



Cush Wind Farm

Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Annex 1.4: Scoping Response from Offaly County Council

Cush Wind Limited

Galetech Energy Services
Clondargan, Stradone, Co. Cavan Ireland
Telephone +353 49 555 5050
www.galetechenergy.com



From: Una McCafferkey <UMcCafferkey@offalycoco.ie>
Sent: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 3:34 PM
To: Declan Owens <declan.owens@galetechenergy.com>
Subject: Preplanning ref. BR23/05 - Cush Windfarm

Re: Cush Windfarm Preplan – SID (OCC ref. BR23/05)

Hi Declan,

Apologies for the delay in issuing these notes. I'm on leave tomorrow and Friday but in the office until 5/5.15pm today so give me a call (086 013 6661) if you need anything amended.

Date of meeting: 13th March 2023

Attendance from OCC: Andrew Murray (Senior Planner), Úna McCafferkey (Area Planner), Danny Managan (Engineer – Roads), John Mitchell (Senior Exec. Engineer / Town Engineer for Birr MD), Niall Hogan (Area Engineer – Birr MD). Apologies from Env & Water Services.

Attendance from Applicant: Declan Owens (Galetech), James Carville (Galetech).

Presentation

- Further to the information, which was submitted as part of the preplanning documentation, Declan provided an overview of the proposed development.
- At this time, a total of 11 no. turbines at 200m height are proposed on lands approximately 4km north of the town of Birr and c. 28km south-west of Tullamore in County Offaly. The proposed development, which will have an approximate electrical capacity of 79.2 megawatts (MW).
- Presence of 2 old quarries were noted and the residential dwellings in the area.
- Grid connection – a number of routes are being proposed.
- Hydro link to 7 no. Natura sites noted – NIS.
- Bird and mammal's surveys are done/ongoing.
- Flooding, location of national monuments outlined,
- Waiting on SID confirmation from the Board.
- Public Consultation held in January with a Liaison Office appointed.

OCC Comments

Roads

- Danny noted the requirement for pre and post surveys.
- RSA at entrances especially at N62.
- CMP and TTA to be prepared.
- Haul routes – highlight bridges, junctions, and roundabout amendments.
- Sightlines – undulating levels – vertical assessment.
- High volume of traffic using national road.
- Asked about the quarry source to be used and to be detailed.
- Galetech noted above and confirmed all necessary surveys/assessments/etc are underway. Advised they have no feedback from TII to date.

Birr MD (John & Niall)

- Peat soils along the haul route so survey are very important.
- Junction / Road opening licences.
- Construction activities – vertical alignment re; sightlines.

- Signage / marking/ lighting all to be considered and provided.
- Management of surface water within the site to be considered.
- Again, noted the volume of traffic along the national road / haul route.

Planning (Andrew and Úna)

- RESS = community benefit fund – full details to be provided.
- Walkway around the development – use of landscaping to reduce exposure along walking tracks.
- 200m noted and concerns raised.
- Within OCC Wind Strategy Area.
- Flooding to be considered in assessment.
- Landscape and Visual assessment – consider the cumulative impact given the existing/permitted development within the area.
- CDP – Section 3.2.6, Chapter 13 – DMS.
- NIS – Rapemills River – close to Natura sites.
- Use of existing vegetation – retain as much as possible.
- Location of mast noted.
- Biodiversity assessment.
- Noise assessment.
- Flicker assessment.
- Visual Assessment.
- Archaeology assessment to also consider underwater.
- Temporary construction compound – concerns about proximity of house to south west, delivery of materials, details to be provided including layout, GFA, access/sightlines, etc.
- AM = noted turbines 7, 10 and 11 – are they tied into a Substitute Consent (for bogs) application.
- AM = *Midland Cycling Destination* - link of Offaly cycleway, part of the site included, can we get a route through?
- Amenity Plan = please include – provision of walkway?
- ÚMC = to provide cycleway map. Please refer to Figure 6.13 Midlands Cycling Destination, Offaly Network Map – Offaly CDP – see attached for better copy.

Declan / James Response

- Status of existing bog = currently reviewing and seeking advice on Sub. Consent but OCC comments on this are noted.
- Access for the public to the development is a concern for some of the landowners.
- Willing to work with OCC / railway underpass to be considered??

End of Meeting.

Please Note:

- It should be noted that any advice is given in good faith and without prejudice to the formal consideration of any subsequent planning application. Article 247 (3) of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 2000 (as amended) states that “the carrying out of consultations shall not prejudice the performance by a Planning Authority of any other of its functions under this Act, or any regulations made under this Act and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or in legal proceedings.”
- Formal consideration of a planning application is necessarily more extensive than consideration at the pre-application stage because of consideration of any internal technical reports e.g. environment section or submissions from third parties or prescribed bodies.

- As with any planning application there is always the possibility of refusal by OCC or An Bord Pleanála, you are advised that any site purchase should be on condition of obtaining planning permission.
- Noted that the above list is not exclusive and requirements may vary depending on the individual site, its neighbourhood, and on site circumstances.

Regards,

Úna McCafferkey

Executive Planner
Planning Department

Offaly County Council

Áras An Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co Offaly R35 F893

T. +353 57 934 6800 | E. umccafferkey@offalycoco.ie | W. Offaly.ie



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Traffic, Roads, Public Safety Pre-planning Considerations - Birr MD

Preservation of the integrity of Regional and Local roads: *could include some/all of the following items:*

Identify the affected roads.

Any weight restrictions on these roads? Any weight restrictions on bridges in the area?

Condition Survey of the affected roads before and after the works. Survey shall include a Video Survey, Photographic Survey, Road Condition Survey, and a Falling Weight Deflectometer (FWD) Survey.

Road Safety Audit.

Traffic Impact Assessment.

Traffic and Transportation Assessment.

Resurfacing of roads or sections of roads where required.

Junction modifications required for over-sized loads?

Road Opening Licence for excavation of Road, Verge, Entrance-ways. Through the MapRoad online licencing system.

Traffic Safety at Entrance(s) and Site Compound: *could include some/all of the following items:*

At both construction phase and operations phase, un-obstructed sightlines shall be maintained at the proposed entrance(s). Also consider the appropriate use of signage, line-marking, lighting, and bound-surfaces at entrances.

Investigate whether turning manoeuvres can be safely accommodated – Auto-Track. All surface water runoff generated by the site shall be attenuated and catered for within the site. This is especially important at site entrances.

13.9.11 Transport and Infrastructure	
DMS-97 Safe Sight Distances required for access onto National, Regional and Local Roads	<p>The following safe sight distances, shall be provided from vehicular entrances on the road network;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Tertiary Roads: 60 metres;• Local Secondary Roads: 90 metres;• Local Primary Roads: 120 metres;• Regional Roads: 150 metres; and• National Roads: 230 metres. <p>As set out by design standards detailed in TII publications, sight distances shall be measured from a point 2.4 metres from the road edge at the proposed access to a point at the near edge of the approaching carriageway. The standard for local roads is at the discretion of the Planning Authority and may be reduced where it would not give rise to a specific traffic hazard.</p>

Temporary Traffic Management (TTM) – Construction Phase: *could include some/all of the following items:*

Construction projects can be evolutionary, and therefore call for specific Temporary Traffic Management Installations at various Phases of the project. As directed by Chapter 8 of the Traffic Signs Manual 2019, Phase-specific Temporary Traffic Management Plans must be created, coupled with site, and phase-specific Design Risk Assessments and Method Statements by a competent Designer. Design considerations that may be considered along with the General Principle of Prevention, for this location include, but not exclusively.

- The prevailing traffic speeds and traffic volumes. Busy commuter routes.
- Horizontal and vertical alignments of the road(s). Visibility. Obstacles. Undulations.
- Presence of existing entrances in the vicinity/ existing turning movements/ existing slow-moving traffic areas.
- Grass verges – shall be kept in check by the developer to ensure that TTM signage is visible at all times.
- Appropriate TTM Plan and risk assessments shall be in place for all activities on the public roads.
- Housekeeping: All public roads affected by the development shall be kept free of loose materials, dust, mud, spillages, and debris.
- For excavation works at entrances – the safety zone requirements and available residual road widths shall be considered as part of the Design Process.
- The impact that (i) queuing of delivery vehicles on the road before entry to the site, and (ii) slow-moving vehicles exiting the site, could have on traffic safety.
- The Provision of Variable Message Signs (VMS) for the duration of the project, or at specific phases of the project.

