

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT (EIAR) FOR THE PROPOSED BALLINAGREE WIND FARM

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## VOLUME 2 - MAIN EIAR

### CHAPTER 5 – EIA SCOPING, CONSULTATION AND KEY ISSUES

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Prepared for: Ballinagree Wind DAC



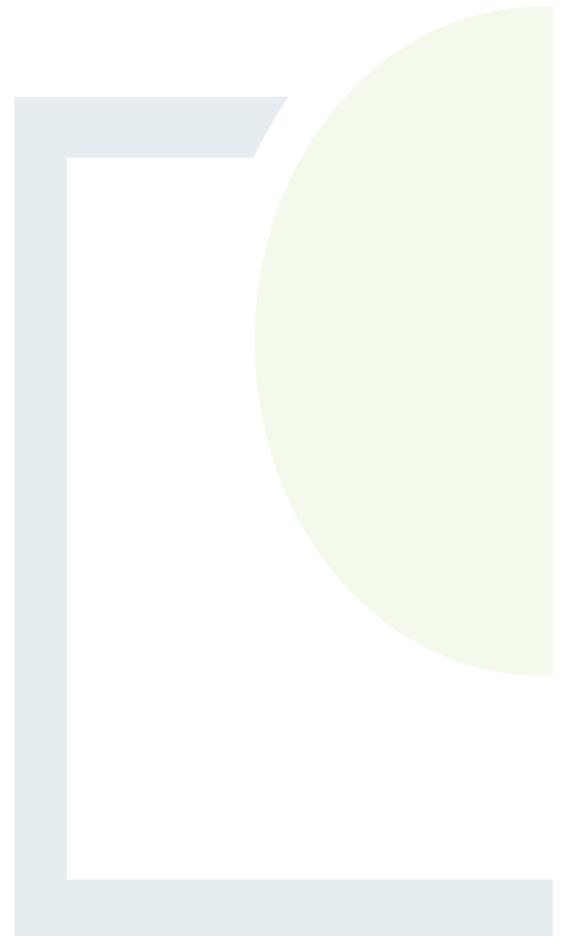
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## 5. EIA SCOPING, CONSULTATION AND KEY ISSUES

### 5.1 Introduction

Consultation is an important part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. This chapter describes the consultation process and EIAR scoping that was undertaken in order to identify key effects from the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm project to be included in the EIAR. The consultation process carried out for the project has been a lengthy, detailed and thorough process. A number of points and submissions were raised as part of the consultation process which have informed the project design and this EIAR.

This chapter presents the key points that arose through the consultation process and how these points were assessed in the EIAR. The consultation process, scoping and pre-application consultation undertaken in respect of the proposed development are set out in this chapter.

Throughout the consultation process, specific regard has been taken to the *Code of Practice for Wind Energy Development in Ireland – Guidelines for Community Engagement* published on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2016 by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment. “*This Code of Good Practice is intended to ensure that wind energy development in Ireland is undertaken in observance with the best industry practices, and with the full engagement of communities around the country*”. The applicant had regard throughout the pre-planning process of the practical steps that renewable energy promoters should comply with, in engaging with communities as set out in this Guidance.

The applicant has prepared a community report detailing the public engagement undertaken with the local community throughout the development of the project, how the views of the local community were taken into account in the design of the proposed development and detailing how community engagement will proceed should the proposed development be granted permission. The community report was prepared in accordance with the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2019) and is contained as Appendix 5.4.

Furthermore, the latest public health guidance was observed throughout the development of the project with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 5.2 Scoping

The purpose of the EIA scoping process is to identify the key points and issues which are likely to be important during the environmental impact assessment (EIA) of a project and to eliminate those that are not. The scoping process identifies sources or causes of potential environmental effects, the pathways by which the effects can happen, and the sensitive receptors which are likely to be affected. It defines the appropriate level of detail for the information to be provided in the EIAR. In essence, the primary focus of scoping is to define the most appropriate assessment of significant effects related to the proposed development.

A scoping request letter and scoping report detailing a description of the proposed project, draft mapping, preliminary table of contents of the EIAR and outline of the methodology for assessment was distributed to consultees on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2020. The recipients included the Local Authority, Government Departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), interested parties and key stakeholders. The Scoping Report was also made available to the public via the project website. Consultees were invited to contribute to the EIAR by suggesting baseline data, survey methodologies and potential impacts that should be considered as part of the impact assessment process and in preparation of the EIAR.



Table 5.1 details the list of consultees who were issued a copy of the scoping document. A copy of the scoping request letter and scoping report are included in Appendix 5.2 of Volume 3 of this EIA.

**Table 5-1: List of Consultees**

| Type of Stakeholder            | Body / Department  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Cork County Council</b>     | Archaeologist<br>Conservation Officer<br>Area Engineer<br>Biodiversity Officer<br>Planning Department  |
| <b>Consenting Authority</b>    | An Bord Pleanála   |
| <b>Government Departments</b>  | Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government<br>Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAU)<br>Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine<br>Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment<br>Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport<br>Department of Defence   |
| <b>NGOs &amp; Stakeholders</b> | Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI)<br>Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)<br>Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)<br>The Heritage Council<br>An Taisce<br>National Monuments Service<br>An Chomhairle Ealaíon (Arts Council)<br>Fáilte Ireland<br>Health and Safety Authority<br>Irish Water<br>Commission for Regulation of Utilities<br>National Roads Authority - Cork roads office<br>Office of Public Works<br>Health Service Executive (HSE)<br>Geological Survey Ireland (GSI)<br>Mountaineering Ireland<br>Southern Regional Assembly<br>Biodiversity Ireland<br>Irish Wildlife Trust<br>National Roads Authority - Cork roads office<br>Office of Public Works<br>Health Service Executive (HSE)<br>Geological Survey Ireland (GSI)<br>Mountaineering Ireland |



| Type of Stakeholder  | Body / Department  |
|--|--|
| <b>NGOs &amp; Stakeholders</b>   | Southern Regional Assembly<br>Biodiversity Ireland   |
|  | Irish Wildlife Trust<br>Bat Conservation Ireland<br>Butterfly Conservation Ireland<br>Birdwatch Ireland<br>National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)<br>Irish Raptor Study Group<br>Irish Environmental Network<br>Teagasc<br>Gas Networks Ireland<br>The Irish Meteorological Service (Met Eireann)<br>Eirgrid<br>ESB Networks<br>Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland<br>National Transport Authority<br>Irish Wind Energy Association<br>Geographical Society of Ireland<br>An Garda Siochána - Macroom Branch<br>Environmental Sciences Association of Ireland<br>Irish Peatland Conservation Council<br>Forestry Service<br>Macroom Trout Fly Anglers<br>Angling Council of Ireland<br>IRD Duhallow<br>Aubane Community Action Group<br>Ballinagree Community Development Group<br>Cork Environmental Forum<br>Macroom & District Environmental Group<br>Cork County Mayor |
| <b>Elected Representatives in the Area of the Proposed Wind Farm (June 2020)</b> | Andrias Moynihan TD<br>Michael Creed TD<br>Michael Moynihan TD<br>Cllr Michael Creed<br>Cllr Martin Coughlin<br>Cllr Ted Lucey<br>Cllr Eileen Lynch<br>Cllr Michael Looney<br>Cllr Gobnait Moynihan  |



| Type of Stakeholder       | Body / Department  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Aviation</b>           | Irish Aviation Authority<br>Cork Airport Authority<br>Rathcoole Aerodrome<br>Kerry Airport<br>Irish Community Rapid Response (ICRR)  |
| <b>Telecommunications</b> | Nova Telecom<br>Skylink Communications<br>Imagine<br>Munster Broadband<br>Digiweb<br>Ripplecom<br>Magnet Networks<br>BT Communications Ireland Ltd<br>RTE<br>Virgin Media Ireland<br>Eir (Eircom)<br>Vodafone (Netshare)<br>Three<br>ESB Telecoms<br>TETRA Ireland Ltd.<br>TowerCom Ltd.<br>Pure Telecom<br>Sky Broadband Ireland<br>Commission for Communications Regulation<br>Enet Telecommunications Network Limited<br>ITS Irish Networks Services<br>Ivertec Ltd.<br>RTE/Saorview<br>RTE Transmission Network (2RN)<br>Broadcasting Authority of Ireland - BAI |

Full details of the scoping responses received are set out in Appendix 5-1. A summary of the consultation responses received are presented in Table 5-2:



**Table 5-2: List of Scoping Responses**

| Consultee  | Date of Response | Response / Key Points Raised  | Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed   |
|--|------------------|---|---|
| Cork County Council Area Engineer  | 02/07/2020       | No comment  | N/A   |
| Cork County Council Biodiversity Officer   | 03/07/2020       | Comments surrounding protected sites, species and habitat including peat habitat.   | Chapter 8 – Biodiversity  |
| Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government                             | 06/07/2020       | No comment  | N/A   |
| Development Applications Unit, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht | 31/08/2020       | Comments on nature conservation including designated sites and protected species.   | Chapter 8 – Biodiversity  |
| Forestry Service, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine                 | 20/08/2020       | Comments on felling and reforestation policy.   | Chapter 5 - EIA Scoping, Consultation and Key Issues<br>Chapter 8 – Biodiversity<br>Chapter 9 – Land, Soils, Hydrogeology & Geology<br>Chapter 10 – Hydrology & Water Quality |
| Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment                     | 02/07/2020       | No comment  | N/A   |
| Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport                                       | 02/07/2020       | No comment  | N/A   |
| Inland Fisheries Ireland   | 17/07/2020       | Comments focused on drainage, water quality and biodiversity  | Chapter 8 – Biodiversity<br>Chapter 9 – Land, Soils, Hydrogeology & Geology<br>Chapter 10 – Hydrology & Water Quality   |
| Transport Infrastructure Ireland   | 22/07/2020       | Comments on recommended consultation, potential traffic impacts and impacts (including visual impacts) on national roads. | Chapter 13 – Traffic & Transportation<br>Chapter 15 – Landscape & Visual  |
| Environmental Protection Agency  | 03/07/2020       | No comment  | N/A   |



| Consultee                              | Date of Response | Response / Key Points Raised  | Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed   |
|--|------------------|---|---|
| Irish Aviation Authority               | 14/07/2020       | Request to consult with Rathcoole Aerodrome and Kerry Airport. Comments on potential obstruction to ILS Flight Calibration. | Chapter 16 – Telecommunications and Aviation  |
| Health & Safety Authority              | 22/07/2020       | No Comment  | N/A   |
| Irish Water                            | 03/07/2020       | Comments on potential impacts to water services and potential impact to water abstraction.                                  | Chapter 9 – Land, Soils, Hydrogeology & Geology<br>Chapter 10 – Hydrology & Water Quality                                 |
| An Bord Pleanála                       | 08/07/2020       | No Comment  | N/A   |
| Department of Defence                  | 08/07/2020       | No Comment  | N/A   |
| Commission for Regulation of Utilities | 03/07/2020       | No Comment  | N/A   |
| Office of Public Works                 | 03/07/2020       | No Comment  | N/A   |
| Geological Survey Ireland              | 15/07/2020       | Comments on geoheritage, groundwater, geohazards, natural resources and flood risk assessment.                              | Chapter 9 – Land, Soils, Hydrogeology & Geology<br>Chapter 10 – Hydrology & Water Quality<br>Chapter 11 – Material Assets |
| Bat Conservation Ireland               | 13/07/2020       | No Comment  | N/A   |
| Butterfly Conservation Ireland         | 27/07/2020       | Comments on Marsh Fritillary butterfly, Large Heath butterfly and European Red List butterflies.                            | Chapter 8 – Biodiversity  |
| Birdwatch Ireland                      | 19/08/2020       | No Comment  | N/A   |
| Teagasc                                | 20/08/2020       | No Comment  | N/A   |
| Gas Networks Ireland                   | 02/07/2020       | No Comment  | N/A   |
| The Irish Meteorological Service       | 27/07/2020       | No Comment  | N/A   |
| EirGrid                                | 06/07/2020       | No Comment  | N/A   |
| ESB Networks                           | 10/07/2020       | No Comment  | N/A   |
| Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland   | 02/07/2020       | No Comment  | N/A   |
| National Transport Authority           | 02/07/2020       | No Comment  | N/A   |



| Consultee   | Date of Response | Response / Key Points Raised   | Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed |
|---|------------------|--|---|
| Cork Airport Authority  | 02/07/2020       | No Comment   | N/A   |
| Cork Environmental Forum                                      | 19/08/2020       | No Comment   | N/A   |
| National Monuments Service                                    | 20/08/2020       | No Comment   | N/A   |
| Michael Creed (TD)  | 03/07/2020       | No Comments  | N/A   |
| Rathcoole Aerodrome   | 16/07/2020       | Telephone conversation with operator. No expected impact to operations due to orientation of the runway. | Chapter 16 – Telecommunications & Aviation            |
| Irish Community Rapid Response (Based at Rathcoole Aerodrome) | 16/07/2020       | No Comment   | Chapter 16 – Telecommunications & Aviation            |
| Kerry Airport   | 20/07/2020       | No comment   | Chapter 16 – Telecommunications & Aviation            |
| Nova Telecom  | 19/08/2020       | Potential impact to service  | Chapter 16 – Telecommunications & Aviation            |
| Skylink Communications  | 02/07/2020       | No comment   | N/A   |
| Imagine   | 09/09/2020       | No expected impact   | Chapter 16  |
| Munster Broadband   | 02/07/2020       | No comment   | N/A   |
| Digiweb   | 19/08/2020       | No comment   | N/A   |
| Ripplecom   | 20/08/2020       | Potential impact identified  | Chapter 16  |
| Magnet Networks   | 02/07/2020       | No comment   | N/A   |
| BT Communications Ireland Ltd                                 | 03/07/2020       | No comment   | N/A   |
|   |                  |  |   |
| Virgin Media Ireland  | 03/09/2020       | No expected impact   | Chapter 16  |
| Vodafone (Netshare)   | 07/09/2020       | No expected impact   | Chapter 16  |
| Three   | 03/09/2020       | No expected impact   | Chapter 16  |
| ESB Telecoms  | 21/07/2020       | No expected impact   | Chapter 16  |
| TETRA Ireland Ltd.  | 03/07/2020       | No expected impact   | Chapter 16  |



|                                     |                         |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Enet Telecommunications Network Ltd | 03/09/2020              | No expected impact                  | Chapter 16   |
| <b>Consultee</b>                    | <b>Date of Response</b> | <b>Response / Key Points Raised</b> | <b>Chapter of EIAR where Key Points Raised are Addressed</b> |
| Ivertec Ltd                         | 02/09/2020              | No expected impact                  | Chapter 16   |
| Broadcasting Authority of Ireland   | 03/09/2020              | No Comment                          | N/A  |

### 5.2.1 Key Issues Raised during Scoping Process

The scoping process proved beneficial to the identification of issues and potential issues in relation to the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm. Responses from the consultees identified a range of observations which have been taken into consideration in the preparation of the respective chapters of this EIAR.

Issues raised during the scoping process are summarised as follows and are detailed in full in Appendix 5-1 of Volume 3 of this EIAR:

#### Cork County Council Biodiversity Officer

Key ecological sensitivities identified in respect of this proposal include:

- Sites designated for nature conservation and their associated habitats and species;
- Protected species; and
- Habitats of high nature conservation value.

Of note is the Boggeragh Mountains Natural Heritage Area and Boggeraghs to Musheramore Mountains Special Protection Area in proximity to the site and its location within two sensitive catchments: the catchment of the Blackwater River Special Area of Conservation and the catchment of the Sullane River.

The proposal will trigger likely requirements for AA and will require EIAR. The AA report and biodiversity chapter of the EIAR should be prepared by competent experienced ecologists.

“Without direct knowledge of the site, key issues likely to be required to focus on will be:

- Potential for the project to give rise to impacts on the population of Hen Harrier which is associated with the adjoining SPA, and possibly other avian species including Merlin, Golden Plover, Red Grouse, Snipe and possibly Curlew – and there may be others. It is advised that the ecologists working to prepare the planning application documents would contact expert organisations including the NPWS, the Irish Raptor Study Group and BirdWatch Ireland and to review all available literature to identify the target species which will need to be surveyed. Surveying protocols will need to be established, and these should be designed to accord with latest guidance from the NPWS and Scottish Natural Heritage. Applicants should note that a minimum of two full years of survey for key sensitive species will be required in such a sensitive location. The information gathered during the survey stage should be used to inform design to ensure that areas around known breeding sites and key foraging areas for sensitive bird species are avoided.



- Potential for the project to give rise to negative effects on freshwater habitats. To this end, there should be a focus at design stage on providing for an appropriately designed surface water management system which minimises risk of release of contaminants to surface waters and ensures that there is no increase in surface water run-off from the site. Avoidance of disturbance of peat based habitats will greatly assist with this.
- It is generally recommended that development on peat habitats is avoided. In particular, the site should be designed to avoid direct intervention within intact peat habitats and on other habitats of high natural value.
- The applicants ecologists should be in a position based on desk top studies and preliminary investigations to identify any other ecological issues which would require to be addressed.

The Biodiversity chapter of the EIAR should be prepared to accord with CIEEM Guidelines and the NIS should be prepared taking account of National and EU Guidelines as well as recent case law.”

The scoping response received from the Cork County Council Ecologist has been considered in Chapter 8 – Biodiversity with regard to protected sites, species and habitat. Furthermore, with regard to the Boggeraghs to Musheramore Mountains Special Protection Area (SPA), greater setback was applied between the proposed infrastructure and the SPA following comments received from the Biodiversity Officer. The most proximate turbine (T2) is located 500m from the SPA boundary. The proposed development does not encroach on the SPA.

#### [Development Applications Unit, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht](#)

In relation to nature conservation, the site is near to Mullaghanish to Musheramore Special Protection Area (SPA) (site code 4162), to the west, and (b) partly within the catchment of the Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) (2170). The DAU said:

“The above SPA has been designated to conserve the hen harrier. At the outset, it would be useful to establish if the similar and nearby Boggeragh wind-farm development has resulted in any loss or relocation of a hen harrier breeding site and/or hunting habitat. Prior to construction of the Boggeragh wind-farm, records show that a pair had regularly bred in the Mossy Beds area. This data would be particularly valuable in assessing the impact of the current wind-farm proposal.

There are historical records of breeding hen harriers in the area of the wind-farm (i.e., within 2km of a proposed turbine). A detailed description of the suitability of the habitat for hunting harriers at the following locations is recommended: T2, T12, and T16 . The need for any compensatory habitat will require careful assessment.

The above cSAC has been designated to protect a number of species and habitats, some of the most important being salmon, lamprey species and otter in the Glen River, and these plus freshwater pearl mussel in the main channel of the Munster Blackwater River. The latter has particularly high water quality and habitat quality requirements. It needs to be established at the outset if the infrastructure for the wind farm can ensure avoidance of any geotechnical risks (soil slippage), siltation or increase in contribution to hydrographic peaks in the downstream river.

In addition, other protected species may occur within the wind-farm site, cable route, or in watercourses draining them, or on access routes to and from the site. These include, but are not limited to: merlin, peregrine falcon, bat species, otter and possibly Kerry slug.

The DAU’s response has been considered in Chapter 8 – Biodiversity, in the contents, methodology and proposed mitigation measures described in the chapter.



### Forestry Service, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

If the proposed development will involve the felling or removal of any trees, the developer must obtain a Felling License from this Department before trees are felled or removed. The developer should take note of the contents of Felling and Reforestation Policy document which provide a consolidated source of information on the legal and regulatory framework relating to tree felling. When the Forestry Service is considering an application to fell trees, the following applies with respect to environmental concerns:

- The interaction of these proposed works with the environment locally and more widely, in addition to potential direct and indirect impacts on designated sites and water, is assessed.
- Development may be subject to EIAR.
- Have regard to the Appropriate Assessment procedure.
- Change in land use which may directly or indirectly involve the felling and replanting of trees.

“Pursuant to Article 2(3) of the EIA Directive, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine strongly recommends that, notwithstanding the fact that a parallel consent in the form of felling licence may also have to be applied for, any EIAR and/or NIS produced in connection with the application for planning permission to the Local Planning Authority or An Bord Pleanála, should include an assessment of the impact of and measures, as appropriate, to prevent, mitigate or compensate for any significant adverse effects, direct or indirect, identified on the environment arising from such felling and replanting of trees, deforestation for the purposes of conversion to another type of land use, or replacement of broadleaf high forest by conifer species.”

Chapter 8 – Biodiversity has considered the potential impact of tree felling on protected sites. Chapter 11 – Population, Human Health & Material Assets considers potential impact of the change of land use of the proposed development with respect to forestry and also considered the potential impact of the removal of forestry as a material asset. Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 considers potential impact of tree felling on Water Quality and soils.

Detailed consideration of the approach to afforestation requirements associated with the project is attached in Appendix 1.3. It should be noted that the clearfelling of trees in the State requires a felling licence. The associated afforestation of alternative lands equivalent in area to those lands being permanently clearfelled is also subject to licensing (‘afforestation licensing’). The Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine is Ireland’s national forest authority and is responsible for all forest licensing. In light of the foregoing and for the purposes of this project, the developer commits that the location of any replanting (alternative afforestation) associated with the project will be greater than 10km from the wind farm site and also outside any potential hydrological pathways of connectivity i.e. outside the catchment within which the proposed project is located. On this basis, it is reasonable to conclude that there will be no more than imperceptible indirect or in-combination effects associated with this replanting. In addition, the developer commits to not commencing the project until both felling and afforestation licences are in place and this ensures the afforested lands are identified, assessed and licensed appropriately by the relevant consenting authority.

### Inland Fisheries Ireland

The site of the proposed development encompasses the head waters of the Blackwater and Laney Rivers, both significant salmonid fisheries.



In this context IFI would ask that the following requirements should be taken into consideration. There should be no drainage or other physical interference within the bed or bank of any watercourse without prior consultation with IFI.

Suspended solids and or hydrocarbon contaminated site run-off waters must be controlled adequately so that no pollution of surface waters can occur. More specifically IFI feels the following issues should be addressed:

- Identifying and zoning the project for environmental impact should a peat slip occur
- Setting out contingency plan should a peat movement occur.
- Setting out a plan for the control of silt in such a scenario, including measures to be put in place at the initial stages of construction.

In the event of any watercourse crossings being bridged or culverted the following general criteria should apply,

- The free passage of fish must not be obstructed.
- The original slope of the river bed should be maintained with no sudden drops on the downstream side. Design details on any proposed crossing should be incorporated at planning stage.
- Bridges are preferable to culverts.
- All instream works should be carried out only in the May-September period.”

Chapter 8 – Biodiversity, Chapter 9 – Land, Soils & Geology and Chapter 10 – Hydrology & Water Quality have set out mitigation measures in order to avoid potential impact on watercourses and water quality. Peat stability is considered in Chapter 9 – Land, Soils & Geology. Furthermore, the design of the project and construction methods have had regard to IFI guidance. A follow-up meeting was held with Inland Fisheries Ireland in April 2021 as detailed in Section 5.3.7.

### [Transport Infrastructure Ireland](#)

Recommendations from TII for the preparation of the EIAR are as follows:

- Consultations should be had with the relevant Local Authority/National Roads Design Office with regard to locations of existing and future national road schemes, in the vicinity of the subject development site.
- TII would be specifically concerned as to potential significant impacts the development would have on the existing 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 Environmental Impact Statement and all conditions and/or modifications imposed by An Bord Pleanála, regarding road schemes in the areas concerned. The developer should in particular have regard to any potential cumulative impacts.
- The developer, in preparing EIAR, should have regard to TII Publications.



- 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'.
- The EIAR 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).
- Subject to meeting the appropriate thresholds and criteria and having regard to best practice, a Traffic and Transport Assessment 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. The Authority's Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014) should be referred to in relation to proposed development, with potential impacts on the national road network.
- 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 applicant/developer should clearly identify haul routes proposed and fully assess the network to be traversed. Separate structure approvals/permits and other licences may be required in connection with the proposed haul route, including where temporary modification to the road network may be required. All structures on the haul route should be checked by the applicant/developer, to confirm their capacity to accommodate any abnormal load proposed.
- Where the windfarm scheme includes grid connection proposals, the scheme promoter should note the locations of existing and future national road schemes and develop proposals, so as to safeguard the proposed road schemes. In the context of existing national roads, alternatives to the provision of cabling along the national road network, such as alternative routing or the laying of cabling in private lands adjoining the national road, should be considered in the interests of safeguarding the investment in and the potential for, future upgrade works to the national road network. The cable routing should avoid all impacts to existing TII infrastructure.

Chapter 13 - Traffic and Transportation was compiled in light of TII observations and recommendations. TII guidelines were used where relevant and recommendations such as the requirement for a Road Safety Audit and Road Safety Impact Assessment were taken on board in the preparation of the chapter. Visual impact assessment was considered from national routes in Chapter 15 - Landscape and Visual were assessed from key receptors along public roads. The Air Quality & Climate and Noise & Vibration Chapters have also had regard to TII guidance.

#### Irish Aviation Authority

"It is the observation of the Irish Aviation Authority Aerodromes Department that the applicant should be required to engage with Rathcoole Aerodrome and Kerry Airport to undertake a preliminary screening assessment to confirm that the proposed wind farm and the associated cranes that would be utilised during construction would have no impact on flight operations at either Rathcoole Aerodrome or Kerry Airport."



Furthermore, “It is the observation of the Irish Aviation Authority Engineering Department that as the proposed development may obstruct ILS Flight Calibration Profiles flown when commissioning and calibrating Cork ILS 16, we require the planning applicant to have an assessment completed by our flight calibration provider FCSL.

This assessment should seek to ensure that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on FCSL’s ability to complete flight calibration checks at Cork Airport, including commissioning flight calibration checks, in all weathers.”

IAA’s observation is considered in Chapter 16 – Telecommunications and Aviation which details the study commissioned by the applicant to determine potential impact on flight calibration at Cork Airport. Furthermore, both Kerry Airport and Rathcoole Aerodrome were contacted as part of the aviation assessment. Both indicated that the proposed development would not impact on operations.

### Irish Water

Irish Water would like the following aspects of Water Services to generally be considered in the scope of an EIAR where relevant:

- Impacts of the development on the capacity of water services.
- Any up-grading of water services infrastructure that would be required to accommodate the development.
- In relation to a development that would discharge trade effluent – any upstream treatment or attenuation of discharges required prior to discharging to an IW collection network.
- In relation to the management of surface water; the potential impact of surface water discharges to combined sewer networks & potential measures to minimise/stop surface waters from combined sewers.
- Any physical impact on IW assets.
- Determine the location of public water services assets through consultation with IW prior to design.
- Any potential impacts on the assimilative capacity of receiving waters in relation to IW discharge outfalls including changes in dispersion /circulation characterises.
- Any potential impact on the contributing catchment of water sources either in terms of water abstraction for the development (and resultant potential impact on the capacity of the source) or the potential of the development to influence/present a risk to the quality of the water abstracted by IW for public supply.
- Where a development proposes to connect to an IW network and that network either abstracts water from or discharges waste water to a “protected”/sensitive area, consideration as to whether the integrity of the site/conservation objectives of the site would be compromised.
- Mitigation measures in relation to any of the above.

Irish Water’s response was considered in Chapter 9 – Land, Soils, Hydrogeology & Geology which assesses any potential impact on the contributing catchment of water sources either in terms of water abstraction for the development (and resultant potential impact on the capacity of the source) or the potential of the development to influence/present a risk to the quality of the water abstracted by IW for public supply and Chapter 10 – Hydrology & Water Quality in relation to surface water and ground water.



There are no public supply source protection areas within 10km of the study area with the closest located proximate to Coachford and to the west of Millstreet. Millstreet is located within a different catchment. The proposed surface water management measures which form part of the project in order to protect adjacent watercourses will ensure that there will be no impact on water quality downstream from the proposed project including Coachford public supply source.

It is not proposed to discharge to IW assets. Irish Water assets were also considered in Chapter 11 with respect to material assets (utility infrastructure). Following an information request by the applicant, no Irish Water Infrastructure was identified in the area of the proposed wind farm site.

#### [Geological Survey of Ireland, Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment](#)

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) set out the following comments relating to the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm and recommended various GSI resources for the EIAR assessment:

Presence of an unaudited County Geological Site, Boggeragh Mountains, which has been identified as having potential significance in terms of geological importance and interest but has not yet been assessed as an individual site through a county audit. With the current plan, there are no envisaged impacts on the integrity of current CGSs by the proposed development.

The Groundwater Vulnerability map (GSI resource) indicates the area covered by the proposed wind farm is variable. GSI recommended use of the Groundwater Viewer to identify areas of High to Extreme Vulnerability and 'Rock at or near surface' in your EIAR. With regard to Flood Risk Management, there is a need to identify areas for integrated constructed wetlands. GSI therefore recommended using National Aquifer and Recharge maps as part of GSI online resources.

Landslides are common in areas of peat, such as areas which are found close to the proposed wind farm. Landslide susceptibility in the area of the proposed wind farm is variable and is classed from Moderately Low / Moderately High to High. GSI recommended that geohazards be taken into consideration, especially when developing areas where these risks are prevalent.

Geological Survey Ireland highlighted the consideration of mineral resources and potential resources as a material asset which should be explicitly recognised within the environmental assessment process. GSI further recommended that their geotechnical database resources should be consulted as part of any baseline geological assessment of the proposed development area.

GSI's scoping response was considered in Chapter 9 – Land, Soils & Geology with regard to geological heritage, groundwater vulnerability, landslide susceptibility and geohazards, and consideration of mineral resources. Mineral resources were considered further in Chapter 11 – Material Assets with regard to non-renewable resources. Chapter 10 – Hydrology & Water Quality deals with flood risk management at the proposed wind farm.



## Butterfly Conservation Ireland

The scoping response from Butterfly Conservation Ireland detailed the following concerns:

“The site of the proposed wind farm is near Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains SPA. This site holds Merlin and Hen Harrier both listed on Annex I of the Habitats’ Directive. The site of the proposed wind farm is near Boggeragh Mountains NHA. This area holds Golden Plover, a Red Data Book species. This area also holds Devil’s-bit Scabious, the foodplant of the Marsh Fritillary butterfly, listed on Annex II of the Habitats’ Directive. The unplanted areas of upland blanket bog may also contain Large Heath butterfly, listed as Vulnerable on the Ireland Red List No.4: Butterflies.

The Large Heath is also rated Vulnerable on the European Red List of butterflies.

The species stated above may also occur on the site of the proposed wind farm in which case the potential for negative impacts may be unacceptably high. The status of these species on the designated sites may also be negatively impacted by a windfarm on the Ballinagree site.”

Butterfly Conservation Ireland’s response was considered in the content, methodology and assessment contained in Chapter 8 – Biodiversity which includes assessment of potential impact on the butterfly species.

## Telecommunications Operators/Providers

As part of the scoping process, telecommunications operators and providers in the area of the proposed wind farm were contacted and details of the wind turbine locations were shared in order to determine any potential impact on telecommunications links. Two providers indicated that the proposed development may have potential impact on operations. These operators, Ripplecom and Novatelecom were sent further correspondence as part of the telecommunications assessment to determine potential impacts. This is detailed in Chapter 16 – Telecommunications and Aviation.

## **5.3 Consultation with Key Stakeholders**

### 5.3.1 Cork County Council Pre-Planning Meeting

As the local authority responsible for the area, Cork County Council (CCC) were consulted in a pre-planning style meeting in order to inform the authority of the project and to receive observations regarding design and potential environmental impacts, as Cork County Council are considered a key stakeholder.

The meeting took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2020 and was conducted online. Those in attendance were:

- Senior Executive Planner - Cork County Council
- Senior Planner - Cork County Council
- Project Manager – Brookfield Renewables Ireland Ltd.
- Project Manager – Coillte
- Planning Manager – Coillte
- Senior Engineer – Fehily Timoney & Company
- Director of Services – Fehily Timoney & Company



The applicant began by describing the proposed project, the history of project development, along with the intention of applying directly to An Bord Pleanála as part of the Strategic Infrastructure Development process. The rationale for the proposed development was also set out in relation to national policy and the Climate Action Plan (2019). Public consultation to date was also described including local groups and individual dwellings, along with measures of further consultation in line with COVID-19 restrictions and emerging public health guidelines. A preliminary site boundary was presented to the County Council.

Representatives of CCC highlighted the existing wind farm development in the area and potential for cumulative impact. It was noted that a section of the study area fell within the ‘normally discouraged’ zoning for wind farm development in the County Development Plan and it was recommended that this area be removed. Important scenic receptors in the greater area were cited by the CCC and added viewpoints were recommended. CCC also recommended further consultation between the project archaeologists and CCC Heritage Officer.

Furthermore, CCC encouraged dialogues with CCC ecologist regarding potential impact to biodiversity and protected sites. CCC also recommended specialist assessment of peat stability.

In light of this meeting, further consultation with CCC was pursued as recommended by CCC planners and is detailed further in this section.

### 5.3.2 Consultation with Cork County Archaeologist

As part of the pre-application consultation with Cork County Council (CCC), the County Archaeologist forwarded comments on the proposed development. This correspondence was received by the project archaeologist. The comments included a review of the site in relation to existing archaeology and outlined concerns that the applicant should demonstrate to the satisfaction of the consenting authority that the proposed development will not negatively impact (directly or indirectly) on the known archaeological heritage and any newly identified archaeological sites not only individually but given the concentration of monuments, its impact on the overall archaeological landscape should be considered and assessed. The assessment also needs to address the ritual sites which have known alignments to distant landscape feature and /or celestial bodies and demonstrate there will be no impact on same.

A meeting was organised between the CCC Archaeologist, the lead archaeologist for the project (John Cronin & Associates) and the Senior Engineer from Fehily Timoney & Company. The meeting took place online on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2020.

The meeting began with a presentation of the overview of the project by the applicant. An overview of the study area was then presented along with assessment and findings to date. Key elements of mitigation through design were highlighted to avoid impacts on registered monuments, including clear corridors for existing alignments and positioning of turbines to avoid encroachment on monuments. Wireframe photomontages were presented along with drone photography of specific monuments.

CCC noted the importance of the alignments in the area and emphasised the need to take care in the siting of the proposed development. CCC also highlighted the need for heritage to be considered in public consultation and highlighted as an asset of the area. In this regard, a heritage amenity trail was discussed in order to emphasise the prominent heritage of the area which could contribute to community gain. The addition of the heritage amenity trail element of the project was welcomed by CCC.

The comments made by the CCC Archaeologist contributed to the assessment of both Archaeology and the Landscape & Visual Chapter and influenced the design of the project and the incorporation of the heritage amenity trail element of the project.



### 5.3.3 Consultation with Cork County Council Biodiversity Officer

As part of the pre-planning meeting with Cork County Council (CCC), the CCC Biodiversity Officer forwarded their comments on the proposed development. Comments were received by the project ecologists and included concerns around sites designated for nature conservation and their associated habitats and species; protected species; and habitats of high nature conservation value. The comments were reiterated during the scoping phase and the response is set out in full in section 5.2.1 of this Chapter.

Further consultation with the CCC Biodiversity Officer was conducted by the project ecologists on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2020. Further to the initial comments made, CCC stated that preference was given to avoidance of all intact peatland, bog, heath & Annex I habitats.

Regarding Habitat/Biodiversity, it was highlighted that avoidance of impacts is the preferred approach over mitigating impacts on ecological receptors of particular interest/sensitivity (e.g., intact peatland, bog, heath & Annex I habitats as mentioned above).

The consultation with the CCC Biodiversity Officer has informed the design and siting of the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm, as well as the methodology of assessment and mitigation measures set out in the Chapter 8 – Biodiversity.

### 5.3.4 Pre-Application Consultation Meeting with An Bord Pleanála

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2020, an initial pre-application consultation meeting took place with An Bord Pleanála (The Board). The meeting was in relation to an application for Strategic Infrastructure Development for the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm. The meeting was conducted online.

In attendance were the following:

- Director of Planning – An Bord Pleanála
- Senior Planning Inspector - An Bord Pleanála
- Executive Officer – An Bord Pleanála
- Project Manager – Brookfield Renewables Ireland Ltd.
- Project Manager – Coillte
- Planning Manager – Coillte
- Senior Engineer – Fehily Timoney & Company
- Director of Services – Fehily Timoney and Company

The meeting allowed for the applicant to present the various aspects of the proposed development. The meeting also allowed for representatives of An Bord Pleanála to gather information and gain an understanding of the project. The representatives of The Board also outlined the procedures of the pre-application consultation process to the applicant.



The applicant presented Design Iteration 2 of the proposed development and described the development of the project to date, including the likely point of connection to the national grid and the preferred turbine delivery route. Policy context, landscape character and consultation to date were all set out as well as the ecological and archaeological context of the site.

A discussion then followed where The Board highlighted the potential cumulative effects of other wind farms in the area, the potential impact on scenic routes, biodiversity, hydrology and geology concerns and potential impact from noise.

The Board concluded by stating its preliminary opinion that the proposed development would constitute strategic infrastructure. The minutes of the meeting, as received from The Board, are included in Appendix 5.3.

### 5.3.5 Second Pre-Application Consultation Meeting with An Bord Pleanála

A second pre-application consultation meeting took place with An Bord Pleanála (The Board) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 2020 and was conducted online. The purpose of the meeting was a follow up on the previous meeting in relation to the application for Strategic Infrastructure Development for the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm. In attendance were:

- Assistant Director of Planning – An Bord Pleanála
- Senior Planning Inspector – An Bord Pleanála
- Executive Officer – An Bord Pleanála
- Project Manager – Brookfield Renewables Ireland Ltd.
- Project Manager – Coillte
- Planning Manager – Coillte
- Senior Engineer – Fehily Timoney & Company
- Director of Services – Fehily Timoney & Company
- Lead Landscape and Visual Consultant – Macroworks
- Lead Archaeologist – John Cronin & Associates

The applicant commenced the meeting with a presentation detailing the proposed development and the progress that had been made since the previous meeting, including details of the number of proposed turbines, the likely point of connection to the national grid, details of the turbine delivery route and a detailed visual analysis of the proposed development with respect to its receiving environment. The applicant also detailed some of the assessment that had taken place to date including potential impacts to the Natura 2000 network, hydrological features, aquatic species and peat stability.

The applicant also highlighted the consultations with the Cork County Council Heritage Officer regarding existing archaeology in proximity to the proposed wind farm site, and a preliminary proposal for a heritage trail. Finally, the applicant outlined the timeline for the expected submission date of the planning application and detailed all other consultation to date.



With respect to peat stability, the Board’s representatives emphasised to the prospective applicant the importance of being cognisant of matters such as temporary, ancillary and enabling works, as well as main construction works, with regard to the subject site which is undulating in nature. The Board’s representatives also recommended further analysis and robust testing, including shear vane testing for establishment of soil strength characteristics.

The Board emphasised the importance of consultation with the NPWS, enquired about the planning status of the proposed grid route and enquired about noise assessment levels. The Board reminded the prospective applicant to ensure that all data and information is up-to-date at the time of the lodgement of the planning application and finally, the Board reminded the applicant to request formal closure to the pre-application process once satisfied with consultation. The minutes of the meeting, as received from The Board, are included in Appendix 5.3.

#### 5.3.6 Consultation with National Parks and Wildlife Service

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2020, the project ecologists spoke to the local NPWS Ranger regarding ornithology surveys at the proposed wind farm site. The consultation was in relation to three hinterland hen harrier nest sites and follow up correspondence was provided to the ranger showing the locations on a map with a brief summary of observations from the early season period for 2020.

Following pre-application consultation with An Bord Pleanála where further consultation was recommended, a formal meeting request was sent to the NPWS to discuss the proposed project with regard to the receiving ecological environment. The project ecologists met a representative of the NPWS in an online meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 2021. The project ecologists presented the proposed project along with their findings to date. The representative of the NPWS set out observations around the connectivity to the Blackwater SAC and the nearby Boggeragh Mountains NHA. Hen Harrier activity was discussed, and the latest survey results were presented. The NPWS followed up with a final correspondence from the Development Applications Unit summarising their observations. This letter is dated 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2021 and is included in Appendix 5.1.

#### 5.3.7 Inland Fisheries Ireland

On the 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021, the project hydrologist and project aquatic ecologist met a representative of Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) at the proposed Wind Farm Site. The project was described to the IFI representative along with the drainage measure which form part of the wind farm’s design. Proposed key watercourse crossings were described including the replacement of an existing bridge with a single span bridge and the installation of 3 no. box culverts. The locations of the crossing points were visited, and construction methodologies were discussed and agreed. Maps photographs and methodologies were subsequently forwarded to the IFI representative following the meeting.

#### 5.3.8 Macroom Trout Fly Anglers

A project ecologist met a representative of the Macroom Trout Fly Anglers organisation on site on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July 2020. The objective of the meeting was to discuss aquatic ecology and consider the best positions for the water quality monitoring points at the site and downstream of the site. Baseline survey methodology was discussed and a greater understanding of the organisation’s knowledge and experience of the waterbodies, catchments and species of the area was acquired through the meeting. Further contact was made with the Macroom Anglers regarding the electro-fishing survey which took place in September 2020.



A set of photographs of the captured fish by site number and a map of survey locations with the photographs by survey location were forwarded to a representative of the Macroom Anglers.

## 5.4 Community Consultation and Public Information Events

Community consultation for the Proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm began at an early stage with an aim for public inclusion throughout the development process of the project. Community engagement was conducted by members of the development team, as well as two appointed Community Liaison Officers (CLOs). A community report is included as Appendix 5.4 of this EIAR which outlines the engagement and liaison with the community local to the area of the proposed wind farm.

The CLOs were responsible for communication between the public and the developer's team. The CLO's role included door to door consultation with community members, distribution of project materials to community members, follow up meetings with community members where requested, liaison between local residents and the project team, communication of any project updates and compilation of feedback. An overview of the engagement process as included in Appendix 5.4 is outlined below.

### 5.4.1 Initial engagement

Engagement began in August 2019, when both CLOs worked together calling to all houses within the 3km zone (207 houses) with the first leaflet. This was before any detailed design work.

It was considered important to give out the accurate, up-to-date information in print to each household in a timely manner, within about three days, ensuring all local households received this at the same time. CLOs were on hand to discuss any queries, comments or concerns that residents may have had with regard to the project and to take back queries and concerns to the project managers. These initial conversations and questions highlighted items that helped to inform the second newsletter.

The CLOs also worked on Saturdays and some evenings in an effort to meet residents unavailable during weekdays. The project team made arrangements to talk with some local residents individually at their request and also met with a couple of smaller groups.

A second project newsletter was distributed in December 2019. This contained a map of the 'developable area' and information on environmental assessments being undertaken.

A low-call number and project email address were created to aid communications. These were subsequently included in all project leaflets.

Project information and newsletters were issued to the elected representatives in the area and to representatives of local community groups at the same time.

All communications issued contained contact details for members of the project team. Householders were invited to make contact if they had concerns or questions. Any significant issues raised at the doors and all issues raised in correspondence were followed up by the project managers.

Prepared notes were left in the letterboxes in cases where nobody was found to be at home on more than one of the calls, explaining that we had called again.



Contact details were provided for the householder to make contact if they wished. Householders were told how they would be kept informed in future, as far as possible, as well as how to contact the project team with any queries.

The project team succeeded in meeting with approx. 95% of households within 3km. The balance of houses were written to with an invite to contact the team if they wished.

A project website was also launched in February 2020 and all materials circulated up to then in the local area were uploaded to this site. The project website also included contact details for any queries.

Project website: [www.ballinagreewindfarm.ie](http://www.ballinagreewindfarm.ie)

#### 5.4.2 Next Phase Engagement:

Newsletter 3 issued in June 2020 and was a comprehensive 24-page document. This included information about the site and the proposed development, site layout map and information on the Community Benefit Scheme. It also included information on the planning process, the site design process, information on key aspects of the environmental studies and some of the environmental benefits associated with the proposed project and next steps. The leaflet was posted out to properties within the 3km zone due to Covid-19 restrictions.

A project update letter and questionnaire were delivered to all households in Sept 2020 by the CLOs. This asked residents if they had an interest in online communications. A limited number expressed interest, 7 in all, and provided relevant details. These were then contacted directly by the project manager. This satisfied their demand for information and opened a direct line of communications with the householders which they were happy to continue with.

In December 2020, Newsletter 4 was hand-delivered by the CLOs and included detailed information on the Design Iteration 2 process including an updated 21 turbine layout map.

In April 2021, a project update letter was delivered to all households. Due to Covid 19 restrictions this was carried out by Allhomes, a leaflet distribution service. The letter gave an update on the project timeline and also invited submissions on the draft Government document “Good Practice Principles Handbook for Community Benefit Funds”.

In August 2021, a detailed 24-page project leaflet (Newsletter 5) with final 20 turbine layout map was hand delivered by the CLOs to the vast majority of homes within a wider **5km zone**.

At all stages of the consultation process, individual calls and emails received by the project were responded to either in person, by phone or by email as they arose.

#### 5.4.3 Engagement with local political representatives:

In parallel with the general community engagement, all local councillors and TDs were kept updated and each of the above representatives were given copies of all Newsletters and correspondence that issued to the houses in the 3km and 5km areas as outlined in Table 3.

The Ballinagree Wind Farm site is in the heart of the Cork North West Constituency, represented by 3 sitting TDs. The site is also located within the Macroom Municipal District. This Municipal District is represented by 6 councillors.



In Sept 2020, individual letters were issued to each representative by the Project Manager, providing them with relevant information of interest for them.

In April 2021, an on-line Webinar was held for the Macroom Municipal District as part of their monthly meeting. Five of the six councillors attended as well as some local Council staff, both engineers and administration. The format was a presentation by the project Developers outlining key aspects of the project followed by a questions and answers session.

#### 5.4.4 Online virtual tour and information platform:

Covid-19 restrictions prevented an in-person public consultation event; however, an informative online virtual presentation was developed with the assistance of Innovision, a virtual platform specialist. The virtual tour went live in June 2020 and is accessible from the project website homepage, <https://www.innovision.ie/ballinagree>.

The virtual presentation included an introductory video from the Project Managers, Turbine Layout map, detailed information on Archaeology and Cultural Heritage assessments, Ecology Field Surveys, Noise assessment, Photomontages, Aquatic Ecology and all project information issued to date. The virtual tour was updated in August 2021 in advance of the issue of the final design layout.

#### 5.4.5 Advertorials:

Advertorials notifying the public about the recent distribution of the fifth newsletter and the updated virtual tour were placed in the relevant local papers, i.e., the Southern Star, The Corkman and the Lee Valley magazine in early September. The advertorials included key information about the proposed scheme and included the project website where people were invited to go for more information.

#### 5.4.6 Webinar:

As an in-person open event was not possible due to Covid-19 restrictions, the project team hosted a Community Information webinar in October 2021. An advert for the webinar, which included contact details and how to register, was published in The Corkman and The Southern Star newspapers and Lee Valley Magazine. Similar information was also included in Local Parish newsletters in Ballinagree and Kilcorney. Information posters were also placed in the Ballinagree Post Office and in local shop windows in Ballinagree Village and Rylane Village, which included details of the webinar and Community Liaison Officer contact details. A hard copy of the webinar presentation was available for anyone who could not attend the webinar, or anyone who wanted a copy of the presentation.

#### 5.4.7 Community Groups:

Table 5.2 below sets out a list of community groups and organisations generally located or representing areas within 3km of the proposed project. These groups received all the same information as the local householders and there were various contacts and discussions with many of these as queries arose.

Table 5.2 has a list of groups in the wider area that were included in circulation of the final Newsletter 5.



**Table 5.2 - Local Community Groups within the 3km**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Ballinagree Development Company</b>                    |
| <b>Aubane Social Club</b>                                 |
| <b>IRD, Duhallow, CEO + Env Committee</b>                 |
| <b>Macroom District Environmental Group</b>               |
| <b>Church, Ballinagree</b>                                |
| <b>Ballinagree National School</b>                        |
| <b>Macroom and District Trout/Fly Anglers Association</b> |
| <b>Macroom and District Gun Club</b>                      |
| <b>Aghinagh Macra</b>                                     |
| <b>Aghinagh Comhaltas</b>                                 |
| <b>Millstreet.ie</b>                                      |
| <b>Rylane Community Park Development Group</b>            |
| <b>Rylane Gun Club</b>                                    |
| <b>Rylane Muintir na Tire and Community Alert</b>         |
| <b>Conor Kelleher, Ecologist and bat expert.</b>          |
| <b>Launa Valley Carriage Club</b>                         |

**Table 5.3 - Groups in the Wider Area**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Kilcorney Development Group</b>        |
| <b>Kilcorney National School</b>          |
| <b>Rylane National School</b>             |
| <b>LTV Services Ltd, Carriganimma</b>     |
| <b>Bawnmore Play and Learn Playschool</b> |
| <b>Muinefliuch National School</b>        |
| <b>Millstreet Country Park</b>            |



A summary of all community engagement is set out in Table 5.4 below.

**Table 5.4 – Summary of Community Engagement for Ballinagree Wind Farm (2019 to 2021)**

| Date                        | Engagement   |
|-----------------------------|--|
| April 2019                  | Two Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) were appointed to work part-time on this project.  |
| August 2019                 | <p>Newsletter 1 was delivered to over 200 properties within 3km by the 2 CLO's working together (see Section 9.1). This involved door knocks, and call backs to houses where nobody was at home. Notes left where direct contact failed, with a phone number for contact purposes.</p> <p>A dedicated project low-call number and email went live.</p>   |
| December 2019               | Newsletter 2 was delivered door to door again by the CLOs (see Section 9.1). This included evening and weekend calls to premises where nobody was at home during the day, in an effort to reach out to all.  |
| January & February 2020     | <p>A dedicated project website was launched to facilitate communications locally and with the wider public: <a href="https://www.ballinagreewindfarm.ie/">https://www.ballinagreewindfarm.ie/</a>.</p> <p>This provided information on project design, studies being carried out and expected timelines. It also included the CLOs' contact details, and copies of the two Newsletters issued. Householders were invited to monitor the website for updates.</p>   |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> March 2020 | Initial Covid-19 restrictions are put in place nationally.   |
| April 2020                  | In an effort to get in touch with the small number of remaining houses (c.5%) within the 3km zone where CLOs were unable to make contact, targeted letters were posted to these remaining households (See Section 9.2).  |
| June 2020                   | <p>Newsletter 3 was delivered by An Post this time due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions on the movements of CLOs. This included a cover letter to explain this (see Section 9.1).</p> <p>Queries were addressed by CLOs and Project Managers and meetings arranged to discuss issues and concerns, subject to compliance with Covid-19 Regulations / Guidance in place at the time.</p> <p>An online virtual presentation was launched adding further to the information available to the public at large –<a href="https://www.innovision.ie/ballinagree">https://www.innovision.ie/ballinagree</a>.</p> |
| September 2020              | A project update letter was issued, with a question to residents asking who would be interested in engaging in online communications due to current Covid-19 restrictions (see Section 9.3). This was hand delivered by CLOs in branded envelopes and contained a stamped addressed return envelope for responses. A letter also issued to political reps (see Section 9.4).   |
| December 2020               | Newsletter 4 was hand delivered by CLOs to all houses within 3km zone (see Section 9.1).   |
| April 2021                  | An information update letter was issued along with Community Benefit information to local residents and local Community Groups and political representatives (see Section 9.5).  |



| Date                            | Engagement   |
|---------------------------------|--|
| April 2021                      | The Developer joined Municipal District Council monthly, meeting to present on the project and answer any questions.   |
| August 2021                     | The Virtual Tour was updated on the website to provide further information in lieu of project open evening(s) due to Covid-19 restrictions.  |
| August & September 2021         | Newsletter 5 was hand delivered by CLOs to most homes within a 5km zone of the project site, roughly 550 houses (see Section 9.1).   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2021  | An advertorial, " <i>Ballinagree Wind Farm prepares to submit planning application</i> " was published in the Corkman and Southern Star newspapers as well as in the local Lee Valley Magazine in an effort to reach as many as possible in the wider area (see Section 9.6).  |
| 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2021 | Public was notified of a Community Webinar scheduled for 7 <sup>th</sup> October. This was advertised in in the Corkman, Southern Star newspapers and the Lee Valley Magazine on 30 <sup>th</sup> September (see Section 9.7).<br>Information posters were also placed in a shop window and the Post Office in Ballinagree village, Shop in Rylane and in Church Newsletters in Ballinagree and Kilcorney.<br>Letters were posted to local Community Groups and political representatives. These included contact details as well as details of how to register. |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2021        | The Community Webinar was held at 7pm, followed by a Q+A session.<br>This resulted in follow-up calls/visits with individuals who raised questions (see Section 9.1).  |

These themes were discussed throughout the engagement process and were answered in a transparent and open manner as far as possible. Ultimately not all themes could be or were addressed to the satisfaction of all, but the project team remains open in trying to find fair and equitable solutions for all, including sharing information sources at our disposal. All of the above themes are also addressed clearly in the EIAR.

The long timeframe for this engagement has allowed people to digest what they were hearing, consult, discuss among themselves and reach out to the project team on any items that they felt needed further clarification.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions on public meetings, where requested further liaison/communication was carried out individually or in small groups outdoors in line with the applicable public health policy in place at the time. This allowed the project team to engage directly with local residents and address their concerns or queries regarding the project design, which was beneficial to all parties. For more information on the community consultation process please refer to Appendix 5.4.

## 5.5 Conclusion

Consultation was sought from a number of stakeholders, including An Bord Pleanála, Cork County Council, Government Departments, Non-Governmental Organisations, telecommunications providers, aviation organisations, local community and local interest groups and local residents. Their comments and feedback were incorporated into the project design iterations and to the assessments conducted in the EIAR as identified in this chapter.



Pre-planning consultation was held with An Bord Pleanála as part of the Strategic Infrastructure Development Process. These meetings highlighted some of the key points and potential impacts of the proposed development and informed the assessment methodology.

A formal pre-planning meeting was held with Cork County Council Planners who provided insight into the planning issues of the area and potential impacts of the proposed project. Detailed correspondence was received from the Cork County Council Biodiversity Officer during the scoping exercise which informed various aspects of the EIAR assessment. Furthermore, a meeting was held between the project ecologist and Cork County Council Conservation Officer regarding the heritage of the area and the potential to highlight the areas heritage with an amenity trail.

Other organisations who provided insightful feedback include the NPWS who have an in-depth knowledge of the site and its biodiversity and Inland Fisheries Ireland who provided important advice regarding water quality and protection of aquatic habitats and the public.



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