

County Wicklow Maritime Business Development Group (MBDG)

Meeting via ZOOM

Thursday 29th October 2020 at 11.00am

Present:

Tom Delahoyde	-	TD
Christine Flood	-	CF
Cllr. Pier Leonard	-	PL
Cllr. Derek Mitchell	-	DM
Stephen Kavanagh	-	SK
Simon Greenwood	-	SG
Paul Ivory	-	PI
Merlin Ovington	-	MO
Derek Cullen	-	DC
Lorcan O' Toole	-	LOT
Roy Conway	-	RC
Frank Curran	-	FC
Pat O' Suilleabhain	-	POS
Breege Kilkenny	-	BK
Susan Nichols	-	SN
William Tyrrell	-	WT
David Forde	-	DF
Kate Dempsey	-	KD
Liam Bourke	-	LB
Lorraine Gallagher	-	LG
Sorcha Walsh	-	SW
Tim Greenwood	-	TG

RWE Dublin Array

Paul Kelly
Peter Lefroy

RPS Consultants

Kristopher Calder
Adrian Bell

GDG Consultants

Paul Doherty

Apologies:

Matthew Carroll	-	MC
Cllr. Gail Dunne	-	GD

Item No. 1

To receive a presentation from Paul Kelly, RWE Renewables Ireland on Dublin Array Offshore Wind Farm

Paul Kelly gave a detailed presentation on the Dublin Array Offshore Wind farm. The presentation was circulated to all.

Following the conclusion of the presentation the following points and questions were raised:

- What is the likely investment from a capital perspective? The scale of the project would give some indication as to what the benefits could be to other areas.
- Have IT Carlow been consulted as they have strong connection to Wicklow County Council?
- Please get in contact with Wicklow County Council at any stage in relation to sites etc in the Wicklow area.
- How do you see the Community Benefit fund operating? Does the Local Authority have a role there?
- Are RWE actively involved in the supply chain clusters on your sites operated in other countries? What is your level of involvement?
- The attractiveness of wind energy and off shore wind farms is relevant to the amount of carbon saving versus the damage to the view. Concern was expressed about the view of the Dublin Array combined with the Codling Wind Bank.
- National policy should state that priority be given to the Wind Farms that produce the most carbon savings and has the least visual impact.
- How many jobs can be expected on this project alone?
- Consideration should be given to the Environmental Impact Assessment that would be cumulative and that you would be looking at the other schemes coming forward and may address some of the concerns around visual impact.

RWE Dublin Array delegates responded to the questions as below:

- If Dublin Array were to build out to its maximum extent it would be over €1 billion expenditure. Wicklow is uniquely positioned in terms of its location and is among the first phase of off shore wind farm projects in the country which is a unique opportunity.
- Even with projects in pre-construction phase we are continually looking for vessels to support survey effort and are in an active recruitment campaign for staff. One of the issues is the absence of a skills and employment base and we're constantly in contact with Enterprise Ireland etc to facilitate this.
- This is about an operations and maintenance base and is something that RWE are very keen to explore further with Wicklow County Council because that will be the sustained cluster for services to the offshore wind farm moving forward.
- Have not spoken directly to IT Carlow but we have spoken to the Department of Education and Skills to try and communicate our aims down.
- Regarding the Community Benefit fund, referring to the example in the presentation of the RWE project in Gwynt y Môr in North Wales, this is a Community Benefit fund which RWE established independent of Government requirement. We would

always invest in communities irrespective of the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS)

- The RESS in Ireland has a requirement that a contribution of up to €2 per megawatt hour be made. We are committing to a level of expenditure similar to what would be the norm in the UK.
- RWE has a Community Investment fund specialist and we would put a lot of effort into designing the fund but we would see a role for the local authority too.
- The Community fund is something that is mandated through the RESS the government are likely to issue guidelines and rules for how the scheme is to be operated so it is not entirely within our control.
- RWE operate a companywide portal and would engage very strongly with those clusters. RWE would be in favour of an East coast cluster of relevant businesses.
- Visual impacts of projects are something that draws a lot of attention and the location of the projects is influenced by the natural configuration of the sandbanks. RWE do recognise concerns on the visual impact and it would be warranted to refer to the Rampion off shore wind farm off the coast of Brighton. 11 million tourists visit Brighton every year with the seaside the most popular attraction. The tourism numbers have even grown since the off shore wind farm was constructed in 2018 and the presence of the wind farm has even supplemented the tourism experience.
- The project can be somewhere between 600 and 900 megawatts which gives a differing spectrum. Referring to another example project that has 334 megawatt project that has 60 jobs in the Operations and Maintenance base. This project could be estimated to provide 100 jobs.

Item No. 2

To receive a presentation from Kristopher Calder, RPS Consultants on the Bray Harbour Feasibility Study.

Kristopher Calder gave a detailed presentation on the Bray Harbour Feasibility Study. The presentation was circulated to all.

Following the conclusion of the presentation the following points and questions were raised:

- What is the preferred option from what was shown in the presentation?
- Wicklow County Council has a URDF application with the department at the moment. Could we get an interim report and what is the timeframe for the final report?
- The 1300 meters cubed of sediment that comes into the harbour – is that cumulative from what comes from the Dargle River. What comes from external pressure and how much of that would be coming from the Dargle as opposed to outside?
- Is it an option to direct the outfall from the harbour into the sea but to redirect from current position?
- Have the Bray Municipal District members been presented with the proposal?

Kristopher Calder of RPS responded to the questions as below:

- The preferred option comes down to how much money is available. The last option is the best but with that comes much more expenditure.

- Once we have a good idea of what needs to be done then the detail on how to divert the river can be determined.
- Working towards having the final report ready for December but due to delays caused by Covid this has been delayed till early 2021. There shouldn't be any issue in getting a report sent over that you could submit in addition to the original URDF.
- The sediment is cumulative and a vast majority of it comes from the Dargle. It really depends on the river flow. There are a lot of factors to consider.
- The members haven't been presented as yet, partly due to Covid 19 reasons, but we can certainly present in the coming weeks.

TD then thanked the RPS delegation for their presentation.

Item No. 3

To receive a report from Paul Doherty, Gavin and Doherty Geosolutions on an options study to consider two potential sites in Co. Wicklow for the creation of a new Deepwater Harbour Development.

Paul Doherty gave a detailed presentation on an options study to consider two potential sites in Co. Wicklow for the creation of a new Deepwater Harbour Development.

CF informed the meeting that the context of this study was requested as towards the end of May 2020 there was a flurry activity relating to off-shore wind projects and at the same time Wicklow County Council were preparing funding applications for the URDF.

The IWEA report prepared by Carbon Trust was published at the end of May, it sets out the requirements for the development of the off shore wind energy industry in Ireland. One of the issues flagged on the day of publication of the report by the chairman of the group was that Ireland has a limited number of options for Marshalling facilities for the off shore wind industry. There were discussions over possible options such as Belfast, Dublin Port and possibly Rosslare Port. The point was made that Ireland should look at developing a purpose built Marshalling facility.

Following the conclusion of the presentation the following points and questions were raised:

- The comparison between Arklow and Wicklow relies on two things; the area is owned by Roadstone are they willing to allow it to be developed? Also there is no road connection other than through the town so should the cost to add in a road be included?
- There was a study carried out a number of years ago that came up with similar conclusions.
- Roadstone has a time limit as the availability of stone will eventually expire. This could be discussed as a separate issue.
- The Arklow shelf is very close to shore so dredging seriously needs to be considered.
- In terms of moving forward is there scope to look at Arklow as a whole, from north to south?
- Is there any point in developing a Marshalling port in Wicklow given the proximity is not important as all the UK off shore wind farms in North Wales were built out of Belfast. There are serious undertakings in Rosslare to develop a lay down marshalling port and it would take at least 10 years?

- In the intervening period in the next 2 to 3 years it would be very important to look at developments on a phased basis.
- The constraints facing Wicklow and Arklow as they are not all-weather ports so sometimes they can get shut-down very quickly in the face of storms. Can we look at shorter term solutions?

The following answers were given in response:

- The land cost was not taken into account in either of the assessments. The question was not asked if CRH were willing to sell and it is something that may need to be asked at a high level.
- Wicklow County Council, with funding from the NTA, is about to procure consultants to do a transport assessment in Arklow and will look at various development scenarios. The scenarios haven't been determined yet so a discussion could be held with the roads department to see whether a new port scenario could be factored in.
- There is definitely only room for one marshalling port. If Rosslare were to develop then it is very unlikely there would be a need for a second one. If this were to take 10 years then you would lose a significant portion of the opportunity.
- Regarding shorter term solutions, the problem is the scale of the infrastructure investment. A phased basis would be ideal.
- In terms of addressing the all-weather issues, breakwaters are in place and it can be difficult to get the protection. There may not be a solution to get a short-term protection without the big investment needed.

TD suggested, as this presentation is very detailed, that the members forward any further questions they may have to Paul Doherty to answer. He thanked Paul for his presentation.

Item No. 4

Minutes of the meeting from 23rd July 2020 and matters arising

LOT suggested carrying on with the remainder of this meeting at sometime in the near future, as time was limited.

It was decided to carry on and conclude the meeting today.

The minutes were agreed.

Codling Wind Bank

CF stated that Wicklow County Council has had a number of discussions with the Codling Wind Bank. They are due to commence similar consultation to that being carried out by the Dublin Array and the SSE Arklow Bank has also widely advertised their consultation. Codling Wind Bank are constrained somewhat but are continuing to progress.

TD stated that as there were questions raised previously about dredging and staffing requirements for the ports that the issue is addressed at the next MBDG meeting.

LOT suggested that consultation should take place with Wexford County Council with regard to dredging because a joint project could be undertaken and a considerable amount of money saved.

Item No. 5

Brexit Update

It was agreed to discuss an update at the next meeting.

Item No. 6

Correspondence

Correspondence was received from Stephen Kavanagh in relation to the NORA online conference. This correspondence was circulated to the group.

Correspondence also received from Billy Tyrrell in relation to Renewable Energy News which was also circulated to the group.

Item No. 7

Any Other Business

Business Incubation Centre

TG asked the question of RWE about off shore wind clusters. Anywhere there is off shore wind development there is generally a business cluster. This should be put on the agenda for the next meeting the item of 'Setting up a business incubation centre'.

CF advised that Wicklow County Council is actively pursuing this type of proposal as it would be a key investment for County Wicklow.

TD requested that this item be added to the next agenda.

NORA Conference

SK confirmed that the conference is on next week with some very interesting case studies. He also informed the meeting the NORRI project has received funding under LEADER which will be used for training and development.

Arklow Harbour Rates

LOT asked that this issue is examined as a matter of urgency as it has been raised previously and still not been addressed.

This concluded the meeting.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 3rd December 2020