

Renewable Energy: Wind Farm Development Information Leaflet



Northern Ireland Policy Context

- Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for NI 2025 – SPG ENV 3, SPG-ENV 5, SPG ENV 6
- Planning Policy Statement 1 – General Principles
- Planning Policy Statement 2 – Planning & Nature Conservation
- Planning Policy Statement 3 (Revised) – Access, Movement & Parking
- Planning Policy Statement 6 – Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage
- Planning Policy Statement 18 – Renewable Energy
- Relevant Development Plans
- DCAN 15
- Planning Strategy for Rural NI DES 4 in relation to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Planning Policy Statement 21 (Draft) – Sustainable Development in the Countryside in relation to ancillary buildings & structures elsewhere in the countryside.
- Coastal policies in the RDS and Planning strategy for Rural N Ireland (where applicable)

Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 1999 as amended by The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008

It is essential that the Environmental Statement meets the legislative requirements.

Purpose

'Environmental statement' means a statement that includes as much of the information referred to in Part 1 of Schedule 4 as is reasonably required to assess the environmental effects of the development and which the applicant can, having regard in particular to current knowledge and methods of assessment, reasonably be required to compile, but which includes at least the information referred to in Part II of Schedule 4'.

Matters for Inclusion in Schedule 4

Matters as detailed in Part 1 and at least the information requested in Part II of the Regulations in Schedule 4.

Topics to be covered include:

Aspects of the environment most likely to be significantly affected by the development, including population, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climate factors, material assets, including the architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the inter-relationship between the above factors.

The above should include:

- Impact on geology, soil, hydrology and water features including possible contamination during construction or bog slip.
- Impact on wetlands, coastal zones and protected habitats – in particular peat.
- Visual impact including cumulative impact of the proposal plus existing windfarms and other proposed windfarms which have been the subject of a planning application.
- Impact on the character of the landscape/area, including cumulative impact as noted above including assessment of remoteness/wilderness, for example by tranquillity mapping where appropriate.
- Climate/emissions, adverse and beneficial effects.
- Impact on population – noise, public safety, employment/economic benefit, impact on residential amenity and appropriate separation distances.
- Shadow flicker.
- Electromagnetic effects including air navigation, power lines, TV and radio transmission, and other telecommunications equipment. This would include impact on MoD installations and Emergency fixed links. The developer is advised, prior to submission of a planning application, to have consulted the Wind Energy and Aviation Interests-Interim Guidelines (Pre-Planning Consultation Form from the DTI/MoD/CAA/British Wind Energy Association.
- Access and traffic during construction and after construction including haul routes to the site.
- Ecology, flora, fauna (baselines studies essential) including cumulative impact with existing and proposed.
- Archaeology including cumulative impact with existing and proposed.
- Listed Buildings.
- Disturbance during construction.
- Grid connection.

- Use of natural resources including sources of materials to be used on site, transported to the site or removed from the site.
- Non-technical summary of the information provided in the Environmental Statement.
- Sufficient number of copies of the Environmental Statement to enable the Department to carry out consultations. Copies of the ES must also be made available by the Developer at an address within the locality of the proposal. The applicant should state if a charge is to be made for a copy of the ES. [This information will advertised by The Department in the local press in conformity with Reg. 12(a)].

Note: visual impact should address overall height of turbines, alternatives assessed (height and layout), visual impact of access roads, substations and ancillary equipment.

The above must include an assessment of the likely significant effects of the proposal during the construction phase and during operation and possible decommissioning. The inter-relationship between effects and mitigation measures proposed must be addressed e.g. archaeology and landscape.

Transboundary effects

The Regulations require that the likely significant environmental effects on another Member State be addressed. Planning Service will consult the Department of Environment in Dublin when an application which may have transboundary implications is received. The view of the relevant authority in the Republic of Ireland will form part of the assessment of the proposal.

Other

“Borrow pits’ may require a separate planning consent.

Planning Applications – Legislative Requirements

Seven copies of the following are required:

Form P1 - accurately completed, signed and dated;

Fee - £230 per 0.1 hectare (or part thereof) up to a maximum of £11,500 (as of 03rd August, 2009)

Drawings: these must be to scale, and not conflict with plans/drawings in the ES:

- 7 copies of the site location map with the site boundary, including the access road and land for any junction improvement outlined in red;

- 7 copies of the site layout including access roads within the site, detailed plans to scale including turbines, details of bases, access roads, wind monitoring masts, substation and other ancillary development. Details of finishing materials (e.g. on turbines, substations, control rooms, fences or other structures), landscaping etc. are required.

The above are required to fulfil the requirement of planning legislation and are separate from the requirements under the Environmental (Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 1999 as amended by The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008.

Renewable Energy Team
Special Studies