

## **4 PLANNING AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This Chapter sets out the planning policy context relevant to the Proposed Development by providing an overview of the international, national and regional legislation and policy of relevance, as well as a detailed review of the planning policy framework within which the application will be assessed. This section also provides a brief overview of the most up-to-date statistics on Irish renewable energy production, climate emissions, and the benefits the Proposed Development can bring to helping Ireland meet 2030 and 2050 targets.

The planning policy assessment demonstrates that the Proposed Development is consistent with European, National and Local Plan Policies. In particular, the Proposed Development will help to meet the objectives of the Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP2025) and the Climate Action Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. Dereenacrinnig West Wind Farm will make an important contribution to Ireland's renewable energy targets. The Proposed Development will have a generating capacity of Approx. 6.9 MW and will be of economic and social importance to both the region and the state.

The urgent need to fight climate change and society's rising demand for energy is prevalent across the policies reviewed. Renewable energy is identified throughout this review as being required to play a vital role in mitigating climate change by transitioning to a low carbon economy and society. By investing in renewable energy, Ireland can promote sustainable economic development using its own, secure and clean energy.

### **4.2 STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY**

This chapter has been prepared by Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited, in particular Angelika Thiel, Evan Concar and Breena Coyle.

Angelika Thiel is an Environmental Scientist with 5 years' experience in Environmental Consultancy and Project Management. She holds a BSc in Geography from the Leibniz University Hannover, Germany. Angelika's key capabilities include Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR), Appropriate Assessment (AA) screenings, Planning and Environmental Reports, Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMP), GIS and Project Management.

Evan Concar, M.Sc., B.Sc. is an Environmental Scientist and Planner. He holds a first-class MSc in Climate Change, Agriculture, and Food Security from the University of

Galway and a Bachelor (Hons.) Degree of Arts with Geography and Spanish, also from the University of Galway. He is experienced in report writing, EIA Report chapter writing, Planning Compliance, Planning and Environmental Reports, Feasibility Studies, Stakeholder Engagement, and assisting with Project Management.

Breena Coyle, Senior Town Planner in Jennings O'Donovan & Partners Limited (JOD), has a Masters in Environment Planning from Queens University and has over 16 years' experience in Environmental Planning throughout Ireland and the UK. She has a clear understanding of the legislative framework and has experience in the development of windfarms from the pre-planning process through to construction.

### 4.3 IRISH PLANNING LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

**Table 4.1: Irish Planning Legislation and Policy Context**

<b>Legislation / Policy</b>	<b>Context</b>
<b>Planning and Development Acts 2000 (the Planning and Development Act)</b>	The Planning and Development Act sets out the statutory basis for the carrying out of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
<b>Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2025 (the Planning and Development Regulations)</b>	The Planning and Development Regulations implement the Planning and Development Act by prescribing the details of the planning code.
<b>Habitats and Birds Directives</b>	The Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC set out the requirements for the protection of habitats and species and in the case of the latter, bird species, of European and national importance. For the purposes of planning, these directives have been transposed into Irish legislation under the Planning and Development Act (in particular Part XAB), the Planning and Development Regulations (in particular Part 20), and the European Union (Birds and Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015.
<b>Wildlife Act 1976, as amended</b>	The requirements for the designation and protection of habitats and species in a natural heritage area (NHA) are set out in the Wildlife Act 1976, as amended.

Legislation / Policy	Context
<p><b>EIA Directives</b></p>	<p>The EIA Directive has been transposed into Irish legislation by way of a number of EIA Regulations from 1989 to 2018. EIA provisions in relation to planning consents are currently contained in the Planning and Development Act) (Part X) and in Part 10 of the Planning and Development Regulations. Developments for the purpose of Part 10 (i.e. those developments requiring an EIA) are set out in Schedule 5 (Parts 1 and 2) of the Planning and Development Regulations.</p>
<p><b>National Energy Security Framework</b></p>	<p>Ireland has one of the highest rates of importing fuel in Europe with imported dependency increasing to 80% in 2021 according to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)<sup>1</sup>. Energy demand in Ireland has been growing and is expected to continue to increase by 37% to 2031. The high rate of imported fossil fuel dependency and the increasing demand for electricity make it vital to introduce more domestic renewable energy generation like the Proposed Development in County Cork. The National Energy Security Framework (DECC, 2022) sets out how Ireland is seeking to phase out dependency on Russian gas, oil and coal imports in order to address the urgent need to secure a long-term, resilient energy supply.</p>
<p><b>Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015</b></p>	<p>The Climate Action Act 2015 provides for the establishment of a national framework with the aim of achieving a low-carbon, climate-resilient, and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 (referred to in the Climate Action Act 2015 as the “national transition objective”). The Climate Action Act 2015 was commenced in the days before the historic COP21 agreement in Paris where consensus was reached by 200 countries on the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</p>

<sup>1</sup> SEAI. (2022). ENERGY IN IRELAND. [https://www.seai.ie/data-and-insights/seai-statistics/key-publications/energy-in-ireland/?gclid=EALalQobChMI-LH\\_o6r8\\_QIV09\\_tCh23YAykEAAYASAAEgJipvD\\_BwE](https://www.seai.ie/data-and-insights/seai-statistics/key-publications/energy-in-ireland/?gclid=EALalQobChMI-LH_o6r8_QIV09_tCh23YAykEAAYASAAEgJipvD_BwE) Accessed 29/03/2023.

Legislation / Policy	Context
<b>Climate Action Plan 2025</b>	The Plan was approved by Government on 15 April 2025, subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment. Climate Action Plan 2025 builds upon the previous plan (Climate Action Plan 2024) by streamlining and accelerating the actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings, supporting Ireland's commitment to reducing emissions by 51% by 2030 and achieving climate neutrality by 2050. As the final Climate Action Plan of the first 5-year Carbon Budget, it marks an important midpoint in the decade of climate action and puts climate solutions at the centre of Ireland's social and economic development.
<b>Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021</b>	The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 supports Ireland's transition to Net Zero and a target of achieving a climate neutral economy by no later than 2050. It has established a legally binding framework containing clear targets and commitments which are set in law to embed the necessary structures and processes on a statutory basis to achieve our national, EU and international climate goals and obligations in the near and long term.
<b>The National Planning Framework 2018-2027</b>	The National Planning Framework (NPF) (which is given statutory recognition in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018) is intended to guide development and investment through a shared set of national objectives and principles. It is then left to the three regional planning bodies and the 31 city and county councils to take a lead in refining these into more detailed plans.
<b>The National Development Plan 2021-2030</b>	The National Development Plan (NDP) sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the implementation of the National Planning Framework, through a total investment of approximately €116 billion. This represents a very substantial commitment of resources and is expected to move Ireland close to the top of the

Legislation / Policy	Context
	international league table for per capita public investment.
<b>Regional Planning</b>	<p>The Local Government Reform Act 2014 provided for three new regional assemblies: the Northern and Western, Eastern and Midland and Southern Regions. Members of the Regional Assemblies consist of the local authorities within that region.</p> <p>The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Regional Assembly area provides a long-term regional level strategic planning and economic framework, to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework, for the future physical, economic and social development for the Southern Region.</p>
<b>The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028</b>	<p>Under Section 9 of the Planning and Development Act, each planning authority is obliged to make a Development Plan for the whole of its functional area. The Development Plan (City/County Development Plan [CDP]) is a statutory land-use plan generally consisting of a written statement and associated maps. The Development Plan is the statutory land use plan which sets out a strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development for the area.</p> <p>The County Cork Development Plan 2022-2028 came into effect in June 2022. The County Cork Wind Energy Strategy is included as Volume 1 Chapter 13 of the CDP 2022-2028.</p>
<b>The Wind Energy Development Guidelines, DoHLG 2006</b>	<p>The Wind Energy Development Guidelines (DoHLG, 2006) offer advice to planning authorities on planning for wind energy through the development plan process and in determining applications for planning permission. The guidelines are also intended to provide a consistency of approach throughout the country in the identification of suitable locations for wind energy development and the treatment of planning applications for wind energy developments.</p>

Legislation / Policy	Context
<p><b>Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2019)</b></p>	<p>The Developer will comply with aspects of the Draft Wind Energy Guidelines 2019 (DWEDGs 2019) (meaning also compliance with the 2006 WEDGs) in relation to shadow flicker, community engagement and visual amenity setback distances (4x tip height). However, as the current version WEDGs 2006 remain valid until the revised final version of the DWEDGs 2019 are published by the government, the WEDGs 2006 have been complied with in some areas of assessment, such as in Chapter 10: Noise.</p> <p>The DWEDGs 2019 set out how wind energy is to be delivered in accordance with best practice and in particular, in partnership with people living in areas local to proposed developments. The Draft guidelines, provide a roadmap as to how Ireland's 2030 climate commitments can be met and ultimately move the country towards a position of net zero emissions by 2050. The key aspects for the new draft proposed wind energy guidelines include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A visual amenity setback of 4 times the turbine height between a wind turbine and the nearest residential property, subject to a mandatory minimum distance of 500 metres</li> <li>• The elimination of shadow flicker</li> <li>• The application of a more stringent noise limit, consistent with World Health Organisation standards</li> <li>• The introduction of new obligations in relation to community engagement with local communities along with the provision of community benefit measures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025</b></p>	<p>Ireland signed and ratified the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention (ELC) which came into effect on 1 March 2004. The Convention has been ratified by thirty-eight countries. It obliges Ireland to implement policy changes and objectives concerning the management, protection and planning of the landscape.</p>

Legislation / Policy	Context
	The National Landscape Strategy will be used to ensure compliance with the ELC and to establish principles for protecting and enhancing it while positively managing its change. It is a high-level policy framework to achieve balance between the protection, management and planning of the landscape by way of supporting actions.

#### 4.4 INTERNATIONAL POLICY

This section of the EIAR documents the international policy perspectives with regards to climate change and renewable energy. Ireland is party to both the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, which together provide an international legal framework for addressing climate change.

##### 4.4.1 The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)<sup>2</sup> implemented by the United Nations in May 1992, determined a long-term objective to lessen greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, with the purpose of preventing anthropogenic interference with the climatic system. Subsequently, the Kyoto Protocol was adopted in 1997. National governments who signed up to the Kyoto Protocol are committed to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. The UNFCCC recognises that the climate system is a shared resource whose stability can be affected by industrial and other emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The convention enjoys near universal membership, with 197 countries listed as being Parties of the Convention<sup>3</sup>.

##### The Paris Agreement (2015)

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016. It seeks to accelerate and intensify the actions and investment needed for a sustainable low carbon future. Its central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The Agreement also aims to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change. The Paris

<sup>2</sup> The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992). Available online at: <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf> [Accessed 05/10/2022]

<sup>3</sup> [http://unfccc.int/essential\\_background/items/6031.php](http://unfccc.int/essential_background/items/6031.php)

Agreement commits the EU as a whole to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030, compared with 1990 levels. This figure was revised upwards under Article 4 of Regulation 2021/1119 by the EU in April 2021 to a 55% domestic Green House Gas reduction by 2030 compared to 1990.

The United Nation's (UN) 26th global climate summit was held in 2021 in Glasgow, where nations committed to a range of decisions in a collective effort to limit global temperatures to 1.5 degrees. The conference focussed on driving action across:

- Mitigation - reducing emissions
- Adaptation - helping those already impacted by climate change
- Finance - enabling countries to deliver on their climate goals
- Collaboration - working together to deliver even greater action

The 27th Global climate summit; The COP27 UN Climate Change Conference, was held in 2022 in Egypt. Agreement was reached on financing loss and damage from the impacts of climate change – an agreement which was negotiated in part by Ireland's Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan.

At COP28 in Dubai (Nov. 2023), although the wording of the agreement didn't signify an imminent "transitioning away from fossil fuels", the agreement signals the "beginning of the end" of the fossil fuel era by laying the ground for a swift, just and equitable transition. This agreement highlights the importance of alternative, renewable energy generation projects to facilitate this transition.

COP29 in Baku (Nov. 2024) focused on enhancing ambition and enabling action in the fight against climate change, with a key focus on climate finance. The conference concluded with an agreement to triple finance to developing countries, from USD 100 billion to USD 300 billion annually by 2035.

Out of 189 Parties that have ratified the Paris Agreement, 90% mentioned renewables and roughly 70% included quantifiable energy targets in their initial Nationally Determined Contributions. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) are national climate action plans by each country under the Paris Agreement. A country's NDC outlines how it plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to help meet the global goal of limiting temperature rise to 1.5C and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Paris Agreement requires that NDCs are updated every five years with increasingly higher ambition, taking into consideration each country's capacity.

However, a 2021 report by the International Energy Agency (IEA)<sup>4</sup> cautions that renewables growth will still need to double to reach the Paris Agreement goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), an intergovernmental organisation focusing on sustainable energy, published a report<sup>5</sup> on the Nationally Determined Contributions relating to renewable energy, which also note that even with the renewable energy pledges in the 2021 Paris agreement, the 1.5°C goal will still be exceeded before the end of the century.

Europe's planned emission reductions in line with the Paris Agreement are set out in part under the Effort Sharing Regulation (2023/857). Under this regulation, Ireland is obliged to reduce Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions by 42% in relation to 2005 levels.

#### **4.4.2 EU Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by EU Directive 2014/52/EU)**

European Union Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (the 'EIA Directive'), was transposed into Irish planning legislation by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). The objective of the Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU), as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU, is to ensure a high level of protection of the environment and human health, through the establishment of minimum requirements for EIA, prior to development consent being given, of public and private developments that are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Planning Authorities and An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) have lengthy experience in assessing the effects of proposed developments on the environment as this is an integral part of considering whether the proposal is in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 transpose the requirements of the 2011 EIA Directive (as amended) into existing planning consent procedures.

Amending Directive 2011/92/EU defined the EIA process as a process consisting of:

- (a) the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) by the Developer
- (b) the carrying out of consultations

---

<sup>4</sup> International Energy Agency (2021). Renewables 2021 Analysis and forecast to 2026. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/5ae32253-7409-4f9a-a91d-1493ffb9777a/Renewables2021-Analysisandforecastto2026.pdf

<sup>5</sup> International Renewable Energy Agency (2023). NDCs and renewable energy targets in 2023: Tripling renewable power by 2030. <https://www.irena.org/Publications/2023/Dec/NDCs-and-renewable-energy-targets-in-2023-Tripling-renewable-power-by-2030>

- (c) the examination by the competent authority of the EIAR, any supplementary information provided, where necessary, by the Developer and relevant information received through consultations with the public, prescribed bodies and any affected Member States
- (d) the reasoned conclusion of the competent authority on the significant impacts of the Project on the environment and
- (e) the integration of the competent authority's reasoned conclusion into any development consent decision.

## 4.5 EUROPEAN LEGISLATION & POLICY CONTEXT

The European Union's (EU) energy policies are set out and powered by three main objectives:

- To ensure energy providers operate in a competitive environment, ensuring affordable prices for homes and businesses.
- To secure energy supplies and to ensure reliable energy delivery whenever and wherever it is needed; and
- To have sustainable energy consumption, through lowering dependence on fossil fuels and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and pollution.

The importance of delivering on these key objectives have been underlined by the Commission's robust and ambitious response to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine – and has seen a suite of legislative files introduced in the sustainability and environmental sectors in its current mandate.

The EU will be climate neutral by 2050. To do this, it will carry out a series of initiatives that will protect the environment and boost the green economy<sup>6</sup>.

### 4.5.1 Renewable Energy Directive

The EU produced the Renewable Energy Directive (REDI) 2009/28/EC, revised in 2018, to make the EU a global leader in renewable energy and ensure that the target of the final energy consumption being at least 16% renewables by 2020 and 27% renewables are met by 2030. In 2015, the EU set itself a long-term goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80-95%, when compared to 1990 levels, by 2050.

---

<sup>6</sup> [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/2050-long-term-strategy\\_en](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/2050-long-term-strategy_en)

Under the 2009 Renewable Energy Directive (REDI), Ireland committed to produce at least 16% of all energy consumed by 2020 from renewable sources. Ireland did not meet its 2020 target for overall Renewable Energy Share resulting in Ireland being obligated to acquire statistical transfers of 3.3 TWh of renewable energy from other Member States to compensate for this shortfall.

From 2021, REDI was replaced by the second Renewable Energy Directive (REDII), which continues to promote the growth of renewable energy out to 2030. The recast directive sets a new binding renewable energy target for the EU for 2030 of at least 32%, with a clause for a possible upwards revision by 2023.

RED III raises the share of renewable energy in the European Union's overall energy consumption to 42.5% by 2030, with an additional 2.5% indicative top-up to allow the target of 45% to be achieved.

The Proposed Development will have an installed capacity of approximately 6.9 MW of renewable energy which would contribute towards the Renewable Energy Directive legally binding targets for 2030 and help to prevent further requirements to acquire statistical transfers from other Member States.

#### **4.5.2 The European Green Deal 2019**

Presented in December 2019, the European Green Deal focuses on 3 key principles for the clean energy transition, which will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance the quality of life of our citizens:

- Ensuring a secure and affordable EU energy supply.
- Developing a fully integrated, interconnected and digitalised EU energy market.
- Prioritising energy efficiency, improving the energy performance of our buildings and developing a power sector based largely on renewable sources.

The European Green Deal 2019 resets the European Commission's commitment to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges. The European Green Deal is a plan to make the EU's economy sustainable. The EU aims to be climate neutral in 2050. Reaching this target will require action in all sector economy, including:

- Investing in environmentally friendly technologies
- Supporting industry to innovate
- Rolling out cleaner, cheaper and healthier forms of private and public transport
- Decarbonising the energy sector

- Ensuring buildings are more energy efficient
- Working with international partners to improve global environmental standards
- Sustainable finance – all of which are strongly interlinked.

### 4.5.3 REPowerEU

In May 2022, The European Commission presented the REPowerEU Plan<sup>7</sup>, in response to the global energy market disruption caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It puts forwards a set of actions to:

- Save energy;
- Diversify supplies;
- Quickly substitute fossil fuels by accelerating Europe's clean energy transition;
- Smartly combine investments and reforms.

It states:

*“Lengthy administrative procedures are one of the key barriers for investments in renewables and their related infrastructure. These barriers include the complexity of the applicable rules for site selection and administrative authorisations for projects, the complexity and duration of the assessment of the environmental impacts of the projects, grid connection issues, constraints on adapting technology specifications during the permit-granting procedure or staffing issues of the permit-granting authorities or grid operators. In order to accelerate the pace of deployment of renewable energy projects it is necessary to adopt rules which would simplify and shorten permit-granting processes.”*

The REPowerEU Plan also includes proposed amendments to the Renewable Energy Directive<sup>8</sup> including:

- Specifying that renewable energy plants are presumed to be of **overriding public interest**.
- Increasing the Union's renewable energy target to 45% – up from 40% in the Commission's initial Fit-for-55 energy package.

In 2021, the EU reached a 22.8%<sup>9</sup> share of its gross final energy consumption from renewable sources – down from 22.1% in 2020. This leaves a long way to go to reach this

<sup>7</sup> European Commission. (2022). REPowerEU Plan [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:fc930f14-d7ae-11ec-a95f-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:fc930f14-d7ae-11ec-a95f-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF) Accessed 14/04/2023

<sup>8</sup> European commission. (2022). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022PC0222&from=EN> Accessed 14/04/2023

<sup>9</sup> European Commission. (2023). [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Renewable\\_energy\\_statistics#Share\\_of\\_renewable\\_energy\\_more\\_than\\_doubled\\_between\\_2004\\_and\\_2020](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Renewable_energy_statistics#Share_of_renewable_energy_more_than_doubled_between_2004_and_2020) Accessed 23/03/2023

increased target. In accordance with the REPowerEU Communication, in May 2022, the Commission published a recommendation<sup>10</sup> on speeding up permit-granting procedures for renewable energy projects, accompanied by guidance to help the Member States speed up permitting for renewable energy plants.

The recommendation was created in order to help Member States exploit all possibilities for acceleration that exist within the legislative framework. It proposes measures to streamline procedures at national level, addresses ambiguities in the application of EU legislation and sets out good practices in Member States. It recommends participatory approaches that involve local and regional authorities and providing authorities with the necessary resources so as to facilitate the timely realisation of locally adapted investments.

Recommendations include:

*“Member States should ensure that the planning, construction and operation of plants for the production of energy from renewable sources, their connection to the electricity, gas and heat grid and the related grid itself and storage assets **qualify for the most favourable procedure available in their planning and permit-granting procedures and are presumed as being in the overriding public interest and in the interest of public safety**, in view of the legislative proposal amending and strengthening the provisions of Directive (EU) 2018/2001 related to administrative procedures and without prejudice to the Union law.”*

*“Member States should establish clearly defined, accelerated and as short as possible deadlines for all the steps required for the granting of permits to build and operate renewable energy projects, specifying the instances where such deadlines may be extended and under which circumstances. Member States should establish binding maximum deadlines for all relevant stages of the environmental impact assessment procedure.”*

The proposed directive target increase and change of wording to “over riding public interest” underlines the vital nature of investments into new renewable energy developments such as the Derreenacrinnig Wind Farm, which would increase the domestic renewable energy production capacity of Ireland and its contribution to the EU overall target.

---

<sup>10</sup>EU. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=PI\\_COM:C\(2022\)3219&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=PI_COM:C(2022)3219&from=EN) Accessed 23/03/2023

#### 4.5.4 Renewable Deployment Acceleration

On 22nd December 2022, Council Regulation (EU) 2022/2577 laying down a framework to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy was adopted by the Council of the European Union<sup>11</sup>. This regulation, which has immediate effect in Member States, applies to "all permit-granting processes that have a starting date within the period of its application". The period of application of the Regulation is the 30th of December 2022 to 29th of June 2024 and therefore applies to the present application. It confirms the EU policy position that renewable energy plants, including wind energy, are crucial to fight climate change and pollution, reduce energy prices, decrease the Union's dependence on fossil fuels and ensure the Union's security of supply. The aim of the Regulation is to eliminate bottlenecks in new permitting procedures. It notes that considering renewable energy projects as being presumed of overriding public interest and serving public health and safety will allow new projects to benefit from a simplified assessment for specific derogations foreseen in the relevant Union environmental legislation with immediate effect.

It states:

*"A fast deployment of renewable energy sources can help to mitigate the effects of the current energy crisis, by forming a defence against Russia's actions. Renewable energy can significantly contribute to counter Russia's weaponisation of energy by strengthening the Union's security of supply, reducing volatility in the market and lowering energy prices."*<sup>12</sup>

Central to the Regulation is the presumption that renewable energy development is in the overriding public interest in the context of addressing competing interests under the Habitats Directive, Birds Directive and the Water Framework Directive and that renewable energy projects should be given priority when balancing legal interests in a given case.

*(1) The planning, construction and operation of plants and installations for the production of energy from renewable sources, and their connection to the grid, the related grid itself and storage assets shall be presumed as being in the overriding public interest and serving public health and safety when balancing legal interests in the individual case, for the purposes of Article 6(4) and Article 16(1)(c) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC, Article 4(7) of Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of*

<sup>11</sup> Council of the European Union Regulation (EU) 2022/2577 of the 22 December 2022, laying down a framework to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022R2577>

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid* Recital 1

*the Council and Article 9(1)(a) of Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council....*

- (2) *Member States shall ensure, at least for projects which are recognised as being of overriding public interest, that in the planning and permit-granting process, the construction and operation of plants and installations for the production of energy from renewable sources and the related grid infrastructure development are given priority when balancing legal interests in the individual case....*<sup>13</sup>

Overriding public interest and serving public health and safety is presumed for all renewable energy projects. This presumption may be rebutted where there is clear evidence that those projects have major adverse effects on the environment which cannot be mitigated or compensated for. As regards the protection of species, the Regulation states that this priority should only be given if, and to the extent that, appropriate species conservation measures contributing to the maintenance or restoration of the populations of the species at a favourable conservation status are undertaken and sufficient financial resources, as well as areas, are made available for this purpose.<sup>14</sup>

The Proposed Development has been assessed under each of the topics contained in the EIAR, with adverse residual environmental impacts actively avoided. No significant negative impacts to the environment have been identified, it therefore does not need to rely on the presumption of Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI).

The EIAR assessments, including mitigation measures mean the Proposed Development is in line with requirements in the European Regulation on laying down a framework to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy indicating the Proposed Development should be given the priority of overriding public interest.

#### **4.6 NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY**

This section sets out the key planning policies from a national, regional and local plan perspective. **Figure 4.1** provides a hierarchy of plans in Ireland.

---

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* Article 3

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* Article 3(2)



**Figure 4.1: Hierarchy of Plans in Ireland**

#### **4.6.1 Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021**

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 commits Ireland to reach a legally binding target of net-zero emissions no later than 2050, and a cut of 51% by 2030 (compared to 2018 levels). It establishes a framework with clear, legally binding targets and commitments, and ensures the necessary structures and processes are embedded on a statutory basis to achieve Ireland's national, EU and international climate goals and obligations in the near and long term.

The Act includes the following key elements:

- It places on a statutory basis a 'national climate objective', which commits Ireland to pursue and achieve no later than 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral economy.
- It embeds the process of carbon budgeting into law. Governments are required to adopt a series of economy-wide five-year carbon budgets, including sectoral targets for each relevant sector, on a rolling 15-year basis, starting in 2021.

- Actions for each sector will be detailed in the Climate Action Plan, updated annually.
- A National Long Term Climate Action Strategy will be prepared every five years.

A recent report from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections<sup>15</sup> found that Ireland is not on track to meet the 51 per cent emissions reduction target (by 2030 compared to 2018), indicating that further measures are needed.

#### 4.6.2 Climate Emergency

On 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019 the European Parliament declared a climate emergency ahead of the UN COP25 in Madrid in December 2019. In May 2019, the Oireachtas declared a "climate emergency" in an amendment to the report 'Climate Action: A cross-party consensus for action' which followed the recommendations of the Citizens Assembly on Climate Action. There then followed the publication of the Cross-Departmental Climate Action Plan 2019 on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2019 this was revised in 2021 and 2023.

#### 4.6.3 The Climate Action Plan 2025

The Climate Action Plan 2025<sup>16</sup> (CAP2025) was published in April 2025 and is the latest assessment and measurement of what has been achieved over the past year, building on actions taken in 2024. It sets out what need to be done in 2025 so Ireland is prepared to take on the challenges of our second carbon budget period 2026-2030.

Ireland's Progress to date:

- In 2023 emissions reduced by nearly 7%
- Emissions in the first half of 2024 were down over 17%
- Compared with the same period in 2023, emissions in the first half of 2024 reduced by 3.5%
- Irish wind farms generated nearly 40% of Ireland's total electricity demand in the first half of 2024
- Over the past year, emissions in agriculture have reduced by over 4%
- In the built environment, emissions have decreased by 21% since 2018
- In transport, emissions increased by 0.3% in 2023

<sup>15</sup> EPA 2023. <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/ghg/>

<sup>16</sup> Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. (2025). Climate Action Plan 2025.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-the-environment-climate-and-communications/publications/climate-action-plan-2025/> [Accessed: 29/04/2025]

CAP2025 re-affirms the previous commitment to increasing the share of renewable electricity to 50% by 2025 and 80% by 2030. Overall, the share of renewable electricity generation in Ireland increased from 38.6% to 40.7% from 2022 to 2023. The figure for 2024 will likely be between 40% and the interim, end of year target of 50% set out in CAP2025.

The targets are:

- onshore wind, 2 GWs by 2025 and 9 GWs by 2030
- offshore wind, at least 8 GWs by 2030
- solar, up to 5 GW by 2025 and 8 GW by 2030

These targets are unchanged for the previous two years. CAP2025 states

“A renewables-led system is at the core of Ireland’s plan to radically reduce emissions in the electricity sector, protect our energy security, and ensure our economic competitiveness. This requires the accelerated and increased deployment of new renewable electricity generation capacity and related infrastructure.”

#### 4.6.4 National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030

The National Energy and Climate Plan (ENCP)<sup>17</sup> is a ten-year integrated document mandated by the European Union to each of its member states in order for the EU to meet its overall greenhouse gases emissions targets.

The plan establishes key measures to address the five dimensions of the EU Energy Union;

- 1) Decarbonisation: GHG emissions and removals and Renewable Energy
- 2) Energy efficiency
- 3) Energy security
- 4) Internal energy market
- 5) Research, innovation and competitiveness

Key, relevant renewable energy objectives include:

- Ireland has established an objective of achieving a 34% share of renewable energy in energy consumption by 2030.

---

<sup>17</sup> Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. (2021). National Energy and Climate Plan [https://energy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-08/ie\\_final\\_necp\\_main\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-08/ie_final_necp_main_en_0.pdf) Accessed 19/04/2023

- Increase electricity generated from renewable sources to 70% (note this target has been increased to 80% in the CAP2023), underpinned by the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS).
- Streamline consenting and connection arrangements.
- Phase-out of coal and peat-fired electricity generation
- Increase onshore wind capacity by up to 8.2 GW (note increase to 9 GW in the CAP2023)

Key, relevant energy security objectives include:

- Support efforts to increase indigenous renewable sources in the energy mix, including wind, solar and bioenergy.
- Facilitate infrastructure projects, including private sector commercial projects, which enhance Ireland's security of supply and are in keeping with Ireland's overall climate and energy objectives.

According to a report published by the EPA in June 2023, Ireland will achieve a reduction of only 29% in its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, far short of a legally binding target of 51%. Almost all sectors are on a trajectory to exceed their national ceilings – including agriculture, industry, electricity and transport. The EPA report warns that the 2030 targets can only be reached by “implementing policies that deliver emission reductions across all sectors of the economy in the short term”.<sup>18</sup>

#### 4.6.5 National Energy Security Framework

In April 2022, the Government of Ireland issued the National Energy Security Framework<sup>19</sup> in response to the European Commission's REPowerEU action statement. It provides a single overarching and initial response to address Ireland's energy security needs in the context of the war in Ukraine. It sets out how Ireland is seeking to phase out dependency on Russian gas, oil and coal imports as soon as possible, emphasising throughout the urgency of the need to secure Ireland's energy supply.

It is focussed on three areas of work:

---

<sup>18</sup> Environmental Protection Agency. (2023) Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections. [https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/air-emissions/EPA-GHG-Projections-2022-2040\\_Finalv2.pdf](https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/air-emissions/EPA-GHG-Projections-2022-2040_Finalv2.pdf) Accessed 06/06/2023

<sup>19</sup> Government of Ireland. (2022) National Energy Security Framework. <https://assets.gov.ie/221399/86cb99f5-58e3-4821-bc4c-e1bb1fa706fb.pdf> Accessed 14/04/2023

- Reducing demand for fossil fuels, which would seek to reduce overall demand for oil, natural gas and coal in Ireland.
- Replacing fossil fuels with renewables, which would seek to reduce the use of gas, oil and coal in Ireland by replacing it with renewable energy sources such as wind energy, solar energy or bioenergy.
- Diversifying fossil fuel supplies, which would seek to replace any Russian supplies of gas, oil and coal (direct or indirect) with supplies from other sources.

The framework highlights the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on energy security, consumer price wise in the short term and how and where energy is sourced to ensure long term system resilience. It notes that:

*“The war has highlighted key dependencies in our energy system which can no longer be relied on and has led to affordability issues for many consumers and businesses”.*

The framework builds on the idea of energy security as the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price and is a response to the challenges of ensuring the ongoing and long-term security of affordable energy supply.

The new framework underlines the importance of new renewable energy generation projects, in securing Ireland’s energy supply in light of the war in Ukraine and resulting energy supply issues.

#### **4.6.6 Department of Communications Climate Action and Environment: Renewable Electricity Support Scheme 2018 (RESS)**

The Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) provides support to renewable electricity projects in Ireland. With a primary focus on cost effectiveness, the RESS delivers a broader range of policy objectives, including:

- enabling communities to participate in renewable energy projects
- increasing renewable technology diversity
- delivering an ambitious renewable electricity policy to 2030
- increasing energy security, energy sustainability and ensuring the cost effectiveness of energy policy

The RESS 2 auction will be a major step in meeting the ambition set out in the Programme for Government of at least 70% renewable electricity by 2030. It will also support the achievement of the increased ambition set out under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act and the policies and measures in the Climate Action Plan 2023.

It has been designed to promote investment in renewable energy generation to support the growth of the green economy, create sustainable work opportunities, and ultimately benefit the consumer as renewables become more cost effective. The Programme for Government commits to hold RESS auctions at frequent intervals throughout the lifetime of the scheme. This will allow Ireland to take advantage of falling technology costs and avoid 'locking in' higher costs for consumers.

#### 4.6.7 Project 2040

Ireland has developed a strategic outlook for the future development of the country under the 'Project Ireland 2040.' Project 2040 comprises two plans, The National Planning Framework (NPF) and the ten-year National Development Plan (NDP) which will guide strategic development and infrastructure investment at the national level. The NDP 2018-2027 sets out investment priorities of €21.8 billion for climate action for the 10-year period, €7.6 billion is to come from the Exchequer. The remaining investment is to be made by Ireland's semi-state companies and by the private sector. In addition, some €8.6 billion funding has been made available for sustainable mobility projects, mostly in public transport. This substantial funding increase will facilitate upscaling of investments and implementation of actions needed to move the country towards its 2030 climate targets.

Section 1.5 of the NPF sets out that *"sustainability is at the heart of long-term planning and the National Planning Framework seeks to ensure that the decisions we make today, meet our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."*

The NPF with the NDP will also set the context for each of Ireland's three regional assemblies to develop their Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies taking account of and co-ordinating Local Authority County and City Development Plans in a manner that will ensure national, regional and local plans align. The National Planning Framework is based on a set of values that will ensure Ireland's "long term economic, environmental and social progress for all parts of the country".

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2025, the Government approved the Revised National Planning Framework (NPF) which, subject to the approval of both Houses of the Oireachtas, firmly sets the direction for Ireland's growth and development to 2040. It sets a new spatial policy for the country with a view to addressing critical priorities, in particular housing, infrastructure and climate.

The NPF sets a number of shared goals for Ireland which the Proposed Development will contribute to achieving, including:

- Strengthened rural economies and communities
- A strong economy, supported by enterprise, innovation and skills
- Transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society

NPF Chapter 9 states that *“The Government is committed to a long-term climate policy based on the adoption of a series of national plans over the period to 2050, informed by UN and EU policy. This is being progressed through the National Mitigation Plan and the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework, both of which will be updated and reviewed periodically.*

*In addition to legally binding targets agreed at EU level, it is a national objective for Ireland to transition to be a competitive, low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, guided by a long-term vision based on:*

- *an aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions of at least 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 across the electricity generation, built environment and transport sectors; and*  
*in parallel, an approach to carbon neutrality in the agriculture and land-use sector, including forestry, which does not compromise capacity for sustainable food production.”*

The NPF states that in relation to rural areas and renewable energy that:

#### **Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society**

*“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.*

**National Policy Objective 69**

*“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 as expressed in the most recently adopted carbon budgets.”*

**National Policy Objective 70**

*“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.”*

In the revised NPF there is the addition of regional renewable energy allocations, to be integrated into Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and the associated Regional Renewable Energy Strategies. Each Region must plan for sufficient wind and solar energy development to achieve both the MW targets set out in the revised NPF and the 2030 national renewable electricity generation targets. For onshore wind, this will most affect the Eastern and Midlands regions, who will need to increase energised capacity significantly to meet their allocation of 1,966 MW (with only 284 MW capacity at present).

In terms of future actions to look out for, the revised NPF suggests the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications will prepare an Offshore Transmission Strategy to ensure enabling infrastructure supports the development of offshore renewable energy, although there is no date for delivery.

The Proposed Development will generate renewable energy, reducing Ireland's carbon footprint by displacing fossil fuels and contributing to climate policy mitigation objectives. It is located in an area “Acceptable in Principle”, with part of the Proposed Development within the “Open to Consideration” designation for wind energy development in the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028. It has been assessed under each of the topics contained in the EIAR and has been found to be in an appropriate location.

**4.6.8 The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA)**

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 provided for the dissolution of the eight regional authorities and two regional assemblies and for their replacement with three new regional assemblies. The three new regional assemblies were established in 2015 representing the Northern and Western, Eastern and Midland and Southern Regions. Members of the Regional Assemblies consist of the local authorities within that region.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region provides a long-term regional level strategic planning and economic framework, to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework, for the future physical, economic and social development for the Southern Region.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region was adopted on the 31st of January 2020. The objective of the RSES is to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040 and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term planning and economic framework, which shall be consistent with the NPF and the economic policies or objectives of the Government.

The RSES for the Southern Region provides a long-term regional level strategic planning and economic framework, to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework, for the future physical, economic and social development for the Southern Region.

One of the key objectives of the RSES is to prioritise action on climate change across all strategic areas and in all economic sectors supported by a robust implementation of time-bound and measurable objectives on climate action for the Southern Region.

The RSES recognises and supports opportunities for onshore wind as a major source of renewable energy with an important role in delivering value and clean electricity for Ireland, stating: *“Opportunities for both commercial and community wind energy projects should be harnessed, having regard to the requirements of DoHPLG Guidelines on Wind Energy”*.

Section 2.1 of the RSES sets out the strategic vision for the Southern Region. The RSES acknowledges that climate change represents the most serious threat to human life and the environment. The Southern Regional Assembly supports the implementation of the Government’s Climate Action Plan 2019, and the RSES identified three priority areas for action to address climate change and to bring about a Transition to a Low Carbon Economy and Society:

- Decarbonisation;
- Resource Efficiency, and
- Climate Resilience.

The RSES states targets for reduction of emissions across different sectors will be further developed, including key targets for 55% movement by sustainable transport modes. This will be supported by a robust implementation of time-bound and measurable objectives on climate action for the Southern Region. Once adopted, the implementation structures will be established to pursue the objectives identified in the RSES – including the priority areas for action.

There are a number of policies within the RSES which are relevant to the Proposed Development. The following policies are of particular relevance:

**Table 4.2: Key Planning Policy Objectives from the RSES**

Regional Policy Objective (RPO)	Project contribution
<p><i>RPO 40 Regional Economic Resilience; It is an objective to sustainably develop, deepen and enhance our regional economic resilience by widening our economic sectors, boosting innovation, export diversification, productivity enhancement and access to new markets.</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development represents a major investment in the region and in renewable energy. It will provide an improved and more resilient renewable electricity supply in the area. This could attract new enterprise to the region, bringing jobs, economic growth and diversification. The increased renewable electricity supply will also help to meet increased demand to facilitate further economic growth.</p>
<p><i>RPO 46 Digital and Physical Infrastructure in Rural Areas; It is an objective to expedite the completion of infrastructure servicing diverse settlements to support innovation, enterprise start-ups and competitiveness. This includes high quality broadband and mobile communication services to all rural locations, water and wastewater facilities for the growth of settlements, <b>sustainable energy supply</b>, enhanced transport connectivity including rural public transport services and greenway walking and pedestrian corridors between settlements.</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development, by producing renewable electricity in a rural area, provides a sustainable energy supply. The Proposed Development includes the Electrical Substation and Grid Connection which will become an asset of the national grid, upgrading the physical electricity infrastructure in the region. By providing renewable electricity, the Proposed Development further boosts the positive environmental effect of an increase in electronic vehicle use, including those</p>

Regional Policy Objective (RPO)	Project contribution
	<p>in rural public transport services. It also increases the stability of energy supply to meet the growing demand of increased electrification.</p>
<p><i>RPO 49 Innovation in Rural areas; It is an objective to support innovation, enterprise start-ups and competitiveness of our rural Region.</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development is located in a rural area, it represents a significant investment into the locality in an innovative and sustainable industry and will create jobs.</p> <p>It will provide an improved renewable electricity supply county. This could attract new enterprise to the region, bringing jobs, economic growth and population increases. The introduction of renewable electricity helps to stabilise and reduce electricity costs, making Ireland a more attractive investment location. The increased renewable electricity supply will also help to meet increased demand to facilitate further economic growth.</p>
<p><i>RPO 50 Diversification; It is an objective to further develop a diverse base of smart economic specialisms across our rural Region, including innovation and diversification in agriculture (agri-Tech, food and beverage), the marine (ports, fisheries and the wider blue economy potential), forestry, peatlands, <b>renewable energy</b>, tourism (leverage the opportunities from the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brands), social enterprise, circular economy, knowledge economy, global business services, fin-tech, specialised engineering, heritage, arts and</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development is a renewable energy project. The Site is located in agricultural lands, represents diversification for the farmers involved. The Proposed Development also provides the opportunity to reinforce the existing local renewable energy industry knowledge and skills base, providing stability and diversity to the rural economy that can drive further investment.</p>

Regional Policy Objective (RPO)	Project contribution
<p><i>culture, design and craft industries as dynamic drivers for our rural economy.</i></p>	
<p><i>RPO 56 Low Carbon Economy;</i></p> <p><i>a. The RSES 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;</i></p> <p><i>b. It is an objective to develop enterprises that create and employ green technologies.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>d. Local authorities shall include objectives in statutory land use plans to promote energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings, including retro fitting of energy efficiency measures in the existing building stock, energy efficiency in traditional buildings and initiatives to achieve Nearly Zero-Energy Buildings (NZEB) standards in line with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD).</i></p> <p><i>e. It is an objective to support investments in energy efficiency of existing commercial and public building stock with a target of all public buildings and at least one-third of total commercial premises upgraded to BER Rating 'B'. Local authorities shall report</i></p>	<p>Renewable energy, wind energy in particular, is identified throughout this review as being required to play a vital role in mitigating climate change by transitioning to a low carbon economy and society. The Proposed Development will contribute to the regions electricity network by producing approx. 6.9 MW of renewable electricity.</p> <p>The Site has been selected for its excellent wind resource and minimal environmental impacts; these impacts have been assessed throughout this EIAR.</p> <p>By producing renewable energy for use in the region, the Proposed Development helps to contribute to lowering the carbon footprint of existing and new buildings.</p>

Regional Policy Objective (RPO)	Project contribution
<p><i>annually on energy usage in all public buildings and will achieve a target of 33% improvement in energy efficiency in all buildings in accordance with the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP)</i></p>	
<p><i>RPO 96: Integrating Renewable Energy Sources; To support the sustainable development, maintenance and upgrading of electricity and gas network grid infrastructure to integrate renewable energy sources and ensure our national and regional energy system remains safe, secure and ready to meet increased demand as the regional economy grows.</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development produces renewable wind energy by harnessing the wind resource of the southern region and helping to meet the increased energy demand as the regional economy grows.</p> <p>The Proposed Development includes the Electrical Substation and Grid Connection which will become assets of the nation grid, upgrading the electricity infrastructure in the region.</p>
<p><i>RPO 99: Renewable Wind Energy; To support the sustainable development of renewable wind energy (onshore and offshore) at appropriate locations and related grid infrastructure in the Region in compliance with national Wind Energy Guidelines.</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development is an excellent example of sustainable development (see <b>Section 4.8.4</b>) it has been assessed under each of the topics contained in the EIAR and has been found to be in a suitable location. The Proposed Development is located in an area “Acceptable in Principle”, with part of the Proposed Development within the “Open to Consideration” to wind farm development in the Cork County Development Plan.</p> <p>The Proposed Development has been designed in accordance with the current Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 and has had regard to the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines (see <b>Section 4.7.1</b> and</p>

Regional Policy Objective (RPO)	Project contribution
<p><i>RPO 100: Indigenous Renewable Energy Production and Grid Injection; To support the integration of indigenous renewable energy production and grid injection.</i></p>	<p><b>4.7.2).</b>                      The Proposed Development will provide up to 6.9 MW of renewable, indigenously produced wind energy. This additional renewable power generated will contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels, improve regional/national energy security and help Ireland achieve our renewable electricity targets.</p>
Regional Policy Objective (RPO)	Project contribution
<p><i>RPO 96: Integrating Renewable Energy Sources; To support the sustainable development, maintenance and upgrading of electricity and gas network grid infrastructure to integrate renewable energy sources and ensure our national and regional energy system remains safe, secure and ready to meet increased demand as the regional economy grows.</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development produces renewable wind energy by harnessing the wind resource of the southern region and helping to meet the increased energy demand as the regional economy grows.                      The Proposed Development includes the Electrical Substation and Grid Connection which will become and asset of the nation grid upgrading the electricity infrastructure in the region.</p>
<p><i>RPO 99: Renewable Wind Energy; To support the sustainable development of renewable wind energy (onshore and offshore) at appropriate locations and related grid infrastructure in the Region in compliance with national Wind Energy Guidelines</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development will have a capacity to produce between 6.9 MW of renewable wind energy which will improve the security of the region's energy supply, helping to stabilise and reduce energy prices.                       The Proposed Development has been assessed under each of the topics contained in the EIAR, and it has been found to be in a suitable location.</p>

Regional Policy Objective (RPO)	Project contribution
<p><i>RPO 100: Indigenous Renewable Energy Production and Grid Injection; To support the integration of indigenous renewable energy production and grid injection.</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development in Derreenacrinnig, County Cork will provide up to 6.9 MW of renewable, indigenously produced wind energy. This additional renewable power generated will contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels, improve regional/national energy security and help Ireland achieve our renewable electricity targets.</p>
<p><i>RPO 40 Regional Economic Resilience It is an objective to sustainably develop, deepen and enhance our regional economic resilience by widening our economic sectors, boosting innovation, export diversification, productivity enhancement and access to new markets.</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development represents a major investment in the region and in renewable energy. It will provide an improved renewable electricity supply in the area. This could attract new enterprise to the region, bringing jobs, economic growth and population increases. The increased renewable electricity supply will also help to meet increased demand to facilitate further economic growth.</p>
<p><i>RPO 46 Digital and Physical Infrastructure in Rural Areas</i>  <i>It is an objective to expedite the completion of infrastructure servicing diverse settlements to support innovation, enterprise start-ups and competitiveness. This includes high quality broadband and mobile communication services to all rural locations, water and wastewater facilities for the growth of settlements, sustainable energy supply, enhanced transport connectivity including rural public transport services and greenway walking and pedestrian corridors between</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development, by producing renewable electricity in a rural area, provides a sustainable energy supply. The Proposed Development includes the Electrical Substation and Grid Connection which will become an asset of the national grid upgrading the physical electricity infrastructure in the region. By providing renewable electricity, the Proposed Development further improves the environmental impact of an increase in electronic vehicle use, including those</p>

Regional Policy Objective (RPO)	Project contribution
<i>settlements.</i>	in the public sector. It also increases the stability of energy supply to meet the growing demand of increased electrification.
RPO 49 Innovation in Rural areas It is an objective to support innovation, enterprise start-ups and competitiveness of our rural Region.	<p>The Proposed Development is located in a rural area, it represents a significant investment into the locality in an innovative and sustainable industry and will create jobs.</p> <p>It will provide an improved renewable electricity supply in the area. This could attract new enterprise to the region, bringing jobs, economic growth and population increases. The increased renewable electricity supply will also help to meet increased demand to facilitate further economic growth.</p>
<p>RPO 50 Diversification</p> <p>It is an objective to further develop a diverse base of smart economic specialisms across our rural Region, including innovation and diversification in agriculture (agri-Tech, food and beverage), the marine (ports, fisheries and the wider blue economy potential), forestry, peatlands, <b>renewable energy</b>, tourism (leverage the opportunities from the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brands), social enterprise, circular economy, knowledge economy, global business services, fin-tech, specialised engineering, heritage, arts and culture, design and craft industries as dynamic divers for our rural economy.</p>	<p>The lands involved in the Proposed Development include agricultural land for livestock grazing, this can continue once the construction phase is complete, effectively enabling these farmers to diversify.</p> <p>The Proposed Development provides the opportunity to reinforce the existing local renewable energy industry knowledge and skills base, providing the stability and diversity to the rural economy that can stimulate further industry investment to take place.</p>

Regional Policy Objective (RPO)	Project contribution
<p>RPO 56 Low Carbon Economy</p> <p>a. The RSES 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;</p> <p>b. It is an objective to develop enterprises that create and employ green technologies;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>d. Local authorities shall include objectives in statutory land use plans to promote energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings, including retro fitting of energy efficiency measures in the existing building stock, energy efficiency in traditional buildings and initiatives to achieve Nearly Zero-Energy Buildings (NZEB) standards in line with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD).</p> <p>e. It is an objective to support investments in energy efficiency of existing commercial and public building stock with a target of all public buildings and at least one-third of total commercial premises upgraded to BER Rating 'B'. Local authorities shall report annually on energy usage in all public buildings and will achieve a target of 33%</p>	<p>Renewable energy, wind energy in particular, is identified throughout this review as being required to play a vital role in mitigating climate change by transitioning to a low carbon economy and society. The Proposed Development will contribute to the regions electricity network by producing 6.9 MW of renewable electricity.</p> <p>The Site has been selected for its excellent wind resource and minimal environmental impacts; these impacts will be assessed throughout this EIAR. By producing renewable energy for use in the region, the Proposed Development helps to contribute to the energy efficiency of existing buildings, lowering their carbon footprint.</p>

Regional Policy Objective (RPO)	Project contribution
improvement in energy efficiency in all buildings in accordance with the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP).	

The RSES sets the framework for the County Development Plans, in this case the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028. This plan highlights the vital importance of a reliable energy supply, increasing renewable energy in line with regional and national targets and the need to transition to a low carbon economy and society.

**4.6.9 The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028**

The Cork County Development Plan (CDP) 2022-2028 was adopted on Monday 25th April 2022 and it came into effect on Monday 6th June 2022. The CDP sets out the blueprint for development in the county.

The Proposed Development complies with the Wind Energy Strategy Section 13.6.3 of the CDP; the Site is located in an area “Acceptable in Principle”, with part of the Development within the “Open to Consideration” for Wind Farms.

The CDP has a number of objectives which are relevant to the Proposed Development, shown in **Table 4.3**.

The CDP underpins its visions and main aims for the county by core quality of life principles, those most relevant to the Proposed Development include Sustainability and Climate Action. It includes a chapter (13) on Energy and Telecommunications, the aim of which is to:

*“Facilitate and support investment in sustainable energy production and infrastructure in Cork to meet the future local, regional and national needs, while transitioning to a low carbon economy, addressing the climate change challenge with greenhouse gas emissions and protection of the environmental, cultural and heritage assets of the county.”*

The CDP outlines the importance of reliable energy supply and the growing energy demand in the county. Section 13.5 expands on the commitments of the county towards increasing renewable energy in line with national targets. In terms of wind energy, the plan states:

*“Cork County currently has 38 commissioned wind farms with capacity of 603 MW, equivalent to approximately 16% of the national capacity. However, if Ireland is to meet*

---

*our renewable energy target, then we need to **double capacity nationally over the next ten years**. On a pro rata basis, that could see capacity in **Cork expand to 1,100 MW**. At present there are valid but unimplemented permissions in the county for a further 200 MW of wind power.”*

Accounting for the unimplemented permissions, County Cork remains almost 300 MW behind its stated target for wind energy. The Proposed Development will contribute 48 MW of renewable energy, assisting Cork County Council in achieving these wind energy targets by providing approximately 16% of the shortfall.

The CDP policies relevant to the Proposed Development are set out in **Table 4.3**. The Proposed Development has been evaluated against these in order to illustrate that they align with the relevant policies set out in the CDP. It should be noted that environmental and amenity considerations have been assessed throughout this EIAR (**Chapters 5 – 18**), and the findings confirm the Proposed Development is in compliance with the relevant objectives and policies in the CDP.

**Table 4.3: Relevant Planning Policies from The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028**

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
13	<p><b>ET 13.1 Energy</b></p> <p><i>a) Ensure that County Cork fulfils its potential in contributing to the sustainable delivery of a diverse and secure energy supply and to harness the potential of the county to assist in meeting renewable energy targets and managing overall energy demand.</i></p> <p><i>b) During the life of this plan, the Planning Authority will prepare a renewable energy strategy for the county.</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development will make a significant and meaningful contribution to renewable energy targets in the county and harness the wind energy potential of the county.</p> <p>The additional renewable energy that the Proposed Development will generate will help support Ireland's wider low carbon transition helping to meet the additional electrical demand created by electrification of the transport and heating networks and growing tech industry installations such as data centres.</p>
13	<p><b>ET 13.2 Renewable Energy</b></p> <p><i>a) Support Ireland's renewable energy commitments as outlined in Government Energy and Climate Change policies by facilitating the development of renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, geothermal, hydro and bioenergy and energy storage at suitable locations within the county where such development has satisfactorily demonstrated that it will not have adverse impacts on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or amenities.</i></p>	<p>The Policy wording of ET 13.2 recognises the opportunity to benefit from increased renewable energy generation with limited additional environmental impacts and this is consistent with the findings of the EIAR. The impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or amenities is addressed in Policy 13.4 below.</p> <p>In <b>Chapter 5: Population and Human Health</b> the socio-economic impacts of the Proposed Development are assessed in terms of impacts on the economy, employment and population. The overall impacts on population and human health have been</p>

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
	<p><i>b) Support and facilitate renewable energy proposals that bring about a direct socio-economic benefit to the local community. The Council will engage with local communities and stakeholders in energy and encourage developers to consult with local communities to identify how they can invest in/gain from significant renewable energy development.</i></p> <p><i>c) Support the development of new and emerging renewable energy technologies / fuels for the transport sector.</i></p> <p><i>d) To promote the potential of micro renewables where it can be demonstrated that that it will not have adverse impacts on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or amenities.</i></p>	<p>assessed as having the potential to result in a moderate, positive, short-term impact during the Construction and Decommissioning Phases and moderate, positive and long-term during the operational phase.</p> <p>Local communities have been consulted throughout the design and planning processes and a full report can be found in <b>Appendix 1.2: Community Consultation Report.</b></p>

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b><i>ET 13.4: Wind Energy</i></b></p> <p><i>In order to facilitate increased levels of renewable energy production consistent with national targets on renewable energy and climate change mitigation as set out in the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030, the Climate Action Plan 2021, and any updates to these targets, and in accordance with Ministerial Guidelines on Wind Energy Development, the Council will support further development of on-shore wind energy projects including the upgrading, repowering or expansion of existing infrastructure, at appropriate locations within the county in line with the Wind Energy Strategy and objectives detailed in this chapter and other objectives of this plan in relation to climate change, biodiversity, landscape, heritage, water management and environment etc.</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development meets the objectives set down in policy ET 13.4, by providing much needed renewable energy at a time when there is a pressing need to meet the Government ambitious 80% renewable electricity target by 2030 (9 GW of onshore wind by 2030 and 6 GW by 2025) as set out in the Climate Action Plan 2025.</p> <p>Wind Energy Strategy: The Proposed Development complies with the Wind Energy Strategy Section 13.6.3 of the CDP; the Site is located in an area “Acceptable in Principle”, with part of the Proposed Development within the “Open to Consideration” for Wind Farms.</p> <p>Landscape; In <b>Chapter 12</b> of the EIAR for the Proposed Development, the Landscape and Visual assessment concluded that the Proposed Development would not give rise to any significant adverse landscape or visual amenity effects (including residential amenity). The EIAR Landscape &amp; Visual Amenity (L&amp;V) chapter also considered effects upon “views and prospects” included in the CDP. The findings demonstrate that the landscape can accommodate the Proposed Development without giving rise to significant adverse effects.</p>

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
		<p>Climate change; By producing renewable energy the Proposed Development contributes to mitigating climate change by reducing emissions from the energy sector. This is fully assessed in <b>Chapter 9: Air and Climate</b>. A carbon calculator is also included in the assessment which finds the savings due to displacing fossil fuels in electricity generation of 5,966 tonnes of carbon dioxide per annum.</p> <p><b>Biodiversity</b>                      EIAR <b>Chapters 6</b> (Biodiversity) assesses the potential impacts and effects of the Proposed Development on biodiversity while the report to inform screening for appropriate assessment and Natura Impact statement (NIS) considers the potential impacts and effects on European (Natura 2000) sites. The mitigation measures set out in the Biodiversity chapter of the EIAR, in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and the AA Screening will ensure that there will be no significant effects nor adverse impacts on the integrity of sites designated for nature conservation as a result of the Project. This approach aligns with Objective BE 15-2 (a), (b), (c) and (e) of the Proposed Development plan biodiversity policy.</p> <p><b>Heritage;</b> There are no recorded archaeological sites located</p>

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
		<p>within the Redline Boundary while there are 48 examples located within external lands extending for 2 km from the proposed turbine locations. There are no examples located within 480 m of the proposed turbine locations within the Proposed Development and the majority (36 no.) are located at distances of over 1 km from the proposed turbine locations.</p> <p>None of the archaeological sites within the 2 km Study Area are listed as National Monuments in State Care but, regardless of the existing condition of their above ground remains, they have the potential to possess sub-surface features, artefacts and other archaeological remains, which may be of high value. This cannot be ascertained without recourse to archaeological excavation, but these attributes are unlikely to be subject to effects in the absence of direct impacts.</p> <p>No potential unrecorded archaeological sites or other features of potentially cultural heritage interested were noted during the inspection of adjoining lands within the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The conclusions of the cultural heritage and archaeological assessment within the EIAR determined that the environment can accommodate the Proposed Development without giving rise to</p>

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
		<p>significant direct, indirect or cumulative effects on on cultural heritage. This is fully assessed in <b>Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage</b>.</p> <p><b>Water management;</b> All surface waters and groundwaters associated with the Site were considered sensitive and important attributes in their own right which must be protected in accordance with the Water Framework Directive to achieve and maintain at least 'Good' status. A comprehensive suite of drainage measures has been developed to protect all receiving waters from potential impacts during the Construction, Operation and Decommissioning of the Proposed Development in the catchment of the Site and along the proposed Grid Connection Route. The assessment and associated proposed mitigation measures are in <b>Chapter 6: Biodiversity</b> and <b>Chapter 8: Hydrology and Hydrogeology</b>. The Surface Water Management Plan (<b>Appendix 2.1 – Management Plan 5</b>) details the site drainage that has been designed for the Site using the principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The drainage system for the Proposed Development is designed in a manner to ensure there are no changes to the baseline water quality within or downstream of the Site. With the implementation of mitigation measures and appropriate environmental engineering controls, the Proposed Development will not jeopardise any waterbody</p>

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
		<p>achieving good status under the WFD, nor will it result in the deterioration of any waterbody's status under the WFD. The findings demonstrate that the environment can accommodate the Proposed Development without giving rise to significant hydrological impacts.</p> <p><b>Environment:</b> This is assessed throughout the EIAR and the effects on the environment as a result of the Proposed Development have been determined to be not significant.</p>
<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b><i>ET 13.5: Wind Energy Projects</i></b></p> <p><i>a) Support a plan led approach to wind energy development in County Cork through the identification of areas for wind energy development. The aim in identifying these areas is to ensure that there are no significant environmental constraints, which could be foreseen to arise in advance of the planning process.</i></p> <p><i>b) On-shore wind energy projects should focus on areas considered 'Acceptable in Principle' and 'Areas Open to Consideration' and generally avoid "Normally Discouraged" areas in this Plan.</i></p>	<p>The Project is located in an area "Acceptable in Principle", with part of the Proposed Development within the "Open to Consideration" in the CDP as advised under policy 13.5b.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will add to Cork County Council's renewable energy portfolio and contribute to climate change mitigation. It has been found not to have any (visual/noise/shadowing) significant adverse effect upon the amenity of any inhabited residential dwellings.</p> <p>The Proposed Development has been assessed against each of the environmental topics contained in the EIAR and adverse residual impacts are avoided.</p>

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b><i>ET 13.7 Open to Consideration</i></b></p> <p><i>Commercial wind energy development is open to consideration in these areas where proposals can avoid adverse impacts on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Residential amenity particularly in respect of noise, shadow flicker and visual impact;</i></li> <li>• <i>Urban areas and Metropolitan/Town Green Belts;</i></li> <li>• <i>Natura 2000 Sites (SPA and SAC), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's) or adjoining areas affecting their integrity and other sites of significant ecological value.</i></li> <li>• <i>Architectural and archaeological heritage;</i></li> <li>• <i>Visual quality of the landscape and the degree to which impacts are highly visible over wider areas.</i></li> <li>• <i>In planning such development, consideration should also be given to the cumulative impacts of such proposals."</i></li> </ul>	<p>The Proposed Development is located in an area "Acceptable in Principle", with part of the Proposed Development within the "Open to Consideration" for commercial wind energy development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development, including the turbine parameters, has been assessed against each of the topics contained in the EIAR and adverse residual impacts are avoided.</p> <p>The EIAR submitted as part of the planning application has considered fully all the criteria listed under the following chapters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 3: Alternatives Considered</li> <li>• Chapter 5: Population and Human Health</li> <li>• Chapter 6: Biodiversity</li> <li>• Chapter 7: Land and Soils</li> <li>• Chapter 8: Hydrology and Hydrogeology</li> <li>• Chapter 9: Air and Climate</li> <li>• Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration</li> <li>• Chapter 11: Traffic and Transportation</li> <li>• Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual Amenity</li> <li>• Chapter 13: Material Assets and Other Issues</li> <li>• Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage</li> <li>• Chapter 15: Shadow Flicker</li> </ul>

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 16: Major Accidents &amp; Natural Disasters</li> <li>• Chapter 17: Interactions of the Foregoing</li> </ul> <p><b>Residential Amenity;</b></p> <p>It has been shown that noise due to the Project, including cumulative effects with operational and consented wind farms will meet all current guidelines at all local properties. The closest house to a turbine that is to be assessed as part of this EIAR, is H1. This is located 983 m from T3. <b>Chapter 10</b> addresses Noise and Vibration. The predicted noise levels are orders of magnitude below the noise limits imposed previously for the Site and well within the lower noise limits proposed in the draft 2019 Guidelines which are up for review. Furthermore, the levels predicted assume that all turbines are downwind at the same time to all receptors a scenario which will not occur. The maximum predicted noise levels are below the existing background noise levels at all locations. The noise levels predicted at the nearest receptors are orders of magnitude below the level at which risk of hearing damage, or indeed negative health effects are possible. Noise during construction of the Proposed Development and Decommissioning will be managed to comply with best practice, legislation and guidelines current at that time so that effects are not significant. <b>Chapter 15</b> addresses Shadow Flicker. Where</p>

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
		<p>significant shadow flicker effects are predicted to affect a sensitive receptor, these will be mitigated by adapting turbine control systems to stop the relevant turbine when shadow flicker conditions are present. In this instance, a shadow control system will be installed to eliminate potential for shadow flicker effects. The installation of a blade shadow control system on all wind turbines will eliminate shadow flicker impacts from the Proposed Development, therefore, removing cumulative shadow flicker impacts.</p> <p>Based on the landscape, visual and cumulative assessment In <b>Chapter 12</b> of the EIAR for the Proposed Development, it is considered that there will not be any significant effects arising from the proposed Derreenacrinnig West Wind Farm.</p> <p>The EIAR L&amp;V chapter also considered effects upon different receptor types, including designated views, community views, centres of population, major routes, tourism, recreational and heritage features. The findings demonstrate that the Proposed Development is not considered to generate significant visual impacts at receptors in the Central Study Area or Wider Study Area.</p>

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
		<p><b>Biodiversity</b></p> <p>Sites designated for nature conservation, such as Natura 2000 sites and Natural Heritage Areas, are considered in the Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment and the EIAR prepared for the Proposed Development. No European Sites occur within or bound the Site with the nearest European Site, the Derryclogher (Knockboy) Bog SAC, located approximately 5.6 km from the Ballylicky terminus of the proposed Grid Connection route. The nearest European Site to the proposed wind farm site is the Bandon River SAC, located approximately 11.5 km to the east.</p> <p>Given the absence of impact pathways there will be no potential for the conveyance any emissions that could arise during the Operation Phase or Decommissioning Phase associated with the Project to European Sites. Furthermore given the absence of any overlap between the proposed wind farm site and population of mobile qualifying species of SACs and SPA there will be no potential for the wind farm to interact or effect such populations. As such all European Sites are located outside the zone of influence of the Project. In view of this the Project will not have the potential to combine with other plans or projects to result in likely cumulative effects to European Sites.</p>

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
		<p><b>Chapter 6</b> of the EIAR focusses on the potential for impacts upon National and Local Sites of Ecological Importance and does not re-examine impacts upon European Sites.</p> <p>The Proposed Development design has been developed within the constraints of Project including telecommunications, landscape, hydrology etc. The design has sought to avoid important ecological features where possible and where this has not been possible mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures have been employed to address the potential effect of the Proposed Development on the biodiversity of the Site.</p> <p><b>Architecture and Archaeological Heritage</b></p> <p>Based on the assessment in <b>Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage</b>, the Project will not result in any predicted direct negative impacts on any known archaeological monuments or architectural heritage structures. The Project will result in a range of slight to moderate, indirect adverse visual effects on the settings of archaeological monuments located within surrounding lands during the operational phase. These indirect effects will be long term in duration but will be reversed following the Decommissioning Phase.</p> <p>Cumulative impacts are assessed in each chapter.</p>

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b><i>ET 13-9: National Wind Energy Guidelines</i></b>  <i>“Development of onshore wind should be designed and developed in line with the ‘Planning Guidelines for Wind Farm Development 2006’ and ‘Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019” and any relevant update of these guidelines.”</i></p>	<p>The Proposed Development is fully compliant with the DEHLG Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006.</p> <p>Until the draft guidelines are published by the Minister in accordance with Section 28, the applicable guidelines are the 2006 Wind Energy Development Guidelines. The CDP has incorporated the draft 2019 Guidelines. As stated in <b>Chapter 15: Shadow Flicker</b>, the Proposed Development will be brought in line with the requirements of the 2019 draft guidelines, which allows for no shadow flicker to impact an existing sensitive receptor, through effective implementation of the mitigation measures.</p> <p>The Proposed Development takes cognisance of this policy. Following feedback received by the Dept. during the public consultation period, the Draft Guidelines have not been progressed or adopted to date.</p> <p>In relation to the Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019 the following is of note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noise impacts are assessed in <b>Chapter 10: Noise</b> and are in line with the 2006 Wind Energy Development Guidelines.</li> <li>• The layout has achieved a minimum separation distance of 700 m (4x the turbine height) between turbine locations and the</li> </ul>

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
		<p>closest inhabited houses in line with the Draft guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To avoid shadow flicker at inhabited houses, assessment and mitigation measures have been included in the Proposed Development. The mitigation measures (turbine controlling technology -, Scada system) can comply with the draft guidelines, should they come into effect. Full details of this can be found in <b>Chapter 13: Material Assets and Other Issues</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b><i>ET 13-10: Development in line with Best Practice</i></b>  <i>“Ensure that wind energy developments in County Cork are undertaken in observance with best industry practices, and with full engagement of communities potentially impacted by the development. In accordance with the Code of Practice ‘Good Practice for Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2016’, wind energy development operators are required to put in place an effective complaints procedure in relation to all aspects of wind energy development projects, where members of the public can bring any concerns they have about operational difficulties, including noise and nuisance to the attention of the wind energy development operator.”</i></p>	<p>The design and environmental assessment of the Proposed Development has been undertaken to consider all extant, and emerging policy, guidance and best practice on wind energy development.</p> <p>In accordance with the Department’s Code of Practice ‘Good Practice for Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2016’ significant community engagement has taken place.</p> <p>A project leaflet was hand delivered to all residences within a 2 km radius of the Site. Leaflets were left at approximately 60 residences in the area on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024. The leaflets provided an overview of the Proposed Development, a Site Location Map, an overview of The Applicant including their projects, an overview of community benefits and details of the date, time and venue of the PID.</p>

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
		<p>A Public Information Day (PID) was undertaken on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024 from 3-7 pm, to establish a dialogue with the local community regarding the Proposed Development being promoted by Derreenacrinnig West Wind Farm Ltd in the local area. A total of 50 no. people attended the PID at Drimoleague Parish Hall on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024.</p> <p>A Community Consultation Report has been appended to this EIAR as <b>Appendix 1.2</b>.</p>
13	<p><b><i>ET 13-11: Public Consultation and Community Support</i></b></p> <p><i>(a) Require wind energy developers to carry out active public consultation with the local community in advance of and in addition to the statutory public consultation required as part of the planning application process.</i></p> <p><i>(b) Applications for large scale wind energy development require a 'Community Report' with the planning application documents detailing the full extent of community and wider public engagement.</i></p>	<p>In accordance with the Code of Practice 'Good Practice for Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2016', active public consultation was carried out with the local community during the period August 2020 to December 2024.</p> <p>A Community Consultation Report has been prepared (<b>Appendix 1.2</b>) and is included with the planning application detailing the full extent of community and wider engagement. The public consultation process has been further summarised in <b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>.</p> <p>A number of consultations took place via online webinars, a dedicated website, a virtual consultation room, in person events, door-to-door engagement, leaflet distribution, newsletters and booklets.</p>

Chapter	Policy Details	Statement of Compliance
		<p>In addition to helping Ireland reduce environmentally damaging fossil fuel emissions and helping avoid significant fines from the EU, the Proposed Development will also contribute positively to the national and regional economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project has the potential to bring significant positive benefits to local communities. The Proposed Development benefits to the local community would include significant investment in local infrastructure and electrical systems, local job creation, and a contribution of approximately €600,000 to Cork County Council for the first 15 years of Proposed Development; and it will provide opportunity for local community investment in the Project in line with the new Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS). This is a Government of Ireland initiative that provides support to renewable energy projects in Ireland. A Community Benefit Fund will be put in place for the RESS period (i.e., 15 years of the operation) of the Project to provide direct funding to those areas surrounding the Project. The significant annual community benefit fund will be established in line with Government policy which will include funding for both wider community initiatives and a Near Neighbour scheme focused on houses in close proximity to the Project.</li> </ul>

#### 4.6.9.1 Wind Energy Strategy

County Cork's Wind Energy Strategy is contained in Section 13.6.7 of the CDP and includes a sieve mapping analysis to identify the most suitable areas for wind energy development. The Proposed Development is located in an area "Acceptable in Principle", with part of the Proposed Development within the "Open to Consideration" to wind farm development, as shown on **Figure 4.2**.

According to the strategy 'Open to consideration':

*"comprises almost 50% of the County area. Within these areas there are locations that may have potential for wind farm developments but there are also some environmental issues to be considered. This area has variable wind speeds and some access to the grid..."*

ET 13-7: Open to Consideration (CDP Objective):

*Commercial wind energy development is open to consideration in these areas where proposals can avoid adverse impacts on:*

- Residential amenity particularly in respect of noise, shadow flicker and visual impact;
- *Urban areas and Metropolitan/Town Green Belts;*
- *Natura 2000 Sites (SPA and SAC), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's) or adjoining areas affecting their integrity and other sites of significant ecological value.*
- Architectural and archaeological heritage;
- *Visual quality of the landscape and the degree to which impacts are highly visible over wider areas.*

*In planning such development, consideration should also be given to the cumulative impacts of such proposals."*

Residential amenity, urban areas, archaeology and Sites Designated for Nature Conservation such as Natura 2000 sites, are all addressed in **Table 4.3** above. Protection of the Natura 2000 network is further dealt with under Development Policy Appraisal for policy 15-2 in **Table 4.3** above. Based on the landscape, visual and cumulative assessment which can be found in **Chapter 12** Landscape and Visual Amenity, it is considered that there will not be any significant effects arising from the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development is in compliance with the Cork CDP Landscape Policies, including Objective GI 14-10 which requires the management of development in the county consider the relevant landscape character, its distinctiveness and sensitivity in regard to the designations in the Cork County Draft Landscape Strategy

and protect High Value Landscapes. The Site has been assessed against this criteria in **Chapter 12**, is not situated in, or in proximity to, an area recognised as a 'High Value Landscape' (HVL). Impacts to scenic routes, important views and prospects are considered not significant, in line with policy GI 14-12, GI 14-13 and GI 1413. This is due in part to the Proposed Development's modest overall scale and extent along with the enclosed nature of the rugged landscape that includes broad scale forestry, farming and existing wind energy developments in the surrounding area which means the Proposed Development appears well assimilated in terms of both scale and function in such views.

Environmental issues have been considered throughout the EIAR processes, as effects have been identified, mitigation has been applied to reduce impacts and enhance positive benefits. The findings of the EIAR technical chapters demonstrate that the environment can accommodate the Proposed Development without giving rise to significant adverse residual effects including cumulative effects.

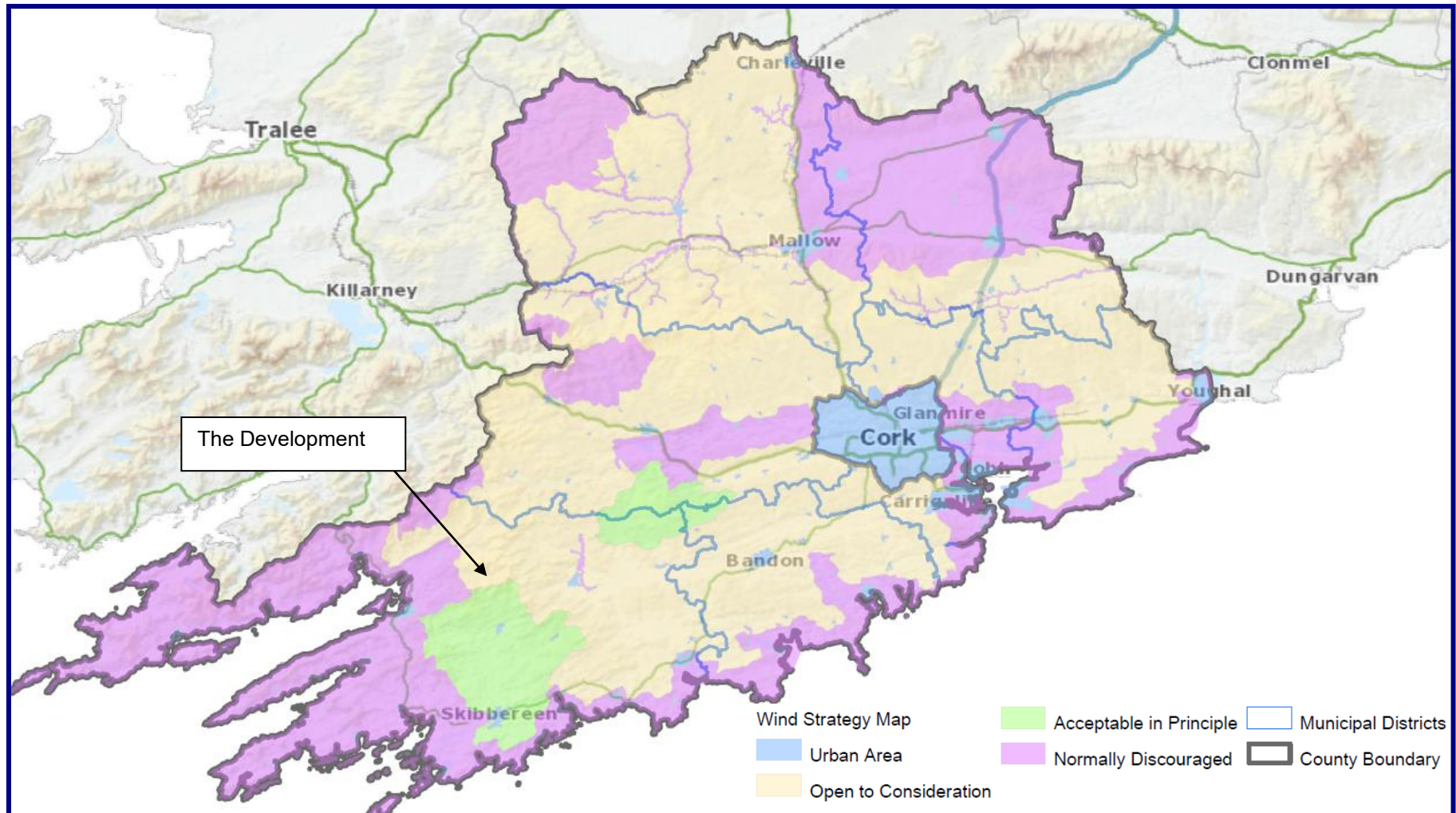


Figure 4.2: Extract from Chapter 13 of the CDP – Figure 13.3 Wind Energy Strategy Map

The Proposed Development will help to county Cork to achieve the goals outlined in the CDP and in National targets. Cork currently has 38 commissioned wind farms with capacity of 603 MW, equivalent to approximately 16% of the national capacity. As National targets aim to double renewable energy capacity over the next 10 years, Cork will have to expand its wind output to 1100 MW. At present, there are valid but unimplemented permissions in the county for a further 200 MW of wind power. The Proposed Development provides an opportunity to harness the excellent wind resources of County Cork, it has been assessed under each of the topics contained in the EIAR and has been found to be in a suitable location. The Proposed Development is located in an area "Acceptable in Principle", with part of the Proposed Development within the "Open to Consideration" to wind farm development. It has been designed to safeguard the environment, including residential amenity.

## **4.7 OTHER CORE PLANNING POLICY DOCUMENTS**

### **4.7.1 The Wind Energy Development Guidelines (WEDGs), Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (DoHLG, 2006)**

The Wind Energy Development Guidelines (DoHLG, 2006) advise that a reasonable balance must be achieved between meeting Government Policy on renewable energy and the proper planning and sustainable development of an area and it provides advice in relation to the information that should be submitted with planning applications. The effects on residential amenity, the environment, nature conservation, birds and the landscape should be addressed. It states that particular landscapes of very high sensitivity may not be appropriate for wind energy development.

The Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 remain valid until the revised, Draft Wind Energy Guidelines 2019 are finalised and published by the government.

### **4.7.2 The Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines (DoHLG, 2019)**

The key aspects for the draft proposed new wind energy guidelines include the following:

- a visual amenity setback of 4 times the turbine height between a wind turbine and the nearest residential property, subject to a mandatory minimum distance of 500 metres.
- the elimination of shadow flicker.
- the application of a more stringent noise limit, consistent with World Health Organisation standards.
- the introduction of new obligations in relation to community engagement with local communities along with the provision of community benefit measures.

The Proposed Development has been designed in accordance with the current Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 and has had regard to the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines in relation to:

- Noise impacts (assessed in **Chapter 10: Noise**) are in line with the guidance.
- The layout has achieved a minimum separation distance over the 600 m buffer (4x150 m) between turbine locations and the closest dwellings.
- To avoid shadow flicker at nearby dwellings, assessment and mitigation measures have also been included in the Project, in line with the draft guidelines, full details of this can be found in **Chapter 5: Population and Human Health**.
- Engagement with local communities has taken place throughout the design and planning phases of the Proposed Development. Full details can be found in **Chapter 1; Introduction** and in the Community Consultation Report in **Appendix 1.2**.
- Community Benefit: Establishing a community fund of up to €99,163 annually in the first 15 years of operation that will be administered by a management committee including local community representatives, in line with the Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) Community Benefit Fund Good Practice Principles published in 2021<sup>20</sup>.

#### 4.7.3 National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025

The National Landscape Strategy for Ireland sets out a roadmap. The objectives of the National Landscape Strategy are to:

- *Implement the European Landscape Convention by integrating landscape into our approach to sustainable development.*
- *Establish and embed a public process of gathering, sharing and interpreting scientific, technical and cultural information in order to carry out evidence-based identification and description of the character, resources and processes of the landscape.*
- *Provide a policy framework, which will put in place measures at national, sectoral - including agriculture, tourism, energy, transport and marine - and local level, together with civil society, to protect, manage and properly plan through high quality design for the sustainable stewardship of our landscape.*
- *Ensure that we take advantage of opportunities to implement policies relating to landscape use that are complementary and mutually reinforcing and that conflicting policy objectives are avoided in as far as possible.*

---

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/5f12f-community-projects-and-benefit-funds-ress/>

## 4.8 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The planning application should be considered on the basis of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and on the likely effects of the Proposed Development on the environment.

### 4.8.1 The National Interest and Strategic Importance

The Proposed Development will make a valuable contribution to climate change adaptation and greenhouse gas reductions as part of the international (Section 4.4) and European (Section 4.5) efforts to combat climate change.

Ireland is facing significant challenges in efforts to meet renewable energy and emissions targets and is falling behind in the longer-term movement away from fossil fuels. Ireland has one of the highest rates of importing fuel in Europe with energy import dependency increasing to 80% in 2021<sup>21</sup>. Energy demand in Ireland has been growing and is expected to continue to increase, especially electricity demand which is expected to grow by 37% to 2031<sup>22</sup>. Increases to the cost of carbon, supply issues and potential political insecurity increases fossil fuel price volatility. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, energy prices in Ireland have increased significantly. The SEAI's Electricity Prices in Ireland Report; January to June 2022<sup>23</sup>, found on average residential electricity prices increased 10.4% in the 12 months prior to June 2022. The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)<sup>24</sup> report on Energy Poverty published in 2022, has also warned that as many as 43% of households could now be in energy poverty.

The high rate of imported fossil fuel dependency, the increasing demand for electricity and current energy price volatility make it vital to introduce more domestic renewable energy generation plants, such as the Proposed Development, to provide reliable, secure and affordable energy supplies in Ireland. The Proposed Development could improve Irish energy security and reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels in line with the National Energy Security Framework (4.6.5) and the REPowerEU Plan (Section 4.5.3).

---

<sup>21</sup> SEAI. (2022). ENERGY IN IRELAND. [https://www.seai.ie/data-and-insights/seai-statistics/key-publications/energy-in-ireland/?qclid=EAlaIqobChMI-LH\\_o6r8\\_QIV09\\_tCh23YAykEAAAYASAAEgJipvD\\_BwE](https://www.seai.ie/data-and-insights/seai-statistics/key-publications/energy-in-ireland/?qclid=EAlaIqobChMI-LH_o6r8_QIV09_tCh23YAykEAAAYASAAEgJipvD_BwE) Accessed 29/03/2023

<sup>22</sup> EirGrid. (2022). EirGrid's Generation Capacity Statement Predicts Challenging Outlook for Ireland <https://www.eirgridgroup.com/newsroom/eirgrids-generation-capac/#:~:text=The%20GCS%2C%20in%20its%20median,relatively%20consistent%20across%20the%20decade>. Accessed 29/05/2023

<sup>23</sup> SEAI. (2022). <https://www.seai.ie/publications/SEAI-EPR-data-for-JAN-to-JUN-2022.pdf> Accessed 19/04/2023.

<sup>24</sup> ESRI. (2022). Energy poverty at highest recorded rate <https://www.esri.ie/news/energy-poverty-at-highest-recorded-rate> Accessed 19/04/2023

The construction of the Proposed Development will also positively contribute to the regional economy bringing investment and jobs that will help to support and retain confidence in the key regional industries of construction and renewable energy.

#### **4.8.2 The Economic Importance of The Development**

The Proposed Development would represent a strategically significant investment in the locality of County Cork and the wider southern region. The Proposed Development will provide a multi-million euro benefit to both the Irish and local economies and the opportunity to reinforce the existing local renewable energy industry knowledge and skills base, providing the stability and diversity to the rural economy that can stimulate further industry investment to take place. This will have a positive economic impact with several Irish firms commissioned to work on the design, environmental assessment and planning aspects of the Project. Local suppliers will be used wherever possible during the construction phase and in the operational stage, Irish businesses will benefit from the provision of a reliable, local renewable energy source.

#### **4.8.3 Renewable Energy Policy**

The Proposed Development meets the objectives of Project 2040 as it will contribute to the economic, environmental, and social objectives of the NPF, in particular National Policy Objectives 69 & 70.

It is critical that a progressive approach is taken to development of renewable energy projects in order to deliver the CAP2025 objectives and support Ireland's commitment to reducing emissions by 51% by 2030 and achieving climate neutrality by 2050. Overall, the share of renewable electricity generation in Ireland increased from 38.6% to 40.7% from 2022 to 2023. The figure for 2024 will most likely fall somewhere between 40% and the interim, end of year target of 50% set out in CAP2025.

The targets are:

- Onshore wind, 2 GWs by 2025 and 9 GWs by 2030
- Offshore wind, at least 8 GWs by 2030
- Solar, up to 5 GW by 2025 and 8 GW by 2030

These targets are unchanged for the previous two years. The Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) continues to support the deployment of renewable energy projects. There was an additional 1,334 MW (more than a 20% increase on current installed capacity) of renewable generation capacity secured in 2024. The timetable for the fifth RESS auction (RESS 5) is due to be published.

As a form of sustainable energy, with an output potential of 6.9 MW of installed capacity at the Wind Farm, the Proposed Development will contribute significantly to renewable energy targets and the strategy supported in the RSES for the Southern Region.

The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 includes following objective:

*ET 13-4 "Wind Energy In order to facilitate increased levels of renewable energy production consistent with national targets on renewable energy and climate change mitigation as set out in the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030, the Climate Action Plan 2021, and any updates to these targets, and in accordance with Ministerial Guidelines on Wind Energy Development, the Council will support further development of on-shore wind energy projects including the upgrading, repowering or expansion of existing infrastructure, at appropriate locations within the county in line with the Wind Energy Strategy and objectives detailed in this chapter and other objectives of this plan in relation to climate change, biodiversity, landscape, heritage, water management and environment etc."*

The current installed capacity of County Cork stands at 603 MW<sup>25</sup>, equivalent to approximately 16% of the national capacity. However, if Ireland is to meet the renewable energy target, Ireland must double its national capacity over the next decade. Proportionally, that could see capacity in Cork expand to 1,100 MW. At present they are valid but unimplemented permissions in the county for a further 200 MW of wind power.

#### **4.8.4 The Proposed Development as Sustainable Development**

Sustainable Development is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs<sup>26</sup>. There are three pillars to sustainable development which are economic, social and environmental. The Proposed Development an excellent example of sustainable development, enshrined in the National Planning Framework. The Proposed Development meets each of the three pillars of sustainable development as outlined in **Table 4.4**.

---

<sup>25</sup> Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 - Volume 1 [volume-1-main-policy-material.pdf](#)

<sup>26</sup> Our Common Purpose: Bruntland Report, 1987

**Table 4.4: How the Proposed Development Interacts with the three pillars of sustainable development**

<b>Economic Role</b>	The Proposed Development would represent a strategically significant investment in the locality. The Proposed Development provides the opportunity to reinforce and grow the existing local renewable energy industry knowledge and skills base, providing the stability and diversity to the rural economy that can stimulate further development by attracting new business to the region due to the improved supply of electricity. The Proposed Development will have a positive economic impact with several Irish firms commissioned to work on the design, environmental assessment and planning.
<b>Social Role</b>	The influence of the Proposed Development to the de-carbonisation of the Irish electricity network will contribute positively to issues of strategic social importance. It will assist in mitigating climate change and improve air quality while enhancing energy security, including helping to stabilise and reduce energy costs. The Proposed Development will also create jobs, economic development and rural diversification.
<b>Environmental Role</b>	<p>Overall, the EIAR sets out that the environmental impacts arising from the Proposed Development can be satisfactorily mitigated. The findings demonstrate that the environment can accommodate the Proposed Development without giving rise to significant environmental impacts in line with the Cork County Development Plan objectives as well as regional, national and international policy. The NIS concludes on the best available scientific evidence that it can be demonstrated objectively that no elements of the Proposed Development will result in a significant adverse effect on the integrity or on the Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests of any relevant European site, either on their own or in-combination with other plans or projects, in light of their conservation objectives.</p> <p>Over 40 years, the Proposed Development would displace approximately 238,640 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. This would help to mitigate climate change and the impacts to ecosystem globally.</p>

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. The UN Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. Learn more and take action.

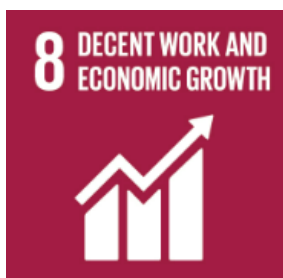
The Proposed Development positively contributes to the following UN Sustainable Development Goals:



By producing renewable energy, the Proposed Development contributes to the displacement of fossil fuels, which pollute the air, this improves air quality, which is closely linked to good health and well-being. See **Chapter 9: Air and Climate** for details.



The Proposed Development would produce a renewable energy source locally, this improves Ireland's energy security and helps to stabilize and reduce energy costs for households and businesses.



The Proposed Development is a renewable energy enterprise, representing a multi-million-euro investment into the Southern Region. This could attract new enterprise to the county, bringing jobs and economic growth. This is examined in more detail in Chapter 5: Population and Human Health.



The Proposed Development by producing renewable energy contributes to decarbonising industry sectors through electrification. The Electrical Substation and Grid Connection will become assets of the national grid under the management of EirGrid and assist in improving energy infrastructure in the region.



The renewable energy that the Proposed Development will generate will help support Ireland's low carbon transition and reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gases. The Proposed Development could provide power for to up to 12,000 homes with renewable energy.



By generating renewable energy and displacing fossil fuels the Proposed Development helps to reduce carbon emissions and other greenhouse gases and mitigate climate change, supporting Ireland's transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050.

## 4.9 CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this Planning Policy Chapter, renewable energy has been identified as being required to play an essential role in mitigating climate change by transitioning to a low carbon economy and society. By investing in renewable energy, Ireland can promote sustainable economic development using its own, secure and clean energy.

All planning applications have to be determined on their individual merits with due consideration given to the overall planning balance of a scheme. While many development proposals will encompass both positive and negative aspects that require consideration, planning weight should air on the side of a 'presumption in favour of development unless material considerations indicate otherwise' as per the paragraph 11 of National Planning Framework. The pressing need to address climate change, the challenges to energy security giving rise to the adoption of Regulation (EU) 2022/2577, and the presumption of overriding public interest being given to renewable energy projects, makes giving additional renewable energy projects, such as the Proposed Development this '*presumption in favour of development unless material considerations indicate otherwise*' more important.

The development in Derreenacrinnig, County Cork will provide up to 6.9 MW of renewable, domestically produced wind energy. This additional renewable power generated will contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels, improve regional/national energy security and help Ireland achieve our renewable electricity targets.

The Proposed Development contributes to supplying the national demand for renewable energy, which in the context of the ongoing climate emergency and increasing demand is an urgent Irish national priority.

While renewable energy in Ireland has come a long way, there is still a shortfall in where the nation needs to be to achieve increasing targets. Ireland missed its 2020 target for renewable energy achieving 12% instead of 16% of overall renewable energy share. There is a clear national mandate to accommodate significant onshore wind within the next decade with CAP2025 setting a 9 GW target for installed onshore wind energy capacity by 2030. In December 2024 this was 4.8 GW<sup>27</sup>, leaving a shortfall of 4.2 GW to be achieved in the next 5 years.

Further, the National Planning Framework emphasises a move to a low-carbon economy, reducing Ireland's carbon footprint and integrating climate action into the planning system. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region supports opportunities for onshore wind as a major source of renewable energy with an important role in delivering value and clean electricity for Ireland. The Cork County Development plan reinforces the national and regional energy policies. The Proposed Development is located in an area "Acceptable in Principle", with part of the Proposed Development within the "Open to Consideration" to wind farm development in the Renewable Energy Strategy for Co. Cork.

The Proposed Development meets the definition of Sustainable Development as defined by the National Planning Framework in terms of the three sustainability pillars: Economy, Environment and Social. It also contributes to the UN sustainability goals; 3 Good Health and Wellbeing, 7 Affordable and Clean Energy, 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, 9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructure, 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities and 13 Climate Action.

The development process adopted by the Applicant has represented a best practice approach to a renewable energy scheme design, minimising the potential impact through multiple design iterations and modifications to minimise the impact on the receiving environment, and ensuring compliance with the suite of planning policies and objectives of the Cork County Development Plan. The layout of the Proposed Development presented in the Planning Application and EIAR represents the optimum fit with the technical and environmental parameters of the Project.

---

<sup>27</sup> Wind Energy Ireland - Wind Stats [Latest Wind Energy Stats](#) [accessed 29/04/2025]

Environmental Impacts have been considered within this EIAR and through the process of assessment, embedded mitigation, and additional proposed mitigation outlined in the EIAR, NIS, CEMP and Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan it has been shown that the Proposed Development can be constructed and operated without significant effects arising, demonstrating the acceptability of the proposal.

This chapter outlines how the Proposed Development is compliant with International, European and National policy on energy security, emissions reductions and renewable energy production. It has reviewed policy for the Southern region and local County Cork policies and finds the Proposed Development complies with key renewable energy and environmental policy objectives.

In summary the Proposed Development would:

- Contribute to the 45% overall renewable energy target for the EU introduced by the REPowerEU Plan in light of the war in Ukraine.
- Contribute to assisting Ireland to increase from 42% electricity produced by renewable sources in 2020 to 80% by 2030 to meet the national target.
- Contribute to the National Development Plan 2021-2030's National Strategic Outcome number 13 to diversify away from fossil fuels to green energy which includes wind.
- Contributes towards climate change mitigation as specified in the National Planning Framework's National Policy Objective 69.
- Contribute toward renewable energy use and generation as specified in the National Planning Framework's National Policy Objective 70.
- Contribute 6.9 MW of renewable wind energy to the national CAP2025 target of 9 GW by 2030 helping to reduce the current 4.2 GW shortfall.
- Comply with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern region's goal of producing renewable energy to tackle climate change, meet predicted growth in demand and provide energy security.
- Support the local Cork County Development Plan Objective to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by promoting energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources utilising the natural resources of County Cork in an environmentally sustainable manner consistent with best practice and planning principles.
- Contribute to rural economic development in line with the Cork County Development Plans and of the RSES.

The Proposed Development is aligned to all the relevant planning policies identified throughout this chapter, and it will contribute to achieving renewable energy and reduction in emissions targets locally, regionally, and nationally.