



White Hill Wind Farm

# Environmental Impact Assessment Report

## Annex 1.5: Scoping Response from Kilkenny County Council

White Hill Wind Limited

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**The applicant is advised of the opinion of Kilkenny County Council as follows in response to Scoping Document received on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021 as part of pre-planning consultation process for Wind Farm development for Whitehill Windfarm’:**

The applicant shall formally consult inter-alia the following bodies:

**Prescribed Bodies**

- the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications
- the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government,
- the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht,
- the Environmental Protection Agency
- the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources,
- An Board Pleanala,
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Health and Safety Authority
- Geological Survey Ireland
- An Taisce
- Irish Water
- National Monuments Service
- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Bord Failte
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- Department of Heritage - Architectural Heritage
- Failte Ireland
- The Heritage Council
- Waterways Ireland
- Carlow County Council

In accordance with Circular Letter PL 1/2017, Kilkenny County Council has contacted the above listed agencies; where responses have been received by the Council the recommendation of these agencies are set out below and shall be taken into consideration by the applicant in the preparation of the EIAR.

The applicant is advised to request a pre-planning meeting with Kilkenny County Council.

Kilkenny County Council’s comments are set out below. In addition to the comments below the combined and cumulative impacts of the development should be assessed.

**Legislation:**

The applicant is advised to fully comply with the requirements of Directive 2014/52/EU on the effects of certain public and private projects on the Environment (EIA Directive) and any resulting amendments to the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2021 to provide for the transposition of the Directive into the Irish planning code. The applicants should also comply with any the requirements of the ‘Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanala on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment’ and any updates subsequent to the above Directive.

## **Responses Received**

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

Outlined below are underwater archaeological observations/recommendations co-ordinated by the Development Applications Unit.

#### **Underwater Archaeology**

The Department refers to the pre-planning scoping for the above proposed windfarm and the intention to have an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) undertaken which will include an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA). The AIA should include comprehensive assessment of all watercourses within the footprint of the windfarm, to include wading survey/dive survey (if depth is beyond wading limits) and this should be accompanied by a metal detection survey.

The Department will await the results of the EIAR before making additional comments.

Reason:

To ensure the continued preservation (either *in situ* or by record) of our underwater cultural heritage and all associated features, objects and structures.

### **Transport Infrastructure Ireland**

With respect to EIAR scoping issues, the recommendations indicated below provide only general guidance for the preparation of an EIAR, which may affect the national road network. The developer/scheme promoter should have regard, *inter alia*, to the following;

- TII notes that the subject site accesses the local road network prior to access to the national road network. Consultations should be had with the relevant Local Authority/National Roads Design Office with regard to locations of existing and future national road schemes.
- TII would be specifically concerned as to potential significant impacts the development would have on the national road network (and junctions with national roads) in the proximity of the proposed development.
- The developer should assess visual impacts from existing national roads.
- The developer should have regard to any EIAR/EIS and all conditions and/or modifications imposed by An Bord Pleanála regarding road schemes in the area. The developer should in particular have regard to any potential cumulative impacts.
- The developer, in preparing EIAR, should have regard to TII Publications (formerly DMRB and the Manual of Contract Documents for Road Works).
- The developer, in preparing EIAR, should have regard to TII's Environmental Assessment and Construction Guidelines, including the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Air Quality During the Planning and Construction of National Road Schemes* (National Roads Authority, 2006).
- The EIAR/EIS should consider the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 (SI 140 of 2006) and, in particular, how the development will affect future action plans by the relevant competent authority. The developer may need to consider the incorporation of noise barriers to reduce noise impacts (see *Guidelines for the Treatment of Noise and Vibration in National Road Schemes* (1<sup>st</sup> Rev., National Roads Authority, 2004)).
- It would be important that, where appropriate, subject to meeting the appropriate thresholds and criteria and having regard to best practice, a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) be carried out in accordance with relevant guidelines, noting traffic volumes attending the site and traffic routes to/from the site with reference to impacts on the national road network and junctions of lower category roads with national roads. In relation to national roads, TII's TTA Guidelines (2014) should be referred to in relation to proposed development with potential impacts on the national road network. The scheme promoter is also advised to have regard to Section 2.2 of the NRA/TII TTA Guidelines which addresses requirements for sub-threshold TTA. Any improvements required to facilitate development should be identified. It will be the

responsibility of the developer to pay for the costs of any improvements to national roads to facilitate the private development proposed as TII will not be responsible for such costs.

- The designers are asked to consult TII Publications to determine whether a Road Safety Audit is required.
- In the interests of maintaining the safety and standard of the national road network, the EIAR should identify the methods/techniques proposed for any works traversing/in proximity to the national road network.
- In relation to haul route identification, the EIAR Scoping Report indicates that turbine components will be transported from the Port of Waterford using the N29, N25, N9, M9, N78, national roads, before reverting to the local road network and that temporary works may be required along the route.

The EIAR Scoping Report also outlines that it is proposed to construct a temporary access at the junction of the N78 and L1834, to accommodate the delivery of abnormal-sized loads as the current junction is not capable of accommodating such loads. It is stated that the construction of the temporary access will be fully reinstated immediately following the delivery of turbine components.

As noted above, designers should consult TII Publications to determine whether a Road Safety Audit is required for any of the temporary works proposed. Any recommendations should be incorporated into designs.

TII recommends that that applicant/developer should clearly identify haul routes proposed and fully assess the network to be traversed. Where abnormal ‘weight’ loads are proposed, separate structure approvals/permits and other licences may be required in connection with the proposed haul route and all structures on the haul route through all the relevant County Council administrative areas should be checked by the applicant/developer to confirm their capacity to accommodate any abnormal ‘weight’ load proposed.

The national road network is managed by a combination of PPP Concessions, Motorway Maintenance and Renewal Contracts (MMaRC) and local road authorities in association with TII.

The applicant/developer should also consult with all PPP Companies, MMaRC Contractors and road authorities over which the haul route traverses to ascertain any operational requirements such as delivery timetabling, etc. and to ensure that the strategic function of the national road network is safeguarded.

Additionally, any damage caused to the pavement on the existing national road at the temporary access due to the turning movement of abnormal ‘length’ loads (e.g. tearing of the surface course, etc.) shall be rectified in accordance with TII Pavement Standards and details in this regard shall be agreed with the Road Authority prior to the commencement of any development on site.

- Grid connection and cable routing proposals should be developed to safeguard proposed road schemes as TII will not be responsible for costs associated with future relocation of cable routing where proposals are catered for in an area of a proposed national road scheme. In that regard, consideration should be given to routing options, use of existing crossings, depth of cable laying, etc.

In the context of the existing national road network, in accordance with the National Planning Framework National Strategic Outcome no. 2 ‘Enhanced Regional Accessibility’, there is a requirement to maintain the strategic capacity and safety of the network. This requirement is further reflected in the National Development Plan, the recent publication of the Draft National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland and also the existing Statutory Section 28 Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

There is around 99,000km of roads in Ireland, the national road network which caters for strategic inter-urban travel consists of only approx. 5.4% of this. There is a critical requirement

to ensure the strategic capacity and safety of this national road network is maintained and significant Government investment already made in the national road network is safeguarded. The provision of cabling along the national road network represents a number of significant implications for TII and road authorities in the management and maintenance of the strategic national road network and TII is of the opinion that grid connection cable routing should reflect the foregoing provisions of official policy. Therefore, TII advises that grid connection cable routing should seek to utilise the extensive existing local road network, or alternatives, as opposed to the strategic national road network contrary to the provisions of official policy. Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is noted that the grid connection routing indicated in the EIAR Scoping Consultation does not propose utilising sections of national roads, however, an underground crossing point of the N10 in the vicinity of the Scart Substation, Kilkenny, is proposed. Other consents or licences may be required from the road authority for any trenching or cabling proposals crossing the national road. TII requests referral of all proposals agreed and licensed between the road authority and the applicant which affect the national road network. Cable routing should avoid all impacts to existing TII infrastructure such as traffic counters, weather stations, etc. and works required to such infrastructure shall only be undertaken in consultation with and subject to the agreement of TII, any costs attributable shall be borne by the applicant/developer. The developer should also be aware that separate approvals may be required for works traversing the national road network. Notwithstanding any of the above, the developer should be aware that this list is non-exhaustive, thus site and development specific issues should be addressed in accordance with best practice.

## **Kilkenny County Council**

### **Planning Section**

The *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027* has been adopted, however a Draft Ministerial Direction on the new Development Plan, in relation to the wind energy policy has been received and the sections referred to in the notice shall be taken not to have not come

into effect, been made or amended; namely Chapter 11, Renewable Energy Section 11.4 Kilkenny Targets, Section 11.5.1 Current status and targets and Figure 11.4 Wind Strategy areas.

The EIAR shall address potential impacts pertaining to both County Kilkenny and County Carlow and any other potential impacts outside of the county boundaries.

The applicant should address the visual impacts and cumulative visual impacts with any other existing and permitted windfarms within a reasonable vicinity of the site.

### **Environment Section**

The following should be taken into consideration of part of this application as a minimum:

#### Section on earthworks

- Borrow pits
- Peat on site? Risks assessment
- Road construction – type, is there excess material?
- Foundation construction– type, is there excess material? Concrete works and washout?
- Hardstand construction– type, is there excess material?
- Grid connection and substation earthworks – type – surplus material?

#### Watercourses

- Assess full network of watercourses which are affected by the proposed works – regional and local hydrology
- Detail methodology of installing infrastructure such as roads, hardstands, foundations, substation, cabling and other in proximity or crossing watercourses
- Grid connection route location, geology assessment relating to bedrock, karst, important aquifer
- Directional drilling or other crossing of watercourses proposals
- Baseline and project monitoring

#### Health

- Noise impacts construction and operation
- Shadow flicker
- electromagnetic

#### Biodiversity

- ecology
- flora fauna
- habitats
- forest tree felling

#### Waste management plan

- excess subsoils, rock peat
- construction materials
- canteen waste
- toilet waste

## **Roads Section**

The following should be taken into consideration of part of this application as a minimum:

### Section on Traffic Generation

- Traffic generation volumes and types
- Assessment of materials imported/ exported from site.
- Construction traffic and routes
- Abnormal loads and delivery routes
- Long term traffic for maintenance/ decommissioning/restoration
- Forestry felling and transportation if required

### Construction Traffic and Abnormal Loads

- Routes for construction traffic
- Route Selection for Abnormal Loads
- Temporary junction at N78/ L1834 ( Moneenroe Cross) and access road link to L1834 (including consultation with TII)
- Assessment of local road route along L1834 & L1837 to Carlow Co Bounds
- Assessment of local network to consider pavement condition, structures, road width restrictions, overhead services and identification of other constraints
- Structural pavement analysis ( Fall Weight Deflectometer - Pre and post works) and recommendations
- Visual and photographic record for pre and post works phases to monitor road condition and damage arising from works
- Traffic Management Plans

### Access points and temporary junctions/ road modifications

- Entrance design and layout
- Visibility Splays and sightlines
- Road Safety Audits
- Temporary works/ layout for abnormal load deliveries
- Traffic management plans

### Underground Cabling to 110kv ESB station

- Route selection
- Assessment of structures and watercourses
- Cross- section detail
- Trench reinstatement requirements
- Traffic Management
- Road opening licences
- ESB chamber/drawpit locations
- Consultation with Municipal District Office

It is noted that some preliminary consultation was undertaken by Galetec with the Municipal District Office and the Road Design Section in Dec 2020 in relation to route selection for the abnormal loads and works to the N78 and some further discussion re proposals for some of the masonry structures on the route to facilitate construction traffic in April 2021.

