

Ballinlee Green Energy Community Engagement

Key Questions & Answers – September 2025

The following document was prepared as a resource for the community using questions that were directed to our community team via email, phone, door-to-door interactions and community clinic meetings during the community engagement phases to date for the proposed Ballinlee Green Energy project.

1. THE SITE, COMPONENTS & SITE LOCATION

Why develop a wind farm here, and not elsewhere, like more remote areas or in the sea?

The site is designated a “preferred area” for wind energy by Limerick City and County Council under the 2022–2028 Development Plan. It offers favourable wind conditions and aligns with the national renewable energy policy.

Where is the site entrance and access routes?

Access to the wind farm site will be via the regional road network. The R516 is located to the North of the wind farm site running from Bruff to Kilmallock. The closest National primary road is the N20 located to the west of the proposed development. The main site entrance is via the R516 Regional Road between Croom and Bruff on the north side of the wind farm site.

Do we use a meteorological mast?

No, we do not use a met mast; we use LiDAR to collect data. In wind energy, LiDar (Light Detection and Ranging) is a remote sensing technology that uses lasers to measure wind speed and direction by detecting the Doppler shift in light reflected off atmospheric aerosols. It's used to assess wind farm sites, measure power curves, predict wind turbine performance, and optimise wind farm layouts.

Request for further mapping

More detailed mapping, including additional details of precise turbine locations, will be made available upon the submission of a planning application. The project layout map, turbine setback and county development plan map are available to download from the project website.

What will the substation look like?

The proposed 110kV substation will comprise of an outdoor electrical yard and two single storey buildings.

2. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Community Consultation Approach

Our engagement approach has been designed to ensure open, consistent, and accessible communication for all members of the community. The project team offers one-on-one consultations to all interested parties in person at a time of their choosing, and we are also available to discuss the project via phone, video, or email.

Who in the community was consulted about this project?

We aim to have an in-person consultation with all residents living within approximately 1km of a proposed turbine, and all those residents will have received a letter and leaflet in the post. Our community team went door to door to each home within 1km to share the project information, discuss all related topics and seek feedback from the local community. We also held a series of community clinics, to which all residents within 1km received an invitation. All local TDs and Councillors were also notified about the project, and an advertisement was placed in the Limerick Leader to alert the wider community.

Will Ballinlee Green Energy hold a public meeting?

We believe that smaller, appointment-based clinics provide the best opportunity for constructive engagement, allowing for more detailed discussion and the addressing of individual concerns. Residents were invited to meet with our project team during individual, scheduled community clinics.

3. THE COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

The Community Benefit Fund – how is it governed?

A key feature of the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) is that all renewable electricity generation projects must establish a Community Benefit Fund to be used for the wider economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of the local community. The contribution is to be set at €2 per Megawatt hour of generation of the RESS Project.

These funds are governed by rules set out by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), and based on the current project scope, a conservative estimate values the overall fund at approximately €350,000 per annum for a 15-year duration.

In relation to the RESS community benefit fund, how does the near neighbour scheme work?

As set out in the RESS Terms and Conditions, Households within 1 km of a turbine in the proposed project will receive a direct "near neighbour" payment of €1,000 per year. Households located further than 1 km from the RESS Project but within a distance of 2 km from such RESS Project shall receive an annual payment of an amount lower than €1,000 but higher than €500. The amount is at the discretion of the locally elected Community Benefit Fund committee. The total amounts allocated to direct payments to households are limited to 50% of the total annual contributions from the Community Benefit Fund.

4. TURBINES

What is the setback from houses?

In line with the Draft Revised Wind Energy Guidelines (2019), resulting in a minimum distance of 640metres (160 metres * 4). This is an increased distance in comparison with the 2006 Guidelines (which is a minimum of 500 metres).

How far apart are the turbines?

For proper wind resource utilisation, each turbine needs to be separated by a suitable distance from the neighbouring turbine. This can vary depending on predominant wind direction, local terrain and environmental considerations. For this project it is approximately 400 metres.

Will residents be affected by Shadow Flicker?

Shadow Flicker Control Measures (SFCM) is a standard element of commercial wind turbine control software. This software considers factors such as location and weather conditions, which will then automatically stop each wind turbine at times when shadow flicker would otherwise occur.

Advancing wind turbine technology allows for the automatic shutdown/start-up of the turbines. The turbine's software/programming enables the automatic shutdown of the turbine to prevent shadow flicker occurring. We commit to adopting the latest technologies and best practices to ensure that shadow flicker will be eliminated at any dwelling. This commitment will be detailed as part of the planning application.

What happens to turbines in extreme weather conditions?

Wind turbines are designed to withstand extreme weather conditions with brake mechanisms installed within the turbines so that they only operate under specific wind speeds and will shut down during very high wind speed events. Therefore, there is very low risk to the proposed development from high wind speeds. To protect wind turbines from damage caused by a lightning strike and to provide grounding, each turbine will be equipped with an electrical grounding system.

We would like to see a visual representation of the project?

Photomontages will be available upon the submission of the planning application.

What noise will be experienced?

The evolution of wind farm technology over the past decade has greatly reduced noise from wind turbines, with the main sound being the aerodynamic swoosh of the blades passing the tower. There are strict guidelines in the planning regulations on wind turbines noise emissions to ensure the protection of residential amenity. A comprehensive noise monitoring regime will be undertaken to ensure the proposed development complies with regulations. The project will comply with noise guidelines and all relevant legislation. The World Health Organisation has published its Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region in which recommendations are made for wind turbine noise. The recommended level of noise

produced should be below 45 dB (A). The current guidelines in Ireland and the UK, which are in line with international best practice, are set at between 35 and 45-dB(A) dependent on the time of day and background noise. For reference, a fridge typically produces a sound level of 32–47 dB(A).

5. TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

How will traffic be managed?

A traffic analysis has been undertaken, and minimising traffic and transport interruption has been paramount in the design of the project, with a construction traffic management plan submitted with the planning application.

How will the turbines be delivered?

The proposed route follows the N69 from Foynes Harbour in Co. Limerick to the N18 (east) bypass around Limerick city, then turns south onto the M20, turns south onto the N20 at Ballybronogue, and east onto the R516 at Croom to the proposed wind farm site.

How are the turbines delivered?

They are delivered via specialised trucks and trailers.

What is a site link corridor – as referenced on your map?

A Site Link Corridor is a term used to refer to a designated pathway or route that connects one part of the site to the other.

How long will construction take?

Construction for a project like the Ballinlee Green Energy project is estimated at between 12 and 24 months.

What about the crossings needed over the streams and rivers in the site itself?

A clear-span bridge is required as part of the proposed development over the Morningstar River to provide access to northern and southern parts of the site.

Roads used – will they be restored if any damage occurs?

Yes, Ballinlee Green Energy commits to maintaining the quality of the roads used.

What about the works for the Grid Connection Cable and route?

The proposed Grid Connection Route will consist of approximately 27 km of a 110kV underground cable buried in the public road (local and regional roads) and under access tracks within the wind farm site.

The works for the grid connection route are estimated to take approximately 6 months within the overall project works schedule.

Will other planning applications on the grid route be affected by this?

No, there is no connection between the two.

www.ballinleegreenenergy.ie

6. ECOLOGY, HYDROLOGY & HYDROGEOLOGY

What about the specially protected species, particularly the whooper swan, the skylark, owls and bats?

As part of the pre-planning process, we conduct extensive ecology surveys. We work with a team of independent ecologists to evaluate any potential impact on local wildlife such as bats as a result of the proposed project. All survey information and assessments will be submitted within an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The EIAR will accompany the planning application for the project.

What about the forestry that is felled?

Felling of some portions of existing tree plantations is required within and around wind farm infrastructure to accommodate the construction of the turbine foundations and associated hardstands, access tracks, turbine assembly, substation and deposition areas. Ballinlee Green Energy intends to replace or replant any forestry affected.

What about waste during operation? Particularly oil.

Wastes arising during the operation phase of the proposed development include but are not limited to lubricating oils, cooling oils, and packaging from spare parts.

The containment and disposal of such oils will be carried out by an approved contractor. Such operations will be carried out in accordance with the Waste Management (Hazardous Waste) Regulations, 1998 as amended. The remaining wastes will all be removed from site and reused, recycled, or disposed of in an authorised facility in accordance with best practice.

What about waste and run off from construction?

Construction phase waste is anticipated to consist of hardcore, concrete, spare steel reinforcement, shuttering timber and unused oil, diesel and building materials. This waste will be segregated and stored in the construction compound and collected regularly during the construction phases and taken off site to be reused, recycled and disposed of in accordance with best practice procedures at an approved facility.

What about Flood Risk?

The turbines have been strategically located to avoid areas prone to flooding. The Flood Risk Assessment concluded that the site is not at risk from extreme flooding.

What about the surface water?

A site surface water management system will be constructed on the site to attenuate run-off, guard against soil erosion and safeguard downstream water quality. The drainage system will be implemented along all work areas including all internal site access tracks, storage areas, crane hardstand areas and temporary site construction compound.

7. ARCHAEOLOGY

What about archaeological features in the wind farm site?

Wind farms require thorough archaeological assessments, as their construction and operation can impact historical sites through physical damage, land alteration, and visual disturbance. Protection mechanisms include Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Archaeological Impact Assessments (AIAs) that identify archaeological constraints, leading to recommendations for avoidance, mitigation, or monitoring of groundworks and grid connections.

8. HEALTH, WELLBEING AND HOME LIFE CONCERNS

What about the health effects?

Both the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Health Service Executive (HSE) have shared their position in relation to wind farms and public health. A report published by the HSE in 2017 entitled "Position Paper on Wind Turbines and Public Health" states: "There is no direct evidence that exposure to wind farm noise affects physical or mental health.". The full scientific paper is available here. <https://www.lenus.ie/server/api/core/bitstreams/e2ee1bf8-1315-4226-90fe-5f4a3a14e3c9/content>

The World Health Organisation states that 'Wind energy will in fact have positive health benefits'. Please see here for further research: <https://windenergyireland.com/images/files/9660bdd9a539e9808a41789a660ba6d3496805.pdf>

Broadband & Mobile coverage – we work at home, will we experience interference?

Wind turbines do not typically interfere with broadband or mobile signals. Any potential interference would be assessed during the planning phase and mitigated if necessary.

My children have special needs – how will this affect them?

Ballinlee Green Energy commit to taking a case-by-case approach with families living locally to ensure the continued enjoyment of their home and do all we can to support individual circumstances as much as possible.

What about property devaluation?

While concerns exist among residents, especially those within 1km of turbines, there is no conclusive, peer-reviewed evidence or research that wind farms cause widespread property devaluation in Ireland.

9. THE PLANNING APPLICATION

Can Ballinlee Green Energy move the turbines after we submit our planning application or move closer to homes?

Should the proposed project receive planning permission, the project will be constructed in accordance with the design presented to An Coimisiún Pleanála. Furthermore, we will be adhering to the Government of Ireland's guidelines on wind energy development, including the draft 2019 Wind Energy Guidelines in relation to setback distances.

What happens after 35 years?

At the end of the 35-year lifespan of the proposed development, the Developer will make the decision whether to repower or decommission the turbines. Any further proposals for proposed development, including repowering, at the site during or after this time will be subject to a new planning application. If planning permission is not secured at the end of life of the turbines, the site will be decommissioned and reinstated with all 17 No. wind turbines removed.

When is the planning application being submitted?

The Planning application is expected to be submitted in 2025. The community will receive a notification via post and it will also be shared on the project website.

Where can I see the planning application?

The full planning application will be available via An Coimisiún Pleanála's website and the dedicated planning application website – www.ballinleegreenenergyplanning.ie

How do we share our thoughts with An Coimisiún Pleanála?

Once the planning application is submitted, there will be a statutory period of six weeks during which all members of the public will have the opportunity to review the full set of documentation and to submit observations directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála.

Our community team are happy to answer any further project-related questions via phone, email or post.

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