



White Hill Wind Farm

# Environmental Impact Assessment Report

## Annex 1.6: Kilkenny County Council Meeting Minutes

White Hill Wind Limited

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White Hill Wind Farm  
Meeting with Kilkenny County Council  
Meeting Minutes

Project	White Hill Wind Farm		
Client	White Hill Wind Limited		
Meeting No.	1		
Location	Microsoft Teams		
Date	29 March 2022	Time	09:30 – 10:30
Attendees	James Carville (JC)	White Hill Wind Limited	
	Simon Carleton (SC)	GES	
	Bláithín Rafferty (BR)	GES	
	Deirdre Breen (DB)	Kilkenny County Council	
	Nicolaas Louw (NL)	Kilkenny County Council	
Prepared by	Bláithín Rafferty		
Agenda Item	Minutes		
1.0	<p><b>Project introduction &amp; Site Context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SC welcomed all attendees and thanked DB and NL for accommodating the meeting.</li> <li>• JC introduced White Hill Wind Limited, company history, and previous Irish experience of development team.</li> <li>• SC introduced the project, set out its general location and the characteristics of the site. Reference was also made to the planning history of the site; which formed part of a wind energy development (known as Valleyview Wind Farm) which was previously refused planning permission by the Board. SC briefly outlined the reasons for refusal and noted that the planning application documentation and associated environmental assessments are cognisant of same.</li> </ul>		
2.0	<p><b>Site Selection Process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SC outlined the rationale for the selection of the site for development including local planning policy and the general absence of fundamental environmental constraints. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In Kilkenny, the subject lands are identified as 'Acceptable in Principle' for wind energy development in <i>Kilkenny City &amp; County Development Plan 2021-2027</i>.</li> <li>○ In Carlow, the subject lands are located within a 'Preferred Location' in <i>Carlow County Development Plan 2015-2021</i>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Draft Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 has shifted from a 'spatially designated' approach to a 'criteria-based' approach and does not explicitly designate suitable locations for wind energy development.</li> <li>● Generally achievable visual-amenity setback (<i>Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019</i>) of 4-times tip for 'non-involved' dwellings.</li> <li>● The availability of generous setbacks reduces likelihood of significant noise/visual amenity effects.</li> <li>● Preliminary noise modelling indicates noise limits can be achieved.</li> <li>● Applicant has committed to implementing a 'zero-shadow flicker' approach – turbine shutdown technology will be implemented to ensure no shadow flicker at dwellings.</li> </ul>
3.0	<p><b>Preliminary Project Design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Project designed on basis of turbines with a tip height of 180m and an output of 6MW (total output of overall project was 42MW).</li> <li>● Applicant has engaged with Roads Department/MD Engineers re: grid connection route and haul route upgrade works</li> <li>● Explanation that there is a significant volume of rock present at the site which will enable the development of borrow pits on site</li> </ul>
4.0	<p><b>Environmental Scoping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consultation with Planning Authorities, Government Departments, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Geological Survey Ireland, telecommunication service providers, etc.</li> <li>● Environmental Constraints Analysis by specialist environmental consultants (ecologists, geologists, hydrologists, archaeologists, landscape architects, etc.).</li> <li>● Identification of constraints at macro-level and site level.</li> <li>● Constraints analysis also undertaken in respect of Air Quality &amp; Climate effects, Landscape &amp; Visual effects, Noise &amp; Vibration effects, Shadow Flicker effects, and Material Assets (transport, aviation, telecommunications)</li> </ul>
5.0	<p><b>Emerged Preferred Design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Arising from constraints analysis, an opportunity arose to increase the tip height of the turbines to 185m. This height increase also provided for the incorporation of recently-development turbine technology which increases the output of each turbine from 6MW to 7.2MW, and the overall project from 42MW to 50.4MW.</li> <li>● On this basis, the development would exceed the relevant Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) threshold. In December 2021, White Hill Wind Limited entered pre-application consultations with the Board to formally determine whether the development is SID or not. Process ongoing.</li> <li>● The configuration of on-site ancillary infrastructure (access tracks, crane hardstandings, etc.) has been revised to avoid localised constraints.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grid connection route and turbine component delivery route remain as previously identified.</li> <li>• c. 15 hectares of commercial forestry are to be felled. A parcel of land in County Monaghan has been identified for possible re-planting and this land will be assessed in the EIAR &amp; NIS.</li> <li>• Achievable visual-amenity setback (<i>Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019</i>) of 4-times tip for 'non-involved' dwellings.</li> <li>• Per <i>Draft Guidelines</i>, dwellings may be located within this setback, where the written agreement of the resident has been obtained, where noise limits remain achievable. In this case, a number of residents have agreed to a reduced visual-amenity setback.</li> </ul>
6.0	<p><b>Open Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NL commented that the presentation clearly described the progression of the project and that changes to turbine technology and future improvements is something the Planning Authority is familiar with.</li> <li>• NL questioned if consultations had been held with local communities/residents. SC advised that all residents within 2km of a proposed wind turbine have been visited (consultation undertaken in accordance with prevailing public health guidance at the time) and that 2 no. rounds of consultation clinics have been held locally. The clinics were advertised in local media and interested parties were invited to book appointments with the project team. JC also advised that a project website has been set up and is regularly updated in accordance with project progression. Additionally, letters are sent out to inform of updates, including the commencement of pre-application consultation with the Board. such as SID proceedings</li> <li>• NL commented that recently there has been a fear of wind turbines getting larger and the visual impacts of this. Pressure groups developing around the county and, due to Draft Ministerial Direction on the <i>Kilkenny City &amp; County Development Plan 2021-2027</i>, there is something of a policy vacuum. NL advised that the Planning Authority has set significant renewable energy generation targets and they are positively disposed to wind energy developments at appropriate locations.</li> <li>• NL questioned how the issue of 'project splitting' was to be addressed. SC advised that all elements of the project (wind farm, grid connection, haul route upgrade works and forestry re-planting will be fully assessed in the EIAR and NIS. However, it is unlikely that all elements will be encapsulated with a single planning application.</li> <li>• NL queries the completion of a visual impact assessment and whether the assessment would be supported by photomontages. SC confirmed that c. 26 viewpoints have been selected from which photomontages will be prepared.</li> <li>• JC noted that c. €260,000 will be contributed, annually, to a community benefit fund. It was noted that the management of the fund will be arranged by a committee comprising local community members thus ensuring that funds are targeted at important local projects. JC also noted that the development would generate c. €900,000 per annum in</li> </ul>



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	business rates contributions to Kilkenny County Council and Carlow County Council.
7.0	<b>Closing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NL and DB confirmed that they had no further matters to raised and again re-iterated the position of the Planning Authority towards renewable energy developments as set out in the <i>Kilkenny City &amp; County Development Plan 2021-2027</i>.</li><li>JC and SC once again thanked NL and DB for facilitating the meeting and it was agreed that the Planning Authority would be advised (via DB) of further updates to the project as they arise.</li></ul>

