

ARCHAEOLOGY REPORT SUMMARY

It is proposed to construct 16 wind turbines within an area of approximately 800 hectares generally between the 400ft – 500ft contour on an east-west ridge to the north of the valley of the River Bandon. There are many known archaeological sites (*Recorded Monuments*) in the general vicinity of the proposed wind turbines; but none are within 100m of the site of any turbine. The majority of the monuments are ringforts and standing stones. As Recorded Monuments all antiquities and possible antiquities are afforded legal protection under the National Monuments Acts. There will be no direct physical impact from any element of the proposal at construction phase on any known monument. The turbines will undoubtedly create a visual impact on the monuments within the boundary, however, only a few of the monuments have a significant physical expression in the landscape i.e. the ringforts in Laravoolta and Shanaclough townlands. Other monuments lie in the vicinity and at least some turbines will be visible from most of the nearby monuments. Some buildings including St John's Church, Newcestown, St. Patrick's Church, FarranThomas, St. Joseph's Church, Castletown and a Methodist chapel at Rushfield occur at the outer perimeter of areas where the turbines are proposed. Some turbines will be visible from these buildings but will not have a visual impact on the buildings or their settings. Due to the likelihood of the occurrence of buried material of archaeological importance in an area of known archaeological monuments, archaeological monitoring of all significant earth moving operations is recommended in accordance with National Guidelines for projects of this scale in proximity to known monuments.

A. Direct impacts

The proposed development will not have a direct physical impact on any recorded archaeological site, although proposed wind turbine 12 is close to the demarcation circle surrounding a standing stone in Courtleigh townland (RMP CO 095-086).

B. Indirect impacts

Any major infrastructural project that involves ground disturbance may uncover previously unknown archaeological sites that have no surface expression. If archaeological sites are discovered, these may vary from small-scale isolated sites to large archaeological complexes. This scenario is difficult to predict and to mitigate against.

The RMP and RMP maps and inventories mainly record sites that were marked on the original OS maps (1837-1913), and it is possible therefore that previously unrecorded archaeological sites that have no surface remains are present in the development area. These sites may be uncovered during the groundworks stage of the project.

C. Off site, Secondary and Cumulative impacts

There are no foreseen off-site, secondary or cumulative impacts on the archaeological heritage for this project.

Likely Significant Impact on the Archaeological landscape & Cultural Heritage

The impact of the proposed development will be two-fold;

1. The visual impact
2. The physical impact.

1 The visual impact There will undoubtedly be a visual impact on the manmade cultural landscape, however there will be no significant visual impact on extant monuments with significant surface expression.

Of the monuments occurring in proximity to the proposal, three are ringforts (CO 095: 056, 057 & 104), five are standing stones (CO 095: 058, 059, 060, 082 & 087) and two are possible standing stones (CO 095: 085 & 086). Some of the wind turbines will undoubtedly be visible from most of the archaeological monuments in the immediate environs of the wind-farm but it shouldn't be possible to view any monuments in the vicinity from one side or the other without the view of turbines in the background. Because the wind-farm is in five clusters over a wide area, all of the turbines will not provide an overbearing impact on any one monument. The turbines will be visible from a considerable distance e.g. from the villages of Castletown and Newcestown. Some turbines will be visible from the top of the round tower at Kinneagh, but no public access to the tower is currently obtainable.

2 Physical Impacts

Direct impacts

The proposed development will not have a direct physical impact on any recorded archaeological site, although proposed wind turbine No 12 is close to the demarcation circle surrounding a standing stone in Courtleigh townland (RMP CO 095-086).

Potential physical impact will be created by the excavation of pits for the foundations of the turbines, by access roads & cable trenches. The details are given above. It is inevitable that the road construction will cut through many field fences and remove some fences entirely, although existing roads will be used over much of the site (Figure 1). The cumulative damage along the entire route of the access roads and the spur roads linking the turbines is not likely to be extensive. Neither the standing area for the turbines nor the construction platforms nor the access roads etc. will have a physical impact on known archaeological monuments. Any or all of the above may have an impact on any hitherto unidentified archaeological remains. The RMP and RMP maps and inventories mainly record sites that were marked on the original OS maps (1837-1913), and it is possible therefore that previously unrecorded archaeological sites that have no surface remains are present in the development area. These sites may be uncovered during the ground-works stage of the project.

Indirect impacts

Any major infrastructural project that involves ground disturbance may uncover previously unknown archaeological sites that have no surface expression. If archaeological sites are discovered, these may vary from small-scale isolated sites to large archaeological complexes. This scenario is difficult to predict and to mitigate against.

Off site, Secondary and Cumulative impacts

There are no foreseen off-site, secondary or cumulative impacts on the archaeological heritage for this project.

Mitigating Adverse Impacts on the Cultural Heritage

The main elements requiring mitigation involve avoiding unnecessary long-term alteration of the existing landscape and avoiding direct impact on buried material of archaeological significance.

It is recommended that all field fences be reconstructed in stone in a style compatible with existing fences. The style of the adjacent length of fence should be followed. Only local stone should be used. Stone is easily obtainable from existing field clearances, from excavations for the turbine bases and roads etc. No artificial materials or concrete should be used in the rebuilding.

All topsoil removal for turbine foundations, roads, cable trenches etc. should be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist in accordance with national guidelines (Duchas 1999, and the recommendations of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government). Any material of archaeological significance uncovered should be treated in accordance with the National Monuments Acts (Appendix 2). In short, the monitoring archaeologist is empowered to halt or redirect works until any find has been examined and recorded.