has a different landfall location to ABWP2. Impacts on the existing ABWP1 export cable have been assessed in Volume II, Chapter 19: Infrastructure and Other Users.</p> <p>Of relevance to Telecommunications Policy 3, the following factored in measure applies: Coordination of cable crossing installations and ongoing consultation with Arklow Energy Limited.</p> <p>The EIAR concludes that there will be no significant adverse impact on the existing ABWP1 export cable.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Telecommunications Policy 2.</p>
Telecommunications Policy 3	Preference should be given to proposals that protect submarine cables whilst achieving successful seabed user coexistence, such as the bundling of cables (electricity and communications) as well as pipelines for multiple activities where suitable. Proposals should specify if separate access to cables for the purposes of repair and maintenance is required. With regard to decommissioning redundant submarine cables, a risk-based approach should be applied with consideration given to cables being left in situ where this would minimise significant impacts on the physical, natural, societal, historic, and economic value of the area	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring.</p> <p>Impacts on the existing ABWP1 export cable have been assessed in Volume II, Chapter 19: Infrastructure and Other Users. The existing ABWP1 export cable is the only existing submarine cable in close proximity to the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Of relevance to Telecommunications Policy 3, the following factored in measure applies: Coordination of cable crossing installations and ongoing consultation with Arklow Energy Limited.</p> <p>The EIAR concludes that there will be no significant adverse impact on the existing ABWP1 export cable.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Telecommunications Policy 3.</p>
Telecommunications Policy 4	Proposals that ensure and enhance connectivity of Ireland's rural and island communities to high quality telecommunications networks should be supported.	The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm. The Proposed Development is not designed to ensure and enhance connectivity of Ireland rural and island communities to high quality telecommunications networks. As such, Telecommunications Policy 4 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Tourism Policy 1	Where appropriate, proposals enabling, promoting or facilitating sustainable tourism and recreation activities, particularly where this creates diversification or additional utilisation of related facilities beyond typical usage patterns, should be supported	The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm. The Proposed Development is not designed to enable, promote or facilitating sustainable tourism and recreation activities networks. As such, Tourism Policy 1 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
Tourism Policy 2	Proposals must identify possible impacts on tourism. Where a potential significant impact upon tourism is identified it should be demonstrated how the potential negative consequences to tourism in communities will be minimised. This must include assessment of how the benefits of proposals are not outweighed by potential negative impacts	<p>An EIAR has been submitted with the Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A number of designed-in measures and management measures (or controls) have been factored into the Proposed Development and are committed to be delivered by the Developer as part of the Proposed Development. The full suite of Factored-in measures can be found in Volume II, Chapter 25: Factored-In Measures, Mitigation and Monitoring.</p> <p>Impacts on tourism have been assessed in Volume II, Chapter 21: Population and Human Health.</p> <p>The following factored-in measures of relevance to tourism have been applied:</p> <p>Appointment of a Community Engagement Manager during the pre-construction and construction phase.</p> <p>The EIAR concludes that there will be no significant adverse impact on tourism.</p> <p>The Proposed Development complies with Tourism Policy 3.</p>
Tourism Policy 3	Proposals for tourism development should seek to optimise facilities and use of space by taking a cross-sectoral development approach that provides for multiple activities, whilst minimising the extent to which the proposal is likely to adversely impact on the natural environment.	The Proposed Development is an offshore wind farm. The Proposed Development is not designed to optimise space for tourism. As such, Tourism Policy 3 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Wastewater treatment and disposal Policy 1	<p>Proposals by Irish Water related to the treatment and disposal of wastewater that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> service the social and economic development of the country under the National Planning Framework; resolve environmental issues at priority areas identified by the EPA; contribute to the realisation of the objectives of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ireland's River Basin Management Plan 2018 – 2021 The Water Services Policy Statement 2018 – 2025 Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2012 - 2020 <p>should be supported, provided they fully meet the environmental safeguards contained within relevant authorisation processes.</p>	The Proposed Development is not an application by Irish Water. As such, Wastewater treatment and disposal Policy 1 is not of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Wastewater treatment and disposal Policy 2	<p>Proposals that have the potential to significantly adversely affect existing and planned wastewater management and treatment infrastructure where a consent or authorisation or lease has been granted or formally applied for by Irish Water should not be authorised unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> compatibility with the existing, authorised, proposed or otherwise identified in consultations with Irish Water activity, can be satisfactorily demonstrated; the proposal is clearly of strategic or national importance. <p>Where possible, proposals that may affect Irish Water activities or plans should engage with Irish Water at the earliest available opportunity.</p>	Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Policy 2 is not relevant to the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development has no impact on wastewater management or treatment.

Policy Point	Description	Applicability to the Proposed Development and Compliance
	<p>Compatibility should be achieved, in order of preference, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) avoiding adverse impacts on those activities; and / orb) minimising impacts where they cannot be avoided; and / orc) mitigating impacts where they cannot be minimised.	



Turley