

Proposed Bracklyn Wind Farm  
Meeting with Westmeath County Council (Online)  
Meeting Minutes

Project	Bracklyn Wind Farm	
Client	Bracklyn Wind Farm Ltd	
Meeting No.	1	
Location	Online Meeting	
Date	27/08/2020 @ 11.30am	
Attendees	Paula Hanlon (PH)	Westmeath County Council (WCC) Planning Department
	Catherine Dillon (CD)	Westmeath County Council (WCC) Planning Department
	Jonathan Deane (JD)	Westmeath County Council (WCC) Environment Section
	James Carville (JC)	Bracklyn Wind Farm Ltd (BWFL)
	Declan Owens (DO)	Galetech Energy Services (GES)
	Simon Carleton (SC)	Galetech Energy Services (GES)
Prepared by	Declan Owens	
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introductions</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions were given by all parties present.</li> </ul>	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Presentation</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DO shared a prepared presentation.</li> <li>• The presentation outlined the scoping and environmental constraints analysis process that has been carried out on the project to-date, the design evolution of the project and where it currently sits. An overview was provided of the extensive public consultation process which has been carried out to-date including letter drops and consultation clinics, with the intention to begin door-door consultation from week commencing 31/08/2020.</li> <li>• DO outlined that whilst the project had initially been designed to accommodate up to 11 turbines, the current design included a 9 turbine layout and the reduction in numbers was considered necessary on the back of a robust constraints analysis process.</li> <li>• DO acknowledged that whilst 3 grid connection options were considered at the early stages of site design, that was now reduced to 1 location which is in County Meath.</li> </ul>	

<b>3.0</b>	<p><b>Follow Up Questions and Advice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Policy <p>PH spoke about the principle of development including that Westmeath CC were favourably disposed to renewable energy development but that care should be taken to avoid any potential planning or environmental impacts. PH also referred to current setback policy included in the Westmeath County Development Plan (CDP).</p> </li> <li>• Roads and Grid Connection <p>PH asked about the proposed grid connection to the substation. DO advised that the connection would likely be underground and may be along the road, this was something that was still being considered. PH outlined concerns that the Council had in relation to grid connections along the public road and referred to issues currently being played out in other planning applications and legal proceedings.</p> <p>JC advised that he had been speaking to Pat Coyle from Property Section in the Council regarding a planning consent letter for works at Caddagh Cross, this was to be followed up. PH outlined that a consent letter for works along the small access road to the proposal may be more difficult to obtain and may require consent from landowner(s) along that stretch of road. JC outlined that he had spoken with Dr. Paul McCool Senior Executive Engineer and that he had highlighted his preference to avoid the placing of underground cables in the local access road ('Burrow Road') due to possible structural integrity concerns. PMC had also highlighted Cool Wind Farm grid connection issues. JC pointed out that Bracklyn Wind Farm were exploring alternatives routes following discussions with PMC.</p> <p>PH asked that local roads were considered in the assessment of the Haul route for turbine components. DO advised that a Haul Route Assessment had taken place and that further consideration would be afforded to the local road network.</p> </li> <li>• Cultural Heritage <p>JD asked about the Cultural Heritage constraints and particularly the feature identified to the east of the proposed development. SC outlined that the feature was a field system and the nearest turbine had been sited in conifer plantation outside of the agricultural field in order to restrict any potential impact. DO highlighted that specialist consultants had been engaged on some of the environmental topics including Cultural Heritage and that early consultation had taken place with the Dept for Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht.</p> <p>PH asked about the location of turbine 'T3' to a ringfort. SC and JC explained how the turbine location was outside of the red line area and as far away as possible from the feature. Again expert advice and guidance was provided on this. SC also</p> </li> </ul>
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	<p>advised that architectural heritage professionals were engaged in order to supplement the Cultural Heritage consideration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Landscape and Visual Impact</b> JD asked about if consideration would be given to the surrounding road network and views onto the proposed development. DO advised that a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) would be carried out for the project and submitted with the application. Photomontage images to accompany the LVIA.</li> <li>• <b>Biodiversity</b> JD asked about the presence of Birds on site. JC advised that BWFL had organised bird surveys on the site over the preceding 2 years and that this would be included within the documentation submitted with the application.</li> <li>• <b>Community Consultation</b> PH asked about the feedback from the public consultation process to date and JD asked if anything particularly specific to this site had been brought up along that process. DO advised that the feedback was generally as expected with a mixed reception for those who had participated to date. SC added that the key issues being raised were similar to all projects of this type and included Noise, Shadow Flicker and Visuals. SC outlined the significant distances the proposal sits from third party dwellings and how this restricts the potential impact from a Noise/Shadow Flicker perspective.</li> <li>• <b>Project Expansion</b> JD asked about the possibility of extension of the project at some point in the future and if the proposed substation would or could be extended to facilitate further development of the site. DO advised that the project had went through a robust constraints analysis process which had resulted in a reduction in turbines and that the substation, as proposed, would be for the proposed project. SC outlined that once operational the substation will be in the control of Eirgrid and would likely form a node on the existing transmission network, hence other forms of development and other wind farms could potentially link into it at this stage.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>Additional Items Noted</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PH asked about the consultants who were engaged on the project and what subject areas they covered. DO &amp; SC outlined the range of competent professionals who are currently working on the project.</li> <li>• PH advised that the applicant takes into consideration the following documents; County Heritage Plan, County Biodiversity Plan, and County Peatlands Study. Also advised to refer to Section 13.6 of the draft CDP.</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PH outlined that the project should be accompanied by a Decommissioning Plan which is cognisant of the area within which it sits and surrounding environment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5.0</b></p>	<p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PH outlined that the Council were happy to engage further with the applicant if and/or when required and also advised that Meath County Council be kept up to date with any ongoing significant design changes.</li> <li>• JC outlined that Spoil Deposition Areas and potential Borrow Pit areas were currently being assessed and that would feed into the final design of the project.</li> <li>• DO thanked all participants and closed meeting.</li> </ul>