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Our Ref: 10730

28th January 2021

Your Ref: 306229-19

The Secretary
An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

**RE: Castlebanny Wind Farm – Direct Planning Application re Strategic Infrastructure Development.
Proposed Development of Castlebanny Wind Farm at Castlebanny, Co. Kilkenny.**

Dear Sir/Madam

On behalf of our clients Springfield Renewable Ltd., (hereafter referred to as the Developer), please find enclosed a planning application for a 10-year permission for the proposed construction of a wind energy development (and all associated infrastructure) at a site located in south-east Kilkenny approximately 2.2km south-east of Ballyhale, 4.5 km north-east of Mullinavat and 5.8 km south-west of Inistioge.

This application is being made directly to An Bord Pleanála as ‘Strategic Infrastructure Development’ (SID) under the provisions of Section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. This position was confirmed by An Bord Pleanála to the applicant on 16th December 2020 following pre-applications consultations with the Board (Case Number – ABP- 306229 -19), a copy of the noted correspondence is enclosed with this letter for completeness.

A detailed description of the proposed development is set out in the enclosed public notices and a complete description is set out in the application documents. The application includes an Environmental Impact Assessment Report and a Natura Impact Assessment. The application maybe also be viewed at a dedicated website: <https://www.castlebannyplanning.ie/>.

The proposed site extends to c. 1,432 hectares (ha), of which c.1200 ha are currently commercial forest owned by Coillte, and is located within the townlands of Castlecosker, Derrynahinch, Kiltorcan, Coolroe Beg, Baunskeha, Castlebanny, Kilvinoge, Cappagh, Coolnahau, Ballytarsna, Mullennakill, Glenpipe, Ballymartin, Ballyvatheen, Ballynoony West and Derrylackey, Co. Kilkenny. The proposed grid connection is located within the townlands of

Directors: Michael Shelly (Chairman) R.F. Tobin (Managing Director) E. Connaughton (Company Secretary)
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B. Heaney C. Kelly A. Mulligan S. Tinnelly

Castlebanny (proposed substation also located here), Cappagh, Coolnahau, Garrandarragh, Ballygegan and Ballyvool (proposed connection with existing 110kV overhead line here), Co. Kilkenny.

There are a number of locations which require temporary additional works to accommodate oversize load delivery to site (for turbine components). The current application includes temporary works at two locations in the townland of Ballynoony West. A number of other minor temporary works areas are not forming part of the current application but are assessed as part of this EIAR and NIS and are located within the townlands of Garrandarragh, Granny, Kilmurry, and Rathpatrick, Co Kilkenny, and Ballyduff East, Co. Waterford.

The proposed development will consist of:

The construction of 21 no. wind turbines and ancillary works. The turbines will have a maximum blade tip height of up to 185m above the top of the foundation level and will be accessible from internal access routes within the site. Springfield Renewables Ltd intends to apply for a ten-year planning permission for the following:

- Erection of 21 no. wind turbines with an overall blade tip height of up to 185m and all associated foundations and hard-standing areas in respect of each turbine;
- Improvement of existing site entrance with access onto the R704 regional road, vertical realignment of the R704 in proximity to this entrance, and creation of two new site entrances on the L7451 to form a new crossing point;
- Improvements and temporary modifications to existing public road infrastructure to facilitate delivery of abnormal loads and turbine delivery and construction access at two locations on the R704 in the townland of Ballynoony West;
- Construction of 2 no. temporary construction compounds with associated temporary site offices, parking areas and security fencing;
- Installation of 1 no. permanent meteorological mast up to a height of 100m;
- 3 no. borrow pits;
- Construction of new internal site access roads and upgrade of existing site roads, to include passing bays and all associated drainage;
- Construction of drainage and sediment control systems;
- Construction of 1 no. permanent 110kV electrical substation including:
 - 2 no. control buildings containing worker welfare facilities and equipment store; All electrical plant and infrastructure and grid ancillary services equipment; Parking; Security Fencing; Wastewater holding tank; Rainwater harvesting equipment; All associated infrastructure and services including site works and signage;
- All associated underground electrical and communications cabling connecting the wind turbines to the proposed wind farm substation;
- All works associated with the connection of the proposed wind farm to the national electricity grid, which will be via a loop-in 110 kV underground cable connection approximately 4km in length to the existing overhead 110 kV line in the townland of Ballyvool, Co. Kilkenny, with two new 16m high steel lattice loop-in/out masts at the connection point;
- All related site works and ancillary development including berms, landscaping, and soil excavation;
- Ancillary forestry felling to facilitate construction and operation of the proposed development and any onsite forestry replanting;

- Development of a permanent public car park with seating/picnic tables at the end of the construction phase of the development on the footprint of the southern temporary construction compound; and
- Permanent recreational facilities including marked walking and cycling trails along the site access roads, and associated recreation and amenity signage and outdoor fitness equipment.
- A 10-year planning permission and 35-year operational life from the date of commissioning of the entire wind farm is being sought. The area of site to which the application relates is 271.2ha.

This application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

As stated, a 10-year planning permission and 35-year operational life from the date of commissioning of the entire wind farm is being sought. Given the recent advances in turbine technology, and the anticipated lifespan of wind turbines, this is considered to be the optimal operational life for the proposed development. The duration of this operational life allows the proposed turbines to be used to generate clean renewable energy until they have reached the end of their life, rather than being removed prematurely.

The application includes an onsite 110kV substation with a loop-in underground grid connection to the existing 110kV overhead line in Ballyvoal. Two new masts will be required in Ballyvoal to allow for the connection, drawings of which can be seen in Appendix 2-1 (Drawings) of EIAR. The overall length of the grid connection between the proposed substation and the existing overhead line is approximately 4km, of which, approximately 1km is within the site of the proposed wind farm, and approximately 0.3km is located along the public road corridor. The remaining approximately 2.7km is located off road.

The proposed underground grid connection will run from the proposed onsite substation in an easterly direction towards the boundary of the proposed wind farm site. The first 370m will be located within a proposed new site access road, after this it will move off road across a field and forestry until it crosses the L-7451 local road in the townland of Cappagh. It continues eastwards across fields and forestry, crossing a small stream, the L-8273 local road and then crossing the River Arrigle and along a field until it reaches the L-3418 local road in the townland of Garrandarragh. The route runs in the field alongside this road northwards for approximately 200m, then enters the road corridor to continue northwards for approximately 300m until it turns eastwards, off road again in the townland of Ballyvoal across pasture fields. From here it sweeps in an arc to the east where it crosses the L-8276 local road and reaches the existing overhead 110kV line in Ballyvoal.

As the project requires an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) the application documentation includes a copy of the EIA Portal Notice. The correspondence issued confirms on the 26th January 2021 the EIA portal ID number for the project (2021021) and that the details have been uploaded onto the Department's portal.

The following documents are included in the application pack:

- Planning Application Documentation
 - Planning Application Form
 - Site Notice
 - Newspaper Notice
 - Planning Cover Letters (Kilkenny County Council and An Bord Pleanála)



- Details of legal owners and relevant legal interest
 - Statutory Undertaker - Springfield Renewable Ltd.
 - List of Prescribed Bodies and SID Determination
 - Copy of Notification Letter sent to Prescribed Bodies
 - EIAR Portal Confirmation (2021021)
 - EFT Confirmation of transfer of SID Planning Application Fee (€100,000)
- Mitigation Measures document
 - Planning Application Drawings (See schedule of application form)
 - Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)
 - Volume I and II- EIAR Text including Non-Technical Summary (NTS)
 - Volume III- EIAR Appendices
 - Volume IV- Photomontages
 - Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

All elements of the proposed development, including the proposed grid connection to the existing overhead line in the townland of Ballyvoal and forestry felling, as well as elements which form part of the overall project but are not part of the current planning application such as off-site forestry replanting and all works required on public roads to accommodate turbine delivery, have been considered and are assessed as part of the EIAR and NIS.

Please find 3 hard copies and 7 electronic copies of the planning application pack enclosed with this letter. Kilkenny County Council has also received 5 hard copies and 2 electronic copies. All prescribed bodies as identified are being provided with the application documentation in the format which they have requested it.

I trust that you have all the information you require to progress the application. If, however, you have any queries or would like to discuss any matter in detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We look forward to your decision in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. John Staunton BSc. PhD.

Senior Project Manager & Environmental Scientist

For and on behalf of TOBIN Consulting Engineers

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Encl: Planning Application Documentation (3 hard copies and 7 electronic copies)
An Bord Pleanála SID Determination Letter dated 16th December 2020.
EIAR Portal Confirmation

