

11. NOISE AND VIBRATION

11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 Background & Objectives

This chapter of the EIAR describes the assessment undertaken of the potential noise and vibration impacts associated with the proposed Ballivor Wind Farm Development (the 'Proposed Development'). The Ballivor wind farm development includes 26 no wind turbines, associated access tracks and hardstands, 110 kV substation, met masts, temporary site compounds, borrow pits, drainage works, and all ancillary site and ground works. A full description of the Proposed Development is provided in Chapter 4 Description of Development.

Noise and vibration impact assessments have been prepared for both the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development to the nearest noise sensitive locations (NSLs). To inform this assessment background noise levels have been measured at several locations, representative of the nearest NSLs in the vicinity of the site to assess the potential impacts associated with the operation of the Proposed Development. The current *Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2006, defines a noise sensitive location as any occupied dwelling house, hostel, health building or place of worship and may include areas of particular scenic quality or special recreational amenity importance. In this instance all of the NSLs are dwellings.

There are 272 no. noise-sensitive locations (NSLs) within 3.5 km of the proposed turbine locations. The nearest NSL to the northern cluster is H057 being 815 m from turbine T17 and the nearest to the southern cluster is H179 being 825m from turbine T03. Existing, under construction, permitted and proposed wind farm developments have been identified in the wider study area and the consented Bracklyn Wind Farm (PA25M.311565) was identified as necessary for inclusion in a cumulative assessment. No other developments of scale were identified within 5 km which could lead to a cumulative impact.

11.1.2 Statement of Authority

This chapter of the EIAR has been prepared by the following staff of AWN Consulting Ltd:

Mike Simms

Mike Simms (Senior Acoustic Consultant) holds a BE and MEngSc in Mechanical Engineering, and is a member of the Institute of Acoustics (MIOA) and of the Institution of Engineering and Technology (MIEI). Mike has worked in the field of acoustics for over 19 years. He has extensive experience in all aspects of environmental surveying, noise modelling and impact assessment for various sectors including, wind energy, industrial, commercial and residential.

Dermot Blunnie

Dermot Blunnie (Senior Acoustic Consultant) holds a BEng (Hons) in Sound Engineering, MSc in Applied Acoustics and has completed the Institute of Acoustics (IOA) Diploma in Acoustics and Noise Control. He has been working in the field of acoustics since 2008 and is a member of the Institute of Engineers Ireland (MIEI) and the Institute of Acoustics (MIOA). He has extensive knowledge and experience in relation to commissioning noise monitoring and impact assessment of wind farms as well as a detailed knowledge of acoustic standards and proprietary noise modelling software packages. He has

commissioned noise surveys and completed noise impact assessments for numerous wind farm projects within Ireland.

11.2 Fundamentals of Acoustics

A sound wave travelling through the air is a regular disturbance of the atmospheric pressure. These pressure fluctuations are detected by the human ear, producing the sensation of hearing. To take account of the vast range of pressure levels that can be detected by the ear, it is convenient to measure sound in terms of a logarithmic ratio of sound pressures. These values are expressed as Sound Pressure Levels (SPL) in decibels (dB).

The human audible range of sounds expressed in terms of Sound Pressure Levels (SPL) is 0dB (for the threshold of hearing) to 120dB (for the threshold of pain). In general, a subjective impression of doubling of loudness corresponds to a tenfold increase in sound energy which conveniently equates to a 10dB increase in SPL. It should be noted that a doubling in sound energy (such as may be caused by a doubling of traffic flows) increases the SPL by 3 dB.

The frequency of sound is the rate at which a sound wave oscillates is expressed in Hertz (Hz). The sensitivity of the human ear to different frequencies in the audible range is not uniform. For example, hearing sensitivity decreases markedly as frequency falls below 250Hz. In order to rank the SPL of various noise sources, the measured level has to be adjusted to give comparatively more weight to the frequencies that are readily detected by the human ear. The 'A-weighting' system defined in the international standard, BS ISO 226:2003 Acoustics. Normal Equal-loudness Level Contours has been found to provide the best correlations with human response to perceived loudness. SPLs measured using 'A-weighting' are expressed in terms of dB(A).

An indication of the level of some common sounds on the dB(A) scale is presented in Figure 11-1.

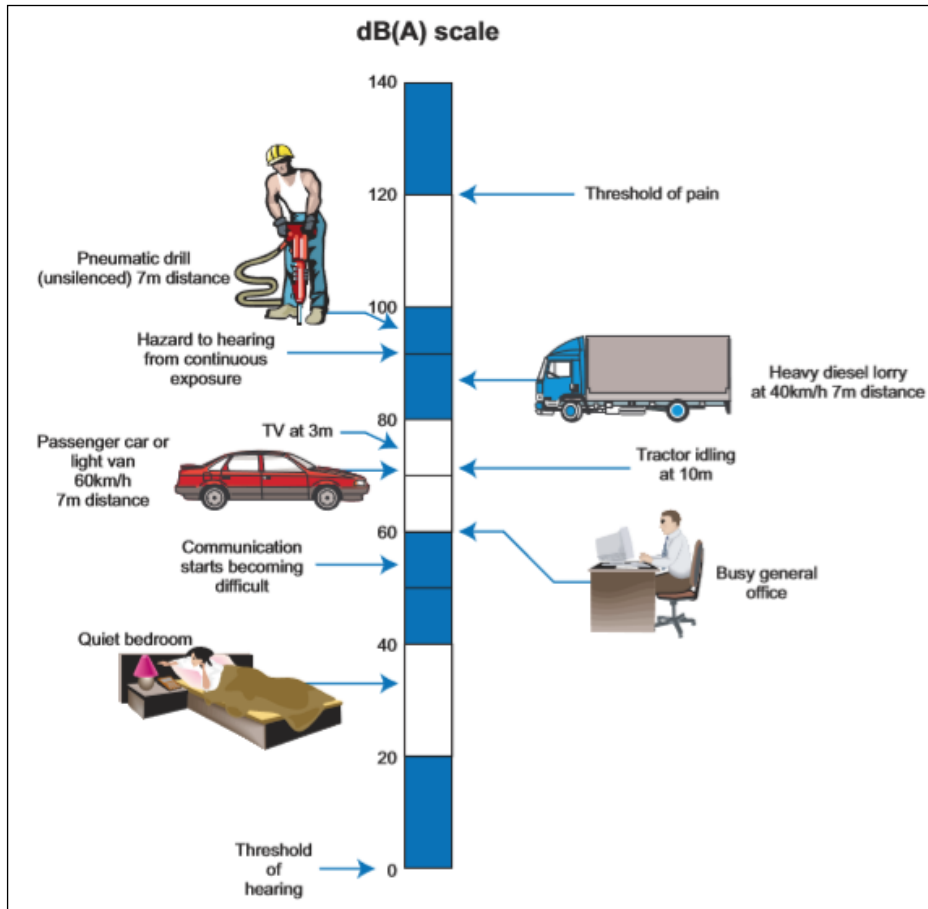


Figure 11-1 The level of typical common sounds on the dB(A) scale (NRA Guidelines for the Treatment of Noise and Vibration in National Road Schemes, 2004)

For a glossary of terms used in this chapter please refer to Appendix 11-1.

11.3 Assessment Methodology

The assessment of impacts has been undertaken with reference to the most appropriate guidance documents relating to noise and vibration for both the operational and construction phases of the Proposed Development, which are set out within the relevant sections of this chapter.

In addition to the specific guidance documents outlined below, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) guidelines listed in Chapter 1 were considered and consulted for the purposes of preparing this EIAR chapter.

The methodology adopted for this noise impact assessment is summarised as follows:

- Review of appropriate guidance to identify appropriate noise and vibration criteria for both the construction, operational, and decommissioning phases;
- Characterise the receiving environment through baseline noise surveys at various NSLs surrounding the proposed development;
- Undertake predictive calculations to assess the potential impacts associated with the construction phase of the proposed development at NSLs;
- Undertake predictive calculations to assess the potential impacts associated with the operational of the proposed development at NSLs;
- Evaluate the potential noise and vibration impacts and effects;

- Specify mitigation measures to reduce, where necessary, the identified potential outward impacts relating to noise and vibration from the proposed development; and
- Describe the significance of the residual noise and vibration effects associated with the Proposed Development.

11.3.1 EPA Description of Effects

The significance of effects of the Proposed Development shall be described in accordance with the EPA guidance document *Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR), 2022*. Details of the methodology for describing the significant of the effects are provided in Chapter 1 – Introduction.

The effects associated with the Proposed Development are described with respect to the EPA guidance in the relevant sections of this chapter.

11.3.2 Guidance Documents and Assessment Criteria

The following sections review best practice guidance that is commonly adopted in relation to developments such as the one under consideration here.

11.3.2.1 Construction Phase

11.3.2.1.1 Construction Noise

There is no published statutory Irish guidance relating to the maximum permissible noise level that may be generated during the construction phase of a project. Local authorities normally control construction activities by imposing limits on the hours of construction works and may consider noise limits at their discretion.

In the absence of specific noise limits, appropriate criteria relating to permissible construction noise levels for a development of this scale may be found in the *British Standard 5228-1:2009+A1:2014 Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites – Noise*.

The approach adopted here calls for the designation of a NSL into a specific category (A, B or C) based on existing ambient noise levels in the absence of construction noise. This then sets a threshold noise value that, if exceeded (construction noise only) at the façade of residential, noise sensitive locations, indicates a potential significant noise impact is associated with the construction activities.

Table 11-1 sets out the values which, when exceeded, potentially signify a significant effect at the facades of residential receptors as recommended by BS 5228 – 1. These levels relate to both construction and decommissioning noise.

Table 11-1 Example Threshold of Potential Significant Effect at Noise Sensitive Locations

Assessment category and threshold value period (T)	Threshold values, $L_{Aeq,T}$ dB		
	Category A ^{Note A}	Category B ^{Note B}	Category C ^{Note C}
Night-time (23:00 to 07:00hrs)	45	50	55
Evenings and weekends ^{Note D}	55	60	65
Daytime (07:00 – 19:00hrs)	65	70	75

Note A Category A: threshold values to use when ambient noise levels (when rounded to the nearest 5dB) are less than these values.

Note B Category B: threshold values to use when ambient noise levels (when rounded to the nearest 5dB) are the same as category A values.

Note C Category C: threshold values to use when ambient noise levels (when rounded to the nearest 5dB) are higher than category A values.

Note D 19:00 – 23:00 weekdays, 13:00 – 23:00 Saturdays and 07:00 – 23:00 Sundays.

For the appropriate period (e.g. daytime) the ambient noise level is determined and rounded to the nearest 5 dB. In this instance, with the rural nature of the site, properties near the development have daytime ambient noise levels that typically range from 40 to 50 dB $L_{Aeq,1hr}$. Therefore, as a precautionary approach, all properties will be afforded a Category A designation.

Please see Section 11.6.2 for the detailed assessment in relation to this site. If the specific construction noise level exceeds the appropriate category value (e.g. 65 dB $L_{Aeq,T}$ during daytime periods) then a significant effect is deemed to have occurred.

11.3.2.1.2 Additional Vehicular Activity on Public Roads

There are no specific guidelines or limits relating to traffic related sources along the local or surrounding roads. Given that construction traffic from the development will make use of existing roads already carrying traffic volumes, it is appropriate to assess the calculated increase in traffic noise levels that will arise because of vehicular movements associated with the development. To assist with the interpretation of the noise associated with additional vehicular traffic on public roads, Table 11-2, adapted from United Kingdom Highways Agency (UKHA) Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Sustainability & Environment Appraisal LA 111 Noise and Vibration Revision 2 (UKHA 2020), offers guidance as to the likely impact in the short-term associated with any change in traffic noise level.

Table 11-2 Classification of magnitude of traffic noise changes in the short-term (Source DMRB, 2020)

Change in Sound Level (dB(A))	Subjective Reaction	DMRB Magnitude of Impact (Short-term)	EPA Significance of Effect
Less than 1 dB	Inaudible	No Change	Imperceptible
1.0 – 2.9	Barely Perceptible	Minor	Slight/Moderate
3.0 – 4.9	Perceptible	Moderate	Significant
≥5	Up to a doubling of loudness	Major	Very Significant

The guidance outlined in Table 11-2 will be used to assess the predicted increases in traffic levels on public roads associated with the construction of the Proposed Development. Where an impact is identified due to the change in traffic noise level, reference will be made to the overall predicted noise level from construction traffic in the context of the construction noise criteria outlined in Section 11.4.1.1.

11.3.2.1.3 Construction Vibration

Vibration standards come in two varieties: those dealing with human comfort and those dealing with cosmetic or structural damage to buildings. With respect to the Proposed Development, the range of relevant criteria used for building protection is expressed in terms of Peak Particle Velocity (PPV) in mm/s.

Guidance relevant to acceptable vibration within buildings is contained in the following documents:

- BS 7385 – Evaluation and measurement for vibration in buildings – Part 2: Guide to damage levels from groundborne vibration (1993); and

- BS 5228 – Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites – Part 2: Vibration (2009+A1:2014).

BS 7385 states that there should typically be no cosmetic damage if transient vibration does not exceed 15 mm/s at low frequencies rising to 20 mm/s at 15 Hz and 50 mm/s at 40 Hz and above.

BS 5228 recommends that, for soundly constructed residential property and similar structures that are generally in good repair, a threshold for minor or cosmetic (i.e. non-structural) damage should be taken as a peak particle velocity of 15 mm/s for transient vibration at frequencies below 15 Hz and 20 mm/s at frequencies above than 15 Hz. Below these vibration magnitudes minor damage is unlikely, although where there is existing damage, these limits may be reduced by up to 50%. In addition, where continuous vibration is generated, the limits discussed above may need to be reduced by 50%.

The Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) (formerly National Roads Authority (NRA)) document *Guidelines for the Treatment of Noise and Vibration in National Road Schemes* (NRA, 2004) also contains information on the permissible construction vibration levels during the construction phase as shown in **Table 11-3**.

Table 11-3 Allowable Transient Vibration at Properties

Allowable vibration (in terms of peak particle velocity) at the closest part of sensitive property to the source of vibration, at a frequency of		
Less than 10Hz	10 to 50Hz	50 to 100Hz (and above)
8 mm/s	12.5 mm/s	20 mm/s

11.3.2.2 Operational Phase

11.3.2.2.1 Noise

The noise assessment summarised in the following sections has been based on guidance in relation to acceptable levels of noise from wind farms as contained in the document “*Wind Energy Development Guidelines*” published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2006. These guidelines are in turn based on detailed recommendations set out in the Department of Trade & Industry (UK) Energy Technology Support Unit (ETSU) publication “*The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms*” (1996). The ETSU document has been used to supplement the guidance contained within the “*Wind Energy Development Guidelines*” publication where necessary.

11.3.2.2.2 Wind Energy Development Guidelines

Section 5.6 of the *Wind Energy Development Guidelines* published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2006) addresses noise and outlines the appropriate noise criteria in relation to wind farm developments.

The following extracts from this document is considered:

“An appropriate balance must be achieved between power generation and noise impact.”

While this comment is noted it is stated that the Guidelines give no specific advice in relation to what constitutes an ‘appropriate balance’. In the absence of this, guidance will be taken from alternative and appropriate publications.

“In the case of wind energy development, a noise sensitive location includes any occupied house, hostel, health building or place of worship and may include areas of particular scenic quality or special recreational importance. Noise limits should apply only to those areas frequently used for relaxation of activities for which a quiet environment is highly desirable. Noise limits should be applied to external locations and should reflect the variation in both turbine source noise and background noise with wind speed.”

As can be seen from the calculations presented later in this chapter the various issues identified in this extract have been incorporated into our assessment.

“In general, a lower fixed limit of 45dB(A) or a maximum increase of 5dB(A) above background noise at nearby noise sensitive locations is considered appropriate to provide protection to wind energy development neighbours.”

This represents the commonly adopted daytime noise criterion curve in relation to wind farm developments. However, an important caveat should be noted as detailed in the following extract.

“However, in very quiet areas, the use of a margin of 5dB(A) above background noise at nearby noise sensitive properties is not necessary to offer a reasonable degree of protection and may unduly restrict wind energy developments which should be recognised as having wider national and global benefits. Instead, in low noise environments where background noise is less than 30dB(A), it is recommended that the daytime level of the LA90, 10min of the wind energy development be limited to an absolute level within the range of 35 – 40dB(A).”

In relation to night-time periods the following guidance is given:

“A fixed limit of 43dB(A) will protect sleep inside properties during the night.”

This limit is defined in terms of the $L_{A90,10min}$ parameter. This represents the commonly adopted night-time lower limit noise criterion curve in relation to wind farm developments.

The ETSU-R-97 guidance allows for a higher level of turbine noise operation at properties that have an involvement in the development, both as a higher fixed level of 45 dB LA90 and/or a higher level above the prevailing background noise level. In line with the guidance a lower threshold of 45 dB $L_{A90,10min}$ is applicable to NSLs involved that are involved in proposed developments. There are no involved receptors for the proposed development in question.

In summary, the Wind Energy Development Guidelines outlines the following guidance to identify appropriate wind turbine noise criteria curves at noise sensitive locations:

- an appropriate absolute limit level for quiet daytime environments with background noise levels of less than 30 dB $L_{A90,10min}$;
- 45 dB $L_{A90,10min}$ for daytime environments with background noise levels of greater than 30 dB $L_{A90,10min}$ or a maximum increase of 5 dB above background noise (whichever is higher), and;
- 43 dB $L_{A90,10min}$ for night-time periods.

While the caveat of an increase of 5dB(A) above background for night-time operation is not explicit within the current guidance it is commonly applied in noise assessments prepared and is detailed in numerous examples of planning conditions issued by local authorities and An Bord Pleanála. Therefore, a night-time allowance for 5dB(A) above background has been adopted for this assessment.

This set of criteria has been chosen as it is considered to be in line with the intent of the relevant Irish guidance. The proposed operational noise criteria curves for wind turbine noise at various noise sensitive locations are presented in Section 11.5.2.

11.3.2.2.3 **The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms – ETSU-R-97**

As stated previously the core of the noise guidance contained within the Wind Energy Development Guidelines guidance document is based on the 1996 ETSU publication *The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms (ETSU-R-97)*.

ETSU-R-97 calls for the control of wind turbine noise by the application of noise limits at the nearest noise sensitive properties. ETSU-R-97 considers that absolute noise limits applied at all wind speeds are not suited to wind turbine developments and recommends that noise limits should be set relative to the existing background noise levels at noise sensitive locations. A critical aspect of the noise assessment of wind energy proposals relates to the identification of baseline noise levels through on-site noise surveys.

ETSU-R-97 states on page 58, “...absolute noise limits and margins above background should relate to the cumulative effect of all wind turbines in the area which contribute to the noise received at the properties in question...”. Therefore, the noise contribution from all wind turbine developments in the area should be included in the assessment.

11.3.2.2.4 **Institute of Acoustics Good Practice Guide**

The guidance contained within the institute of Acoustics (IoA) document *A Good Practice Guide to the Application of ETSU-R-97 for the Assessment and Rating of Wind Turbine Noise (2013)* (IOA GPG) and Supplementary Guidance Notes are considered to represent best practice and have been adopted for this assessment. The IOA GPG states, that at a minimum continuous baseline noise monitoring should be carried out at the nearest noise sensitive locations for typically a two-week period and should capture a representative sample of wind speeds in the area (i.e. cut in speeds to wind speed of rated sound power of the proposed turbine). Background noise measurements (i.e. $L_{A90,10min}$) should be related to wind speed measurements that are collated at the site of the wind turbine development. Regression analysis is then conducted on the data sets to derive background noise levels at various wind speeds to establish the appropriate day and night-time noise criterion curves.

Noise emissions associated with the wind turbine can be predicted in accordance with ISO 9613: *Acoustics – Attenuation of sound outdoors, Part 2: General method of calculation* (1996). This is a noise prediction standard that considers noise attenuation offered, amongst others, by distance, ground absorption, directivity and atmospheric absorption. Noise predictions and contours are typically prepared for various wind speeds and the predicted levels are compared against the relevant noise criterion curve to demonstrate compliance with the appropriate noise criteria.

Where noise predictions indicate that reductions in noise emissions are required in order to satisfy any adopted criteria, consideration can be given to detailed downwind analysis and operating turbines in low noise mode, which is typically offered by modern wind turbine units.

Reference has been made to the IoA GPG for guidance on the methodology for the background noise survey and operation impact assessment for wind turbine noise.

11.3.2.2.5 **World Health Organisation (WHO) Noise Guidelines for the European Region)**

The WHO *Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region* (2018) provide guidance on protecting human health from exposure to environmental noise. They set health-based recommendations based on average environmental noise exposure of several sources of environmental noise, including wind turbine noise. Recommendations are rated as either ‘strong’ or ‘conditional’. A strong

recommendation, “can be adopted as policy in most situations” whereas a conditional recommendation, “requires a policy-making process with substantial debate and involvement of various stakeholders. There is less certainty of its efficacy owing to lower quality of evidence of a net benefit, opposing values and preferences of individuals and populations affected or the high resource implications of the recommendation, meaning there may be circumstances or settings in which it will not apply”.

The objective of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region that was published in October 2018 is to provide recommendations for protecting human health from exposure to environmental noise from transportation, wind farm and leisure sources of noise. The guidelines present recommendations for each noise source type in terms of L_{den} and L_{night} levels above which there is potential for adverse health risks.

In relation to wind turbine noise, the WHO Guideline Development Group (GDG) state the following:

*“For average noise exposure, the GDG **conditionally** recommends reducing noise levels produced by wind turbines below 45 dB L_{den} , as wind turbine noise above this level is associated with adverse health effects.*

No recommendation is made for average night noise exposure L_{night} of wind turbines. The quality of evidence of night-time exposure to wind turbine noise is too low to allow a recommendation.

*To reduce health effects, the GDG **conditionally** recommends that policymakers implement suitable measures to reduce noise exposure from wind turbines in the population exposed to levels above the guideline values for average noise exposure. No evidence is available, however, to facilitate the recommendation of one particular type of intervention over another.”*

The quality of evidence used for the WHO research is stated as being ‘Low’, the recommendations are therefore conditional.

There is potential increased uncertainty due to the parameter used by the WHO for assessment of exposure (i.e. L_{den}), which it is acknowledged may be a poor characterisation of wind turbine noise and may limit the ability to observe associations between wind turbine noise and health outcomes, as stated below.

“Even though correlations between noise indicators tend to be high (especially between L_{Aeq} -like indicators) and conversions between indicators do not normally influence the correlations between the noise indicator and a particular health effect, important assumptions remain when exposure to wind turbine noise in L_{den} is converted from original sound pressure level values. The conversion requires, as variable, the statistical distribution of annual wind speed at a particular height, which depends on the type of wind turbine and meteorological conditions at a particular geographical location. Such input variables may not be directly applicable for use in other sites. They are sometimes used without specific validation for a particular area, however, because of practical limitations or lack of data and resources. This can lead to increased uncertainty in the assessment of the relationship between wind turbine noise exposure and health outcomes. Based on all these factors, it may be concluded that the acoustical description of wind turbine noise by means of L_{den} or L_{night} may be a poor characterization of wind turbine noise and may limit the ability to observe associations between wind turbine noise and health outcomes...”

“...Further work is required to assess fully the benefits and harms of exposure to environmental noise from wind turbines and to clarify whether the potential benefits associated with reducing exposure to environmental noise for individuals living in the vicinity of wind turbines outweigh the impact on the development of renewable energy policies in the WHO European Region.”

Based upon the review set out above, it is concluded that the conditional WHO recommended average noise exposure level (i.e. 45dB L_{den}) should not currently be applied as target noise criteria for an existing or proposed wind turbine development in Ireland.

11.3.2.2.6 Future Potential Guidance Change

The 2006 Guidelines were issued by the Minister pursuant to section 28 of the 2000 Act which, so far as relevant, provides: “(1) *The Minister may, at any time, issue guidelines to planning authorities regarding any of their functions under this Act and planning authorities shall have regard to those guidelines in the performance of their functions ... (2) Where applicable, the Board shall have regard to any guidelines issued to planning authorities under subsection (1) in the performance of its functions.*”

Section 143 of the 2000 Act provides that: –

“(1) The Board shall, in performing its functions, have regard to – (a) the policies and objectives for the time being of the Government, a State authority, the Minister, planning authorities and any other body which is a public authority whose functions have, or may have, a bearing on the proper planning sustainable development of cities, towns or other areas, whether urban or rural.

The 2006 Guidelines are accordingly the guidelines that must be considered, and not any drafts. As per the High Court decision in *Element Power Ireland Ltd v An Bord Pleanala* (2017) nothing in the planning legislation, authorises the planning authorities to take into account drafts, or the prospect of new or modified government or local authority policy or objectives. Without prejudice to that background, in December 2019, the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines December 2019 (DRWEDG19) were published for consultation and have yet to be finalised. It is important to note that as part of the public consultation a number of concerns in relation to the proposed approach have been expressed by various parties and it is the opinion of the authors’ of this assessment that the DRWEDG19 document does not outline a best practice approach in terms of the assessment of wind turbine noise. Specific concerns expressed by a cross party group of interested professionals can be reviewed at:

<https://www.ioa.org.uk/wind-energy-development-guidelines-wedg-consultation-irish-department-housing-planning-community-and>

The following statement is of note from the above submission:

“a number of acousticians working in the field have raised serious concerns over the significant amount of technical errors, ambiguities and inconsistencies in the content of the draft WEDG and these were highlighted during the consultation process by a group of acousticians”

Therefore, in line with best practice, which includes ESTU and IoA methodologies as described above the assessment presented in the EIAR is based on the current best practice guidance outlined in Section 5.6 of the Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2006.

The original ETSU-R-97 concepts on which both the WEDG06 and DRWEDG19 are based underwent a thorough standardisation and modernisation in 2013 with the Institute of Acoustics publication of the A Good Practice Guide to the Application of ETSU-R-97 for the Assessment and Rating of Wind Turbine Noise including 6 Supplementary Guidance Notes, all of which bring together the combined experience of acoustic consultants in the UK and Ireland in the application of these methods. Numerous improvements in the accuracy and robustness are described, in particular the treatment of wind shear and the general adaptation to larger wind turbines. The assessment in the EIAR is therefore in full accordance with the latest best-practice methods.

In the event that updated Wind Energy Guidelines are published during the application process for the Proposed Development it is anticipated that any relevant changes affecting the noise (if any) will be

addressed through an appropriate planning condition, or where a supplementary assessment is necessary, through provision of additional information.

11.4 Comments on Human Health Impacts

11.4.1.1 The National Health & Medical Research Council

The relevant Australian authority on health issues, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), conducted a comprehensive independent assessment of the scientific evidence on wind farms and human health, the findings are contained in the NHMRC Information Paper: *Evidence on Wind Farms and Human Health* 2015, this report concluded:

“After careful consideration and deliberation, NHMRC concluded that there is no consistent evidence that wind farms cause adverse health effects in humans. This finding reflects the results and limitations of the direct evidence and also takes into account the relevant available parallel evidence on whether or not similar noise exposure from sources other than wind farms causes health effects.”

11.4.2 Special Characteristics of Turbine Noise

11.4.2.1 Infrasound/Low Frequency Noise

Low Frequency Noise is noise that is dominated by frequency components less than approximately 200Hz whereas Infrasound is typically described as sound at frequencies below 20Hz. In relation to Infrasound, the following extract from the EPA document *Guidance Note for Noise Assessment of Wind Turbine Operations at EPA Licensed Sites* (NG3) (EPA, 2011) is noted here:

“There is similarly no significant infrasound from wind turbines. Infrasound is high level sound at frequencies below 20 Hz. This was a prominent feature of passive yaw “downwind” turbines where the blades were positioned downwind of the tower which resulted in a characteristic “thump” as each blade passed through the wake caused by the turbine tower. With modern active yaw turbines (i.e. the blades are upwind of the tower and the turbine is turned to face into the wind by a wind direction sensor on the nacelle activating a yaw motor) this is no longer a significant feature.”

With respect to infrasonic noise levels below the hearing threshold, the World Health Organisation (WHO) document *Community Noise* (WHO, 1995) has stated that:

“There is no reliable evidence that infrasounds below the hearing threshold produce physiological or psychological effects.”

In 2010, the UK Health Protection Agency published a report entitled *Health Effects of Exposure to Ultrasound and Infrasound*, Report of the independent Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation. The exposures considered in the report related to medical applications and general environmental exposure. The report notes:

“Infrasound is widespread in modern society, being generated by cars, trains and aircraft, and by industrial machinery, pumps, compressors and low speed fans. Under these circumstances, infrasound is usually accompanied by the generation of audible, low frequency noise. Natural sources of infrasound include thunderstorms and fluctuations in atmospheric pressure, wind and waves, and volcanoes; running and swimming also generate changes in air pressure at infrasonic frequencies.”

For infrasound, aural pain and damage can occur at exposures above about 140 dB, the threshold depending on the frequency. The best-established responses occur following acute exposures at intensities great enough to be heard and may possibly lead to a decrease in wakefulness. The available evidence is inadequate to draw firm conclusions about potential health effects associated with exposure at the levels normally experienced in the environment, especially the effects of long-term exposures. The available data do not suggest that exposure to infrasound below the hearing threshold levels is capable of causing adverse effects.”

The UK Institute of Acoustics Bulletin in March 2009 included a statement of agreement between acoustic consultants regularly employed on behalf of wind farm developers, and conversely acoustic consultants regularly employed on behalf of community groups campaigning against wind farm developments (IAO JS2009). The intent of the article was to promote consistent assessment practices, and to assist in restricting wind farm noise disputes to legitimate matters of concern. In relation to the issue of infrasound, the article states the following:

“Infrasound is the term generally used to describe sound at frequencies below 20 Hz. At separation distances from wind turbines which are typical of residential locations the levels of infrasound from wind turbines are well below the human perception level. Infrasound from wind turbines is often at levels below that of the noise generated by wind around buildings and other obstacles.

Sounds at frequencies from about 20 Hz to 200 Hz are conventionally referred to as low-frequency sounds. A report for the DTI in 2006 by Hayes McKenzie concluded that neither infrasound nor low frequency noise was a significant factor at the separation distances at which people lived. This was confirmed by a peer review by a number of consultants working in this field. We concur with this view.”

The article concludes that:

“from examination of reports of the studies referred to above, and other reports widely available on internet sites, we conclude that there is no robust evidence that low frequency noise (including ‘infrasound’) or ground-borne vibration from wind farms, generally has adverse effects on wind farm neighbours”.

A report released in January 2013 by the South Australian Environment Protection Authority namely, *Infrasound levels near windfarms and in other environments* (EPA, 2013)¹ found that the level of infrasound from wind turbines is insignificant and no different to any other source of noise, and that the worst contributors to household infrasound are air-conditioners, traffic and noise generated by people.

The study included several houses in rural and urban areas, both adjacent to and away from a wind farm, and measured the levels of infrasound with the wind farms operating and switched off.

There were no noticeable differences in the levels of infrasound under all these different conditions. In fact, the lowest levels of infrasound were recorded at one of the houses closest to a wind farm, whereas the highest levels were found in an urban office building.

The EPA’s study concluded that the level of infrasound at houses near wind turbines was no greater than in other urban and rural environments, and stated that:

“The contribution of wind turbines to the measured infrasound levels is insignificant in comparison with the background level of infrasound in the environment.”

¹ EPA South Australia, 2013, *Wind farms* https://www.epa.sa.gov.au/files/477912_infrasound.pdf

A German report², titled “*Low Frequency Noise incl. Infrasound from Wind Turbines and Other Sources*” presents the details of a measurement project which ran from 2013. The report was published by the State Office for the Environment, Measurement and Nature Conservation of the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg in 2016 and concluded the following in relation to infrasound from wind turbines:

“The measured infrasound levels (G levels) at a distance of approx. 150 m from the turbine were between 55 and 80 dB(G) with the turbine running. With the turbine switched off, they were between 50 and 75 dB(G). At distances of 650 to 700 m, the G levels were between 55 and 75 dB(G) with the turbine switched on as well as off.”

“For the measurements carried out even at close range, the infrasound levels in the vicinity of wind turbines – at distances between 150 and 300 m – were well below the threshold of what humans can perceive in accordance with DIN 45680 (2013 Draft)”³

“The results of this measurement project comply with the results of similar investigations on a national and international level.”

, There is a significant body of evidence to show that the infrasound associated with wind turbines will be below perceptibility thresholds and typically in line with existing baseline levels of infrasound within the environment.

11.4.2.2 Amplitude Modulation

In the context of this assessment, amplitude modulation (AM) is defined in the IOA Noise Working Group (Wind Turbine Noise) Amplitude Modulation Working Group (AMWG) document A Method for Rating Amplitude Modulation in Wind Turbine Noise (IOA, 2016) as:

“Periodic fluctuations in the level of audible noise from a wind turbine (or wind turbines), the frequency of the fluctuations being related to the blade passing frequency (BPF) of the turbine rotor(s).”

It is now generally accepted that there are two mechanisms which can cause amplitude modulation:

- ‘Normal’ AM, and;
- ‘Other’ AM (sometimes referred to ‘Excessive’ AM).

In both cases, the result is a regular fluctuation in amplitude at the Blade Passing Frequency (BPF) of the wind turbine blades (the rate at which the blades of the turbine pass a fixed point). For a three-bladed turbine rotating at 20 rpm, this equates to a modulation frequency of 1 Hz.

‘Normal’ AM An observer at ground level close to a wind turbine will experience ‘blade swish’ because of the directional characteristics of the noise radiated from the trailing edge of the blades as it rotates towards and then away from the observer.

This effect is reduced for an observer on or close to the turbine axis, and therefore would not generally be expected to be significant at typical separation distances, at least on relatively level sites.

The RenewableUK AM project (RenewableUK, 2013) has coined the term ‘normal’ AM (NAM) for this inherent characteristic of wind turbine noise, which has long been recognised and was discussed in ETSU-R-97 in 1996.

² Report available at https://www4.lubw.baden-wuerttemberg.de/servlet/is/262445/low-frequency_noise_incl_infrasound.pdf?command=downloadContent&filename=low-frequency_noise_incl_infrasound.pdf

³ DIN 45680:2013-09 – Draft “Measurement and Assessment of Low-frequency Noise Emissions” November 2013

‘Other’ AM In some cases AM is observed at large distances from a wind turbine (or turbines). The sound is generally heard as a periodic ‘thumping’ or ‘whoomphing’ at relatively low frequencies.

On sites where it has been reported, occurrences appear to be occasional, although they can persist for several hours under some conditions, dependent on atmospheric factors, including wind speed and direction.

It was proposed in the RenewableUK 2013 study that the fundamental cause of this type of AM is transient stall conditions occurring as the blades rotate, giving rise to the periodic thumping at the blade passing frequency.

Transient stall represents a fundamentally different mechanism from blade swish and can be heard at relatively large distances, primarily downwind of the rotor blade.

The RenewableUK AM project report adopted the term ‘Other AM’ (OAM) for this characteristic. The terms ‘enhanced’ or ‘excess’ AM (EAM) have been used by others, although such definitions do not distinguish between the source mechanisms and presuppose a ‘normal’ level of AM, presumably relating back to blade swish as described in ETSU-R-97.

11.4.2.2.1 Frequency of Occurrence of AM

Research by Salford University commissioned by the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) and the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) investigated the issue of AM associated with wind turbine noise. The results were reviewed and published in the report *Research into Aerodynamic Modulation of Wind Turbine Noise* (2007). The broad conclusions of this report were that aerodynamic modulation was only considered to be an issue at 4, and a possible issue at a further 8, of 133 sites in the UK that were operational at the time of the study and considered within the review. At the 4 sites where AM was confirmed as an issue, it was considered that conditions associated with AM might occur between about 7% and 15% of the time. It also emerged that for three out of the four sites the complaints have subsided, in one case due to the introduction of a turbine control system. The research has shown that AM is a rare and unlikely occurrence at operational wind farms.

It should be noted that AM is associated with wind turbine operation and it is not possible to predict an occurrence of AM at the planning stage. It should also be noted that it is a rare event associated with a limited number of wind farms. While it can occur, it is the exception rather than the rule.

RenewableUK Research Document states the following in relation to matter:

Page 68 Module F *“even on those limited sites where it has been reported, its frequency of occurrence appears to be at best infrequent and intermittent.”*

Page 6 Module F *“It has also been the experience of the project team that, even at those wind farm sites where AM has been reported or identified to be an issue, its occurrence may be relatively infrequent. Thus, the capture of time periods when subjectively significant AM occurs may involve elapsed periods of several weeks or even months.”*

Page 61 Module F *“There is nothing at the planning stage that can presently be used to indicate a positive likelihood of OAM occurring at any given proposed wind farm site,*

based either on the site's general characteristics or on the known characteristics of the wind turbines to be installed."

11.4.2.2.2 Assessment of AM

Research and Guidance in the area is ongoing with recent publications being issued by the Institute of Acoustics (IoA) Noise working Group (Wind Turbine Noise) Amplitude Modulation Working Group (AMWG) namely, *A Method for Rating Amplitude Modulation in Wind Turbine Noise* (August 2016) (The Reference Method). The document proposes an objective method for measuring and rating AM. The AMWG does not propose what level of AM is likely to result in adverse community response or propose any limits for AM. The purpose of the group is simply to use existing research to develop a Reference Methodology for the measurement and rating of amplitude modulation.

The definition of any limits of acceptability for AM, or consideration of how such limits might be incorporated into a wind farm planning condition, is outside the scope of the AMWG's work and is currently the subject of a separate UK Government funded study. In the absence of published guidance to date, it is considered best practice to adopt the penalty rating and assessment scheme contained in an article published in the Institute of Acoustics publication *Acoustics Bulletin* (Vol. 42 No. 2 March/April 2017) titled, *Perception and Control of Amplitude Modulation in Wind Turbines Noise*.

Where it occurs, AM is typically an intermittent occurrence, therefore assessment may involve long-term measurements during the operational phase of the proposed development. The 'Reference Method' for measuring AM outlined in the IoA AMWG document will provide a robust and reliable indicator of AM and yield important information on the frequency and duration of occurrence, which can be used to evaluate different operational conditions including mitigation.

11.4.2.3 Health Canada

Health Canada, Canada's national health organisation, released preliminary results of a study into the effect of wind farms on human health in 2014⁴. The study was initiated in 2012 specifically to gather new data on wind farms and health. The study considered physical health measures that assessed stress levels using hair cortisol, blood pressure and resting heart rate, as well as measures of sleep quality. More than 4,000 hours of wind turbine noise measurements were collected and a total of 1,238 households participated.

No evidence was found to support a link between exposure to wind turbine noise and any of the self-reported illnesses. Additionally, the study's results did not support a link between wind turbine noise and stress, or sleep quality (self-reported or measured). However, an association was found between increased levels of wind turbine noise and individuals reporting of being annoyed.

11.4.2.4 New South Wales Health Department

In 2012, the New South Wales (NSW) Health Department provided written advice to the NSW Government that stated existing studies on wind farms and health issues had been examined and no known causal link could be established.

NSW Health officials stated that fears that wind turbines make people sick are 'not scientifically valid'. The officials wrote that there was no evidence for 'wind turbine syndrome', a collection of ailments including sleeplessness, headaches and high blood pressure that some people believe are caused by the noise of spinning blades.

⁴ Health Canada 2014, *Wind Turbine Noise and Health Study: Summary of Results*. Available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/environmental-workplace-health/noise/wind-turbine-noise/wind-turbine-noise-health-study-summary-results.html>

11.4.2.5 The Australian Medical Association

The Australian Medical Association put out a position statement, Wind Farms and Health 2014⁵. The statement said:

“The available Australian and international evidence does not support the view that the infrasound or low frequency sound generated by wind farms, as they are currently regulated in Australia, causes adverse health effects on populations residing in their vicinity. The infrasound and low frequency sound generated by modern wind farms in Australia is well below the level where known health effects occur, and there is no accepted physiological mechanism where sub-audible infrasound could cause health effects.”

11.4.2.6 Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

The review titled, Wind Turbines and Health: A Critical Review of the Scientific Literature was published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 2014. An independent review of the literature was undertaken by the Department of Biological Engineering of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The review took into consideration health effects such as stress, annoyance and sleep disturbance, as well as other effects that have been raised in association with living close to wind turbines. The study found that:

“No clear or consistent association is seen between noise from wind turbines and any reported disease or other indicator of harm to human health.”

The report concluded that living near wind farms does not result in the worsening of the quality of life in that region.

11.4.2.7 Summary

The peer reviewed research outlined in the preceding sections supports that there are no negative health effects on people with long term exposure to wind turbine noise. Please refer to Chapter 5 of the EIAR for further details of potential health impacts associated with the Proposed Development.

11.4.3 Vibration

A report published in Germany by the State Office for the Environment, Measurement and Nature Conservation of the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg in 2016, “*Low Frequency Noise incl. Infrasound from Wind Turbines and Other Sources*”, Conducted vibration measurements study for an operational Nordex N117 – 2.4 MW wind turbine. The report concluded that at distances of less than 300m from the turbine vibration levels had dropped so far that they could no longer be differentiated from the background vibration levels.

Considering the distances from nearest NSL’s to any of the turbines in the Proposed Development (>800m) the level of vibration will be significantly below any thresholds for perceptibility. Therefore, vibration criteria have not been specified for the operational phase of the Proposed Development.

⁵ Australian Medical Association, 2014, Wind farms and health. Available at <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/wind-farms-and-health-2014>

11.4.4 Background Noise Assessment

An environmental noise survey was undertaken to determine typical background noise levels at representative NSLs surrounding the development site. The background noise survey was conducted through the installation of unattended sound level meters at seven representative locations in the surrounding area.

All measurement data collected during the background noise surveys has been carried out in accordance with the Institute to Acoustic's Good Practice Guide to the Application of ETSU-R-97 for the Assessment and Rating of Wind Turbine Noise (IoA GPG, 2013) and accompanying, Supplementary Guidance Note 1: Data Collection (2014) discussed in the following Section.

The NSLs are spread over a large area and the noise monitoring locations were selected to obtain background noise levels representative of the noise environments at noise sensitive locations surrounding the site.

As set out in the IOA GPG:

“Where a new wind farm is proposed and a receptor is also within the area acoustically affected by an already operational wind farm, then noise from the existing wind farm must not be allowed to influence the background noise measurements for the proposed development.”

For each measurement location, noise data collected during the survey has been filtered to exclude periods where the measurement locations were downwind of existing operational wind turbines.

11.4.4.1 Choice of Measurement Locations

The noise monitoring locations were identified by preparing using the wind turbine noise model (See 11.4.5 form more detail on wind turbine noise calculations). Noise contours for the surrounding area were produces, (see Appendix 11-5) and locations that fell inside the predicted 35 dB L_{A90} noise contour, were considered for noise monitoring in line with current best practice guidance outlined in the IoA GPG. The selection of the noise monitoring locations was informed by site visits, discussions with locals and supplemented by reviewing of aerial images of the study area and other online sources of information (e.g. Google Earth).

The selected locations for the noise monitoring are outlined in the following sections. Coordinates for the noise monitoring locations are illustrated on Figure 11-2 and detailed in Table 11-4.

Figure 11-2 Noise measurement locations (A, B, C, D, E, G, and H).



Table 11-4 Noise Measurement Location Coordinates

Location	Coordinates – Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM)	
	Easting	Northing
A (H094)	663929	760400
B (H115)	666471	759713
C (H103)	664791	757635
D (H059)	662819	756051
E (H113)	664640	756125
G (H198)	666769	752349

H (H218)	659185	757155
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Significant noise sources in this area were noted to be distant traffic movements, activity in and around the residences and wind generated noise from local foliage and other typical anthropogenic sources typically found in such rural settings. Flowing water was audible at some locations.

There were no perceptible sources of vibration noted at any of the survey locations. **Plate 11-1 to Plate 11-7** illustrate the installed noise monitoring kits.

Location A

The noise meter at Location A was positioned on a lawn at approximately 15m south of the dwelling, 300m from a local road and 1.5m above the low-level surrounding grass.



Plate 11-1 Location A (H094)

Location B

Location B was positioned on a lawn 15m south of the dwelling, 15m northeast from a local road and 1.5m above the low-level surrounding grass.



Plate 11-2 Location B (H115)

Location C

Location C was positioned 12m northwest of the dwelling and 1.5m above the surrounding garden.



Plate 11-3 Location C (H103)

Location D

Location D was positioned in a grassy area at 20m to the north-west of the dwelling and 1.5m above the surrounding grass.



Plate 11-4 Location D (H059)

Location E

Location E was positioned on grassy area at 15m to the southwest of the dwelling and 1.5m above the surrounding lawn.



Plate 11-5 Location E (H113)

Location G

Location G was positioned on grassy area at 20m to the south of the dwelling, at 50m from a local road and 1.5m above the surrounding lawn.



Plate 11-6 Location G (H198)

Location H

Location H was positioned on a lawn at 15m to the southeast of the dwelling, at 15m from a local road and 1.5m above the surrounding lawn and planting.



Plate 11-7 Location H (H218)

11.4.4.2 Measurement Periods

Noise measurements were conducted at each of the monitoring locations over the periods outlined in **Table 11-5**.

Table 11-5 Measurement Periods

Location	Start Date	End Date
----------	------------	----------

A (H094)	25 August 2020	27 October 2020
B (H115)	29 August 2020	28 October 2020
C (H103)	25 August 2020	23 October 2020
D (H059)	25 August 2020	28 October 2020
E (H113)	25 August 2020	26 October 2020
G (H198)	25 August 2020	18 October 2020
H (H218)	25 August 2020	22 October 2020

A variety of wind speed and weather conditions were encountered over the survey periods in question. **Figure 11-3** and illustrates the distributions of wind speed and wind direction standardised to 10 metre height over the survey period detailed in **Table 11-5**.

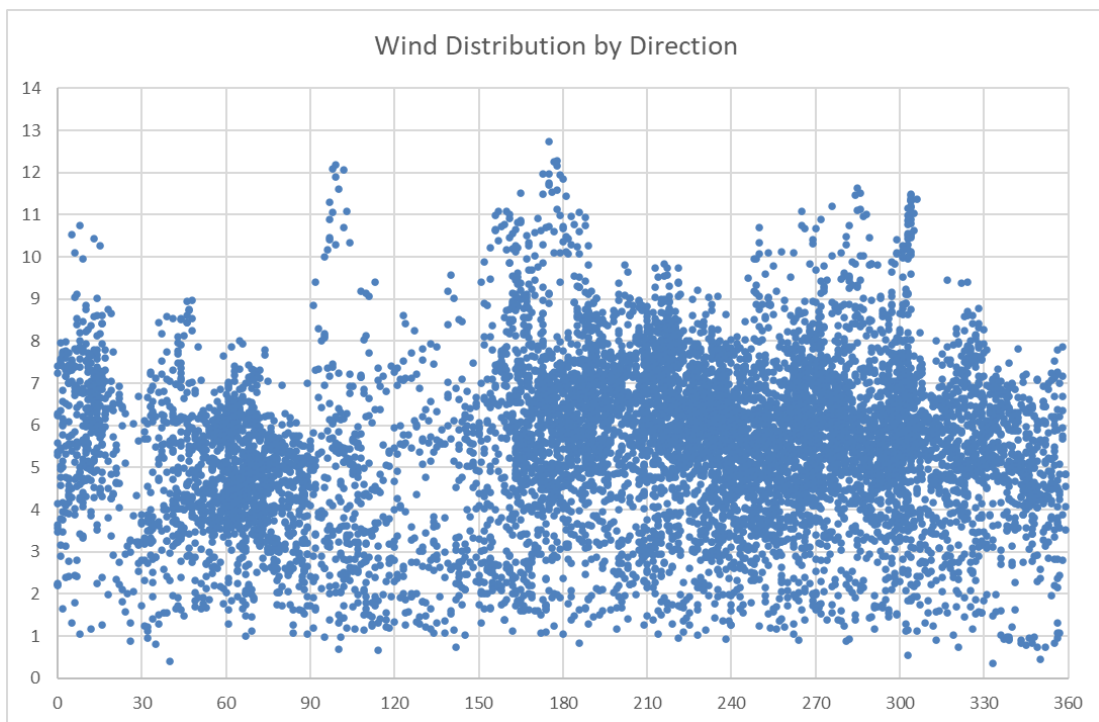


Figure 11-3 Distributions of Wind Speeds and Directions Over the Survey Period

11.4.4.3 Personnel and Instrumentation

AWN Consulting installed and removed the noise monitors at all locations. Battery checks and meter calibrations were carried out part-way through the survey periods. The following instrumentation was used at the various locations:

Table 11-6 Instrumentation Details

Location	Equipment	Serial Number	Max. Calibration Drift (dB)
A (H094)	Rion NL-52	186671	0.2
B (H115)	Rion NL-52	186667	0.2
C (H103)	Rion NL-52	186670	0.1
D (H059)	Rion NL-52	575785	0.2
E (H113)	Rion NL-52	575802	0.1
G (H198)	Rion NL-52	164427	0.1
H (H218)	Rion NL-52	998409	0.2

Before and after the survey the measurement apparatus was check calibrated using a sound level calibrator where appropriate. Instruments were calibrated on each interim visit and any drift noted. Relevant calibration certificates are presented in **Appendix 11-2**.

Rainfall was monitored and logged using a Texas Instruments TR-525 console and a data logger that was installed on-site for the duration of the surveys. This allows for the identification of periods of rain fall to allow for the removal sample periods affect by rainfall from the noise monitoring data sets in line with best practice when calculating the prevailing background noise levels.

Wind data was measured at a temporary meteorological mast located within the site of the Proposed Development and was supplied to AWN for data analysis.

Table 11-7 Temporary Met Mast Details

Description	Coordinates (ITM)	
	Easting	Northing
Met Mast	664728	759005

11.4.4.4 Procedure

Measurements were conducted at the seven locations over the survey periods outlined in Table 11-5. Data samples for all measurements (noise, rainfall and wind) were logged continuously at 10-minute interval periods for the duration of the survey.

11.4.4.5 Analysis of Background Noise Data

The data sets have been filtered to remove issues such as the dawn chorus and the influence of other atypical noise sources. An example of atypical sources would be short, isolated periods of raised noise levels attributable to local sources, agricultural activity, boiler flues, operation of gardening equipment etc. In addition, sample periods affected by rainfall or when rainfall resulted in prolonged periods of atypical noise levels have also been screened form the data sets. The assessment methods outlined above are in line with the guidance contained in the IoA *GPG*.

The results presented in the following sections refer to the noise data collated during ‘quiet periods’ of the day and night as defined in the IoA *GPG*. These periods are defined as follows:

- > Daytime Amenity hours are:
 - all evenings from 18:00 to 23:00hrs;
 - Saturday afternoons from 13:00 to 18:00hrs, and;
 - all day Sunday from 07:00 to 18:00hrs.
- > Night-time hours are 23:00 to 07:00hrs.

11.4.4.5.1 Consideration of Wind Shear

Wind shear is defined as the increase of wind speed with height above ground. As part of a robust wind farm noise assessment due consideration should be given to the issue of wind shear. The issue of wind shear has been considered in this assessment and followed relevant guidance as outlined in the IoA GPG. It is standard procedure to reference noise data to standardised 10 metre height wind speed.

Wind speed measurements at 80m and 60m heights have been corrected to a height of 115m (the hub height adopted for the noise assessment) in accordance with Method B of Section 2.6 of the IOA GPG. The calculated hub height wind speeds were then corrected to standardised 10 metre height wind speed.

The IoA GPG presents the following equations in relation to the derivation of a standardised wind speed at 10m above ground level:

$$\text{Shear Exponent Profile: } U = U_{\text{ref}} [(H / H_{\text{ref}})]^m$$

Where:

- U Calculated wind speed
- U_{ref} Measured HH wind speed.
- H Height at which the wind speed will be calculated.
- H_{ref} Height at which the wind speed was measured.
- M shear exponent = $\log(U/U_{\text{ref}})/\log(H/H_{\text{ref}})$

The Calculated hub height wind speeds have been standardised to 10 m height using the following equation:

$$\text{Roughness Length Shear Profile: } U_1 = U_2 \times [(\ln(H_1/z))/(\ln(H_2/z))]$$

Where:

- H₁ The height of the wind speed to be calculated (10m)
- H₂ The height of the measured or calculated HH wind speed.
- U₁ The wind speed to be calculated.
- U₂ The measured or calculated HH wind speed.
- Z The roughness length.

Note: A roughness length of 0.05m is used to standardise hub height wind speeds to 10m height in the IEC 61400-11:2003 standard, regardless of what the actual roughness length seen on a site may have been. This ‘normalisation’ procedure was adopted for comparability between test results for different turbines.

Any reference to wind speed in this chapter should be understood to be the standardised 10m height wind speed reference unless otherwise stated.

11.4.5 Turbine Noise Calculations

A series of computer-based prediction models have been prepared to quantify the noise level associated with the operation of the Proposed Development. This section discusses the methodology for the noise modelling process.

11.4.5.1 Noise Modelling Software

Proprietary noise calculation software was used for the purposes of this impact assessment. The selected software, DGMR iNoise Enterprise, calculates noise levels in accordance with ISO 9613: *Acoustics – Attenuation of sound outdoors, Part 2: General method of calculation*, (ISO, 1996).

iNoise is a proprietary noise calculation package for computing noise levels and propagation of noise sources. iNoise calculates noise levels in different ways depending on the selected prediction standard. In general, however, the resultant noise level is calculated considering a range of factors affecting the propagation of sound, including:

- the magnitude of the noise source in terms of A weighted sound power levels (L_{WA});
- the distance between the source and receiver;
- the presence of obstacles such as screens or barriers in the propagation path;
- the presence of reflecting surfaces;
- the hardness of the ground between the source and receiver;
- Attenuation due to atmospheric absorption; and
- Meteorological effects such as wind gradient, temperature gradient and humidity (these have significant impact at distances greater than approximately 400m).

11.4.5.2 Input Data and Assumptions

The calculation settings, input data and any assumptions made in the assessment are described in the following sections. Additional information relating to the noise model inputs and calculation settings is provided in Appendix 11-3.

11.4.5.2.1 Turbine Details

Table 11-8 details the co-ordinates of the 26 No. proposed turbines that are being considered in this assessment.

Table 11-8 Proposed Ballivor Turbine Co-ordinates

Turbine	ITM X	ITM Y	Top of Foundation Levels metre OD
1	665162	753511	75.3
2	665604	753275	73.9
3	665983	752965	73.9
4	665796	752196	72.6
5	665231	752587	73.1
6	664502	752692	72.2
7	665928	751694	72.4
8	665164	751792	72.9
9	664623	752007	74.4
10	663783	752452	74.1
11	663976	753121	75.0
12	664329	753719	78.1
13	663739	757007	73.8
14	663474	757496	74.9
15	662595	757805	78.1
16	662765	757323	74.9
17	662002	756804	79.0
18	661508	757054	77.0
19	665118	758520	73.3
20	665844	758647	73.2
21	664274	759054	73.3
22	664023	759553	75.2

23	664744	759727	75.0
24	665464	759850	75.1
25	665735	759326	73.9
26	665028	759172	73.5

The turbine type assessed is the Siemens Gamesa SG170 6MW. The turbine is a pitch regulated upwind turbine with a three-blade rotor with a hub height of 115 m and a rotor diameter of 170m. Each wind turbine is secured to a circular-shaped reinforced concrete foundation. The sound power levels for the SG170 6MW referenced to windspeeds at standardised 10m height are presented in Table 11-9.

Table 11-9 Sound Power Level Spectra for Siemens SG170 for 115 m hub height – Ballivor Wind Farm

Wind Speed (m/s)	Octave Band Centre Frequency (Hz)								dB L _{WA}
	63	125	250	500	1000	2000	4000	8000	
3	74.5	81.3	83.5	84.5	87.7	87.4	82.9	71.1	93.0
4	79.3	86.1	88.3	89.3	92.5	92.2	87.7	75.9	97.8
5	84.2	91.0	93.2	94.2	97.4	97.1	92.6	80.8	102.7
6	87.2	94.0	96.2	97.2	100.4	100.1	95.6	83.8	105.7
7	87.5	94.3	96.5	97.5	100.7	100.4	95.9	84.1	106.0
8	87.5	94.3	96.5	97.5	100.7	100.4	95.9	84.1	106.0
9	87.5	94.3	96.5	97.5	100.7	100.4	95.9	84.1	106.0

An appraisal of the wider study area around the site identified the potential for cumulative impacts from the operation of the consented Bracklyn Wind Farm ((Planning Reference PA25M.311565), a nine turbine wind farm which assessed General Electric 158 5.5MW turbine models with a hub height of 101 m and coordinates as in Table 11-10.

Table 11-10 Bracklyn Turbine Co-ordinates

Turbine Ref.	Coordinates – Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM)	
	Easting	Northing
T01	660970	759136
T02	660780	758679
T03	660893	758066
T04	661188	757707

Turbine Ref.	Coordinates – Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM)	
	Easting	Northing
T05	660780	757320
T06	661425	758849
T07	661617	758418
T10	662349	758514
T11	662153	758072

Table 11-11 shows the detailed sound power levels for the Bracklyn turbines.

Table 11-11 Sound Power Level Spectra Used for Prediction Model – Bracklyn Wind Farm

Wind Speed (m/s)	Octave Band Centre Frequency (Hz)								dB L _{WA}
	63	125	250	500	1000	2000	4000	8000	
3	75.4	82.8	87.5	89.3	88.2	84.3	77.6	68.0	94.2
4	76.9	84.6	89.2	90.9	89.8	85.6	78.6	68.5	95.8
5	81.0	88.6	93.2	94.9	93.8	89.6	82.6	72.6	99.8
6	84.7	92.2	96.8	98.5	97.4	93.3	86.4	76.5	103.4
7	85.6	93.1	97.7	99.4	98.3	94.2	87.3	77.5	104.3
8	85.6	93.1	97.6	99.4	98.3	94.3	87.5	77.9	104.3
9	85.0	92.6	97.3	99.3	98.5	94.9	88.5	79.3	104.3

manufacturer’s turbine sound power levels in Table 11-9 and Table 11-11 includes the manufacturer’s turbine sound power levels and are derived based on measurements in terms of the L_{Aeq} acoustic parameter. In accordance with best practice guidance contained within the Institute of Acoustics Good Practice Guide (IoA GPG), an allowance for uncertainty in the measurement of turbine source levels of +2dB is added to all turbine sound power levels presented in the tables above.

Moreover, as explained below, appropriate guidance is couched in terms of a L_{A90} criterion. Best practice guidance in the IoA GPG states that “L_{A90} levels should be determined from calculated L_{Aeq} levels by subtraction of 2 dB”. Therefore, a 2dB reduction has been applied to the noise model output. All predicted noise levels in this chapter are presented in terms of L_{A90}, i.e. this reduction of 2dB is included the values presented. In the interest of clarity, the levels presented in the tables above are the corrected levels following the adding of +2dB for uncertainty and subtracting of 2dB to obtain the L_{A90} and the noise-sensitive location.

Finally, best practice specifies that should any tonal component be present, a penalty shall be added to the predicted noise levels. The level of this penalty is described in ETSU-R-97⁶, and is related to the level by which any tonal components exceed audibility. For the purposes of this assessment a tonal penalty has not been included within the predicted noise levels. A warranty will be provided by the manufacturers of the selected turbine to ensure that the noise output will not require a tonal noise correction under best practice guidance.

11.4.5.3 Consideration of Wind Direction and Noise Propagation

When considering noise impacts of wind turbines, the effects of propagation in different wind directions should be considered. The day to day operations of the optimised development will not result in a worst-case condition of all noise locations being downwind of all turbines at the same time i.e. omni-directional predictions. Therefore, to address this issue, a review of expected noise levels downwind of the turbines has been prepared for various wind directions in accordance with the IoA GPG Guidance.

For any given wind direction, a property can be assigned one of the following classifications in relation to turbine noise propagation:

- > Downwind (i.e. $0^\circ \pm 80^\circ$);
- > Crosswind (i.e. $90^\circ \pm 10^\circ$ and $270^\circ \pm 10^\circ$);
- > Upwind (i.e. $180^\circ \pm 70^\circ$).

Figure 11-4 illustrates the directivity attenuation factor that has been applied to turbines when considering noise propagation in downwind conditions (downwind is represented by 0° with upwind being 180°).

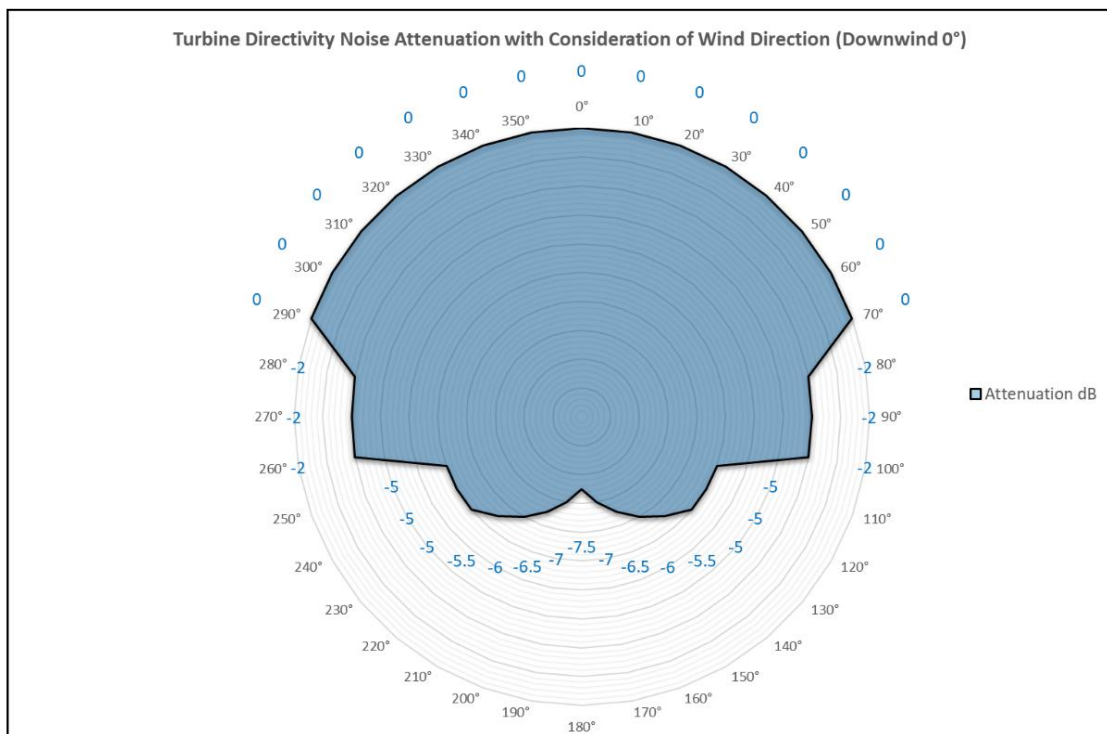


Figure 11-4 Turbine Directivity Attenuation with Consideration of Wind Direction

⁶ UK Department of Trade and Industry: ETSU-R-97 The assessment of rating of Noise from wind farms, 1996

11.4.5.4 Assessment of Turbine Noise Levels

The predicted cumulative turbine noise level from the Proposed Development will be compared against the derived turbine noise limits and any exceedances of the limits will be identified and assessed. Where necessary, appropriate mitigation measures will be detailed.

The following presents a breakdown of the various steps involved in the assessment of operational turbine noise level:

- Screen the cumulative turbine noise predictions against the lowest potential (worst-case) criteria outlined in Section 11.3.2.2.2 to identify any locations with a potential exceedance.
- Undertake directional noise prediction calculations to refine the noise prediction results as presented in
- Identify any locations with potential cumulative exceedances that occur as result of the proposed development only (i.e. Ballivor turbines).
- Calculate the level of attenuation required from the Ballivor turbines to achieve the adopted turbine noise criteria or the attenuation required to Ballivor such that the predicted contribution of the Ballivor turbines is 10 dB below the cumulative turbine limit value in accordance with best practice guidance.

11.4.6 Assessments of Construction Impacts

The potential impacts of the construction phase noise and vibration in addition to the potential impacts from additional vehicular activity on public roads will be assessed in accordance with best practice guidance as outlined in Section 11.4.6.

11.5 Receiving Environment

This stage of the assessment was to determine typical background noise levels at representative NSLs surrounding the development site. The background noise survey was conducted through installing unattended sound level meters at seven locations in the surrounding area.

11.5.1 Background Noise Levels

The following sections present an overview and results of the noise monitoring data obtained from the background noise survey in accordance with the methodology discussed above.

11.5.1.1 Location A (H094)

11.5.1.1.1 Daytime Quiet Periods

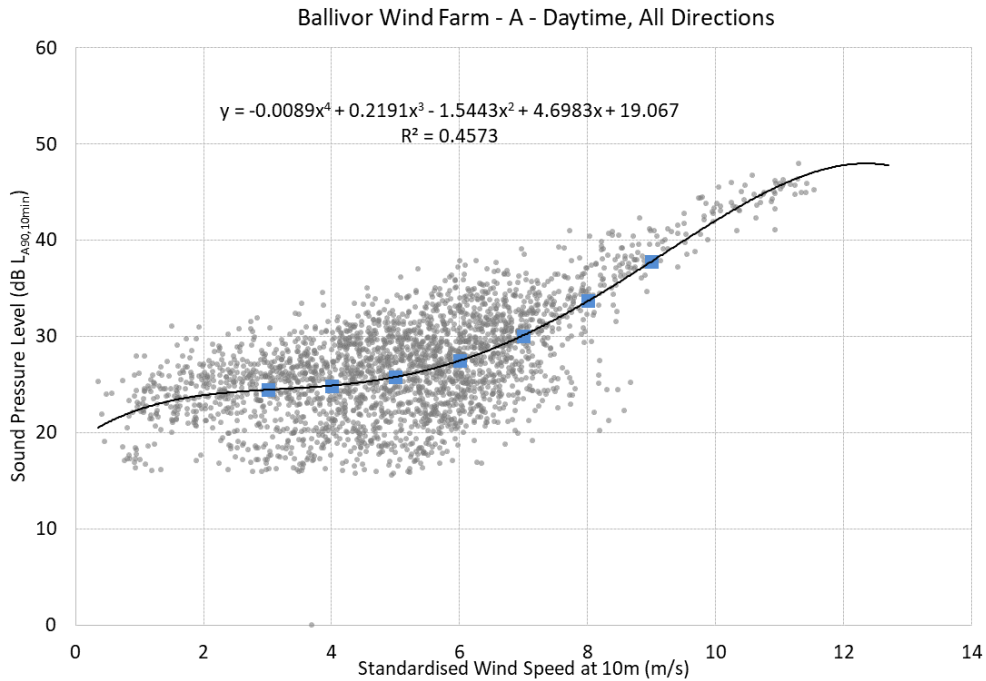


Figure 11-5 Location A (H094) Background Noise Levels $L_{A90, 10 \text{ min}}$ dB – Daytime

11.5.1.1.2 Night-time Periods

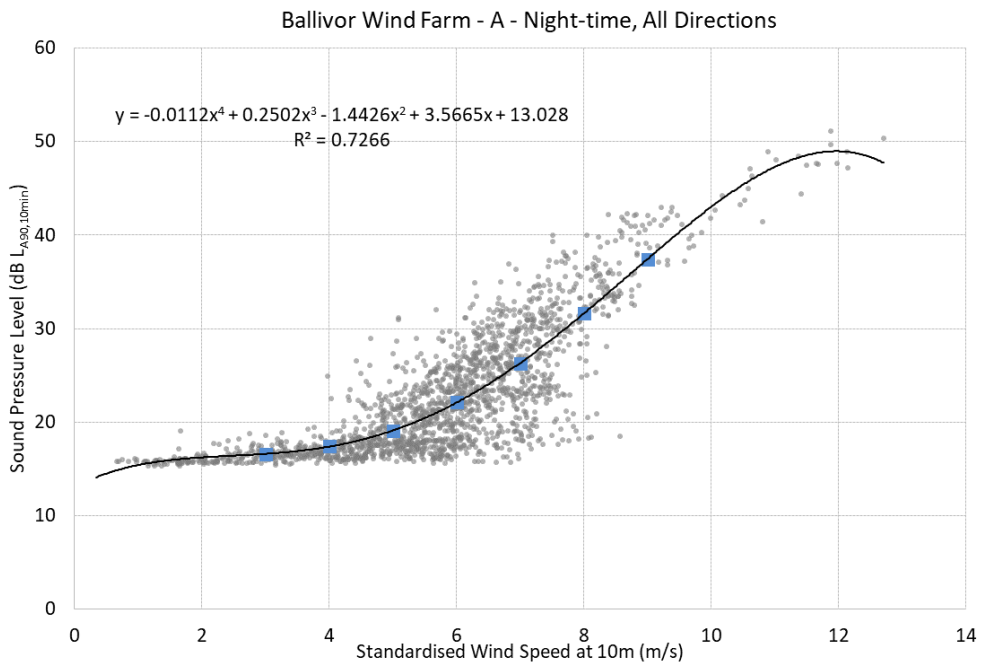


Figure 11-6 Location A (H094) Background Noise Levels $L_{A90, 10 \text{ min}}$ dB – Night-time

11.5.1.2 Location B (H115)

11.5.1.2.1 Daytime Quiet Periods

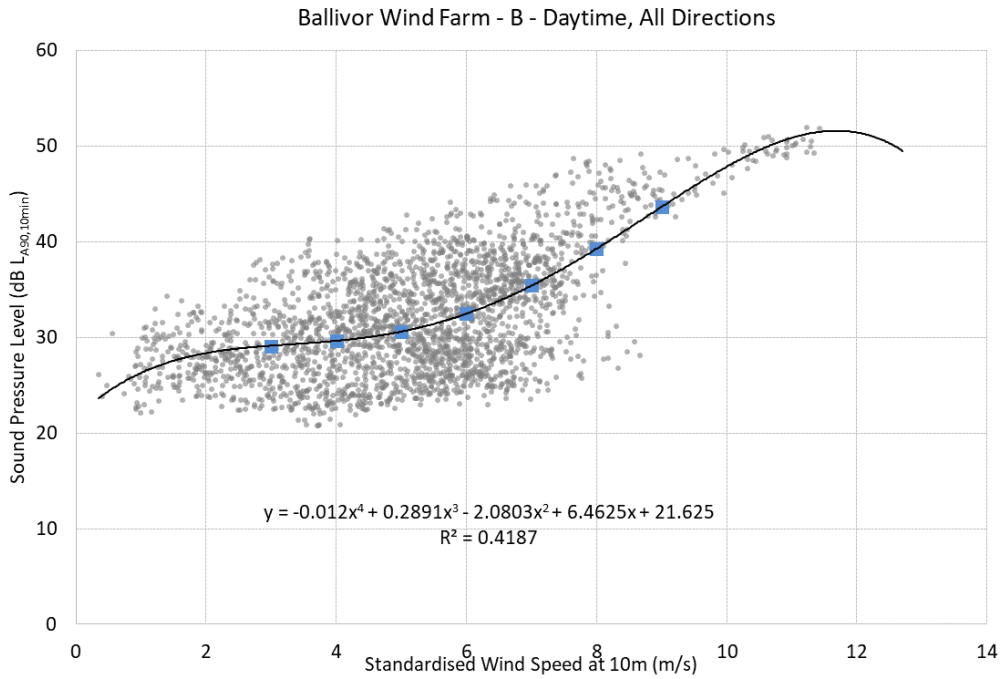


Figure 11-7 Location B (H115) Background Noise Levels $L_{A90, 10 \text{ min}}$ dB – Daytime

11.5.1.2.2 Night-time Periods

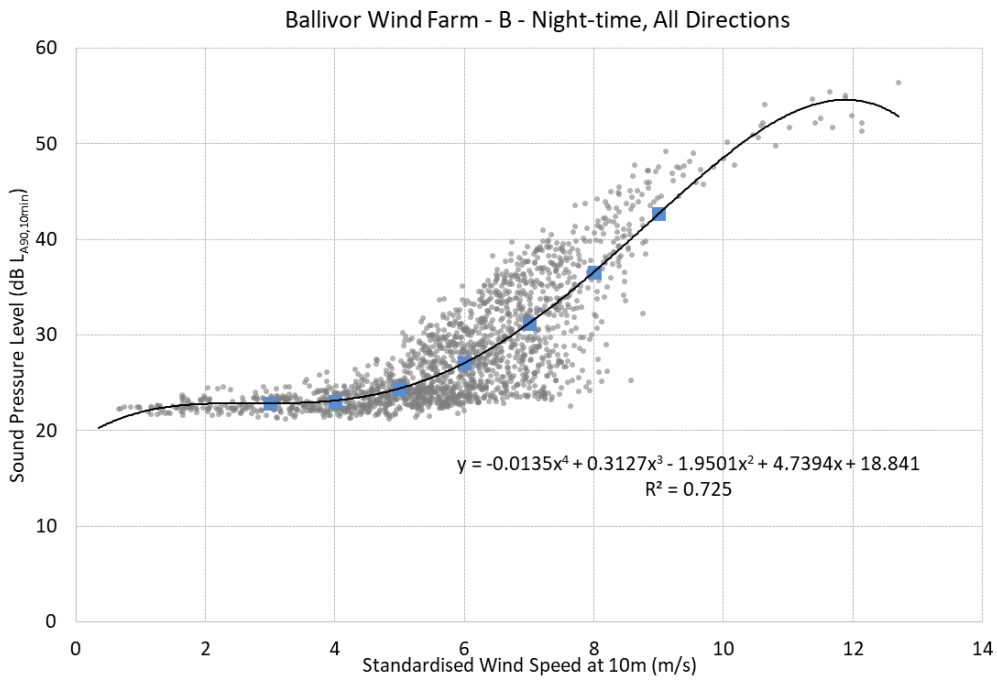


Figure 11-8 Location B (H115) Background Noise Levels $L_{A90, 10 \text{ min}}$ dB – Night-time

11.5.1.3 Location C (H103)

11.5.1.3.1 Daytime Quiet Periods

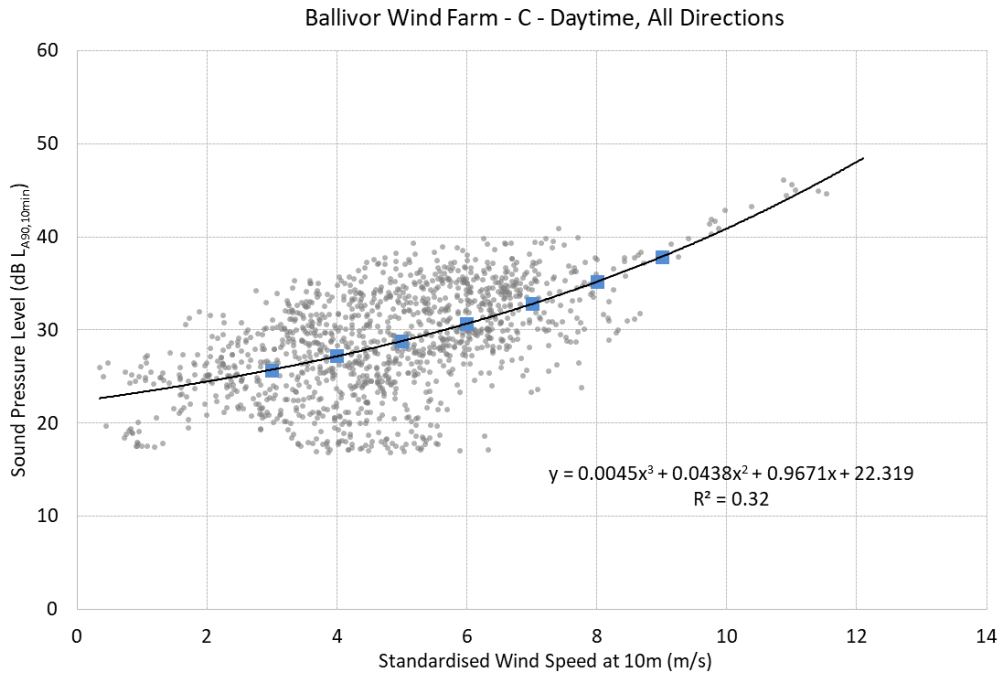


Figure 11-9 Location C (H103) Background Noise Levels LA90, 10 min dB –Daytime

11.5.1.3.2 Night-time Quiet Periods

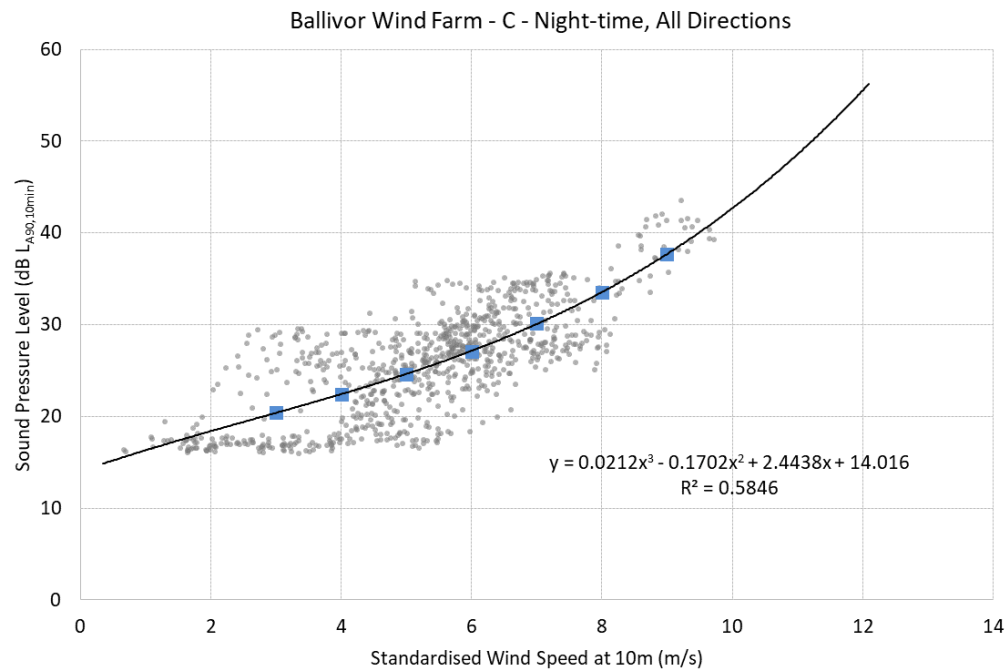


Figure 11-10 Location C (H103) Background Noise Levels LA90, 10 min dB –Night-time

11.5.1.4 Location D (H059)

11.5.1.4.1 Daytime Quiet Periods

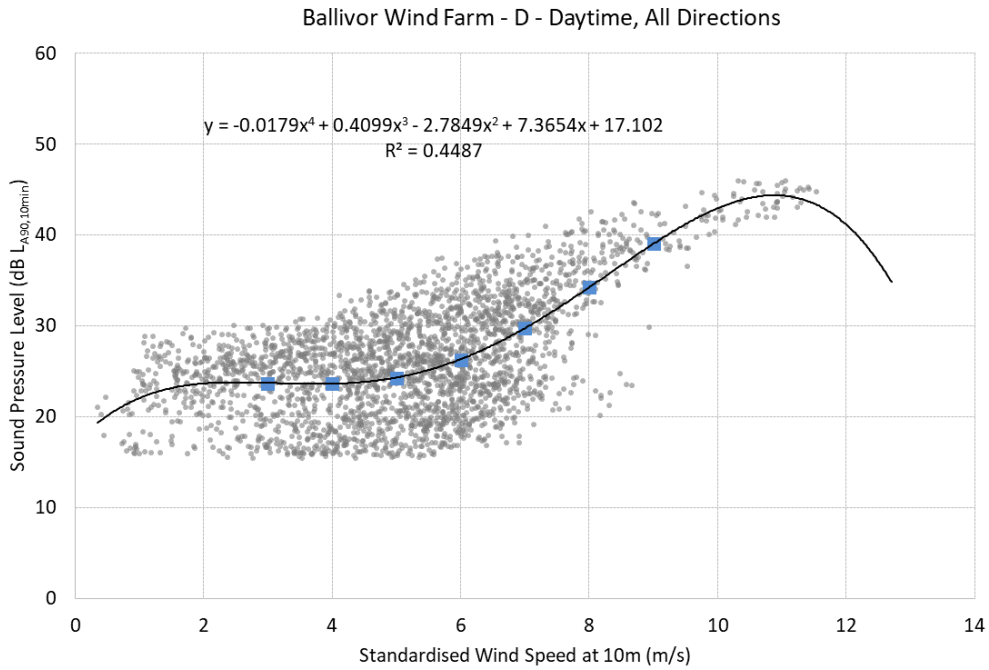


Figure 11-11 Location D (H059) Background Noise Levels $L_{A90, 10 \text{ min}}$ dB –Daytime

11.5.1.4.2 Night-time Periods

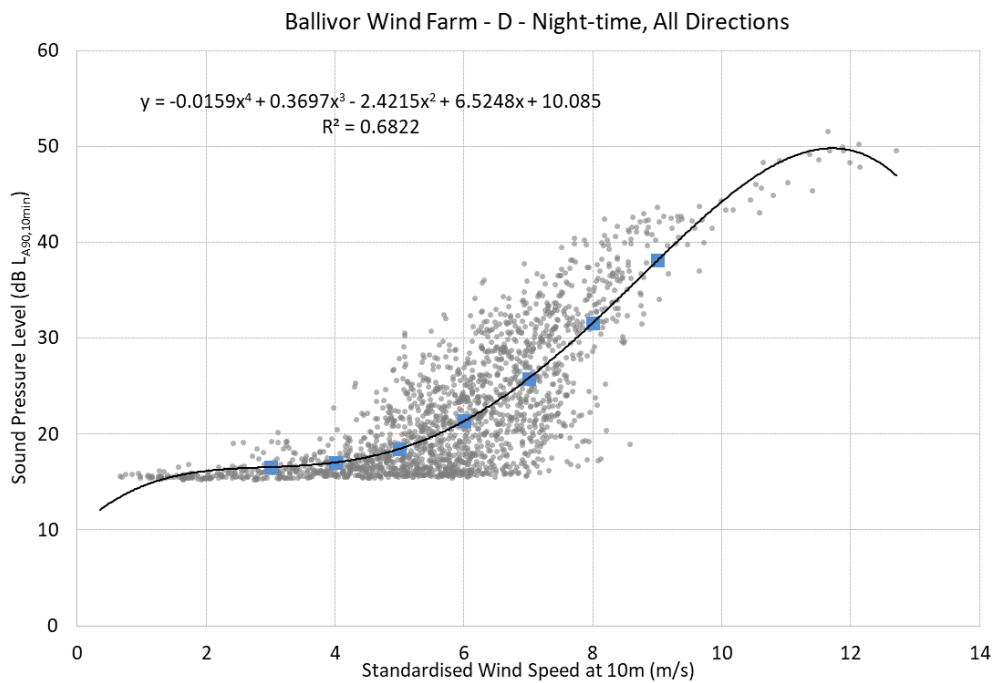


Figure 11-12 Location D (H059) Background Noise Levels $L_{A90, 10 \text{ min}}$ dB – Night-time

11.5.1.5 Location E (H113)

11.5.1.5.1 Daytime Quiet Periods

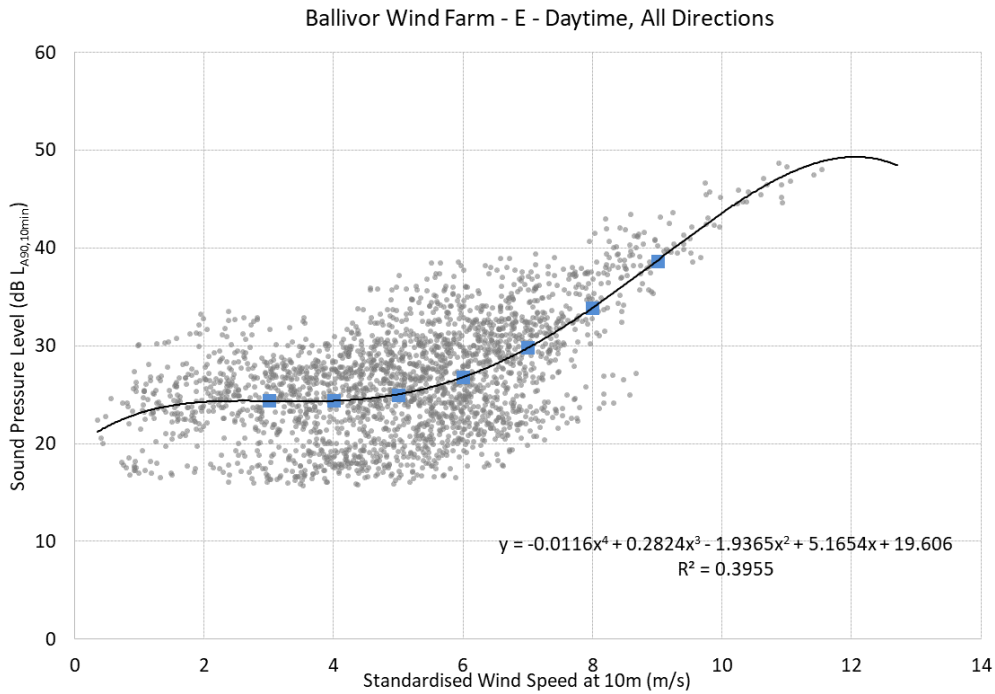


Figure 11-13 Location E (H113) Background Noise Levels $LA_{90, 10 \text{ min}}$ dB – Daytime

11.5.1.5.2 Night-time Periods

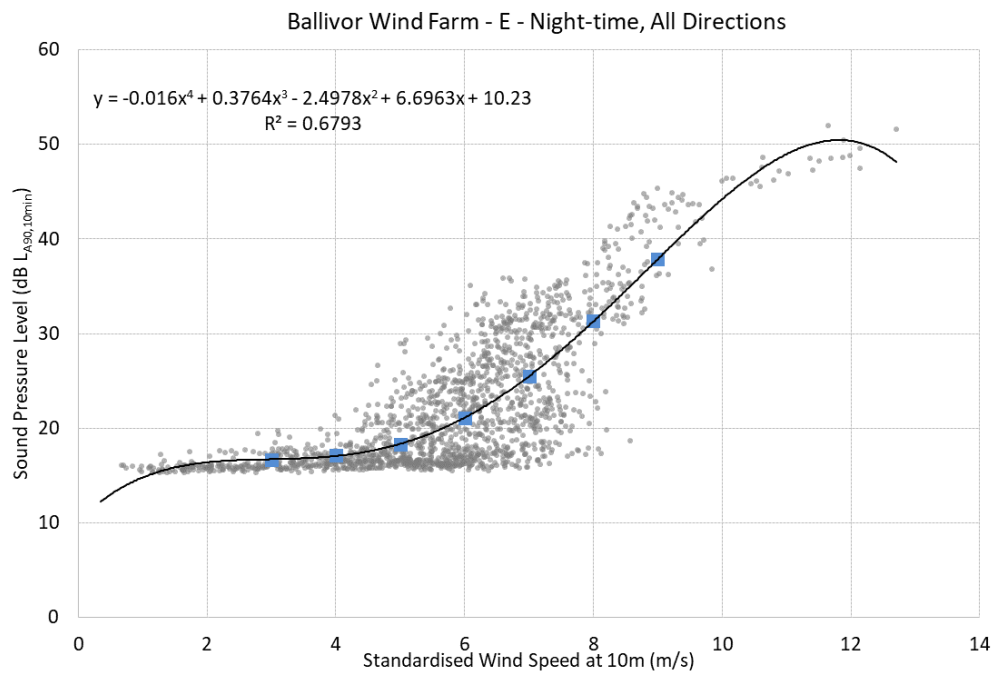


Figure 11-14 Location E (H113) Background Noise Levels $LA_{90, 10 \text{ min}}$ dB – Night-time

11.5.1.6 Location G (H198)

11.5.1.6.1 Daytime Quiet Periods

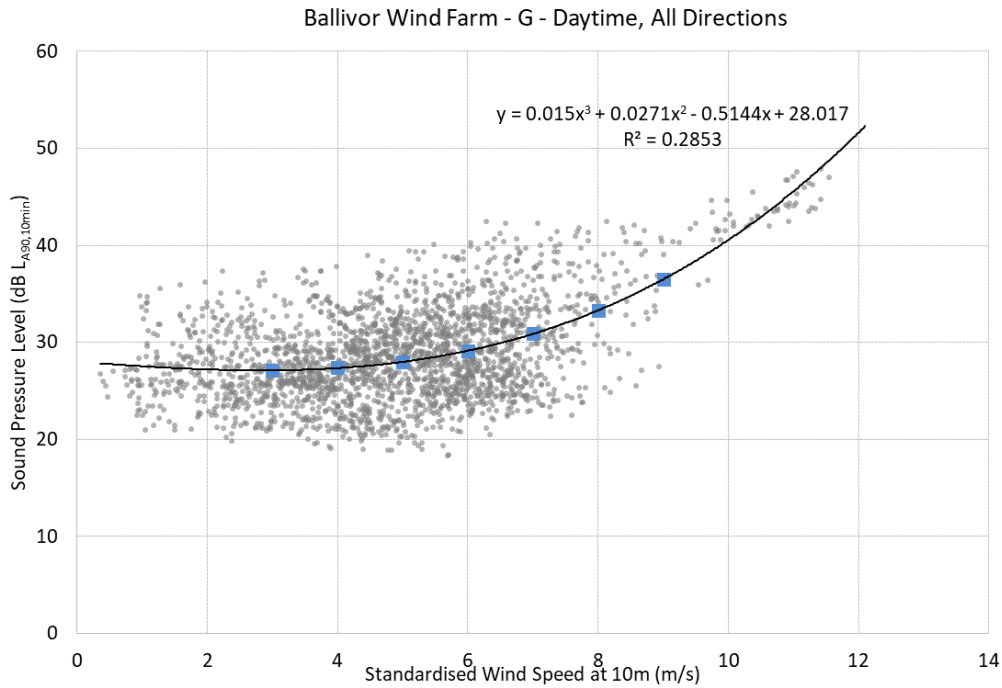


Figure 11-15 Location F (H198) Background Noise Levels LA90, 10 min dB –Daytime

11.5.1.6.2 Night-time Periods

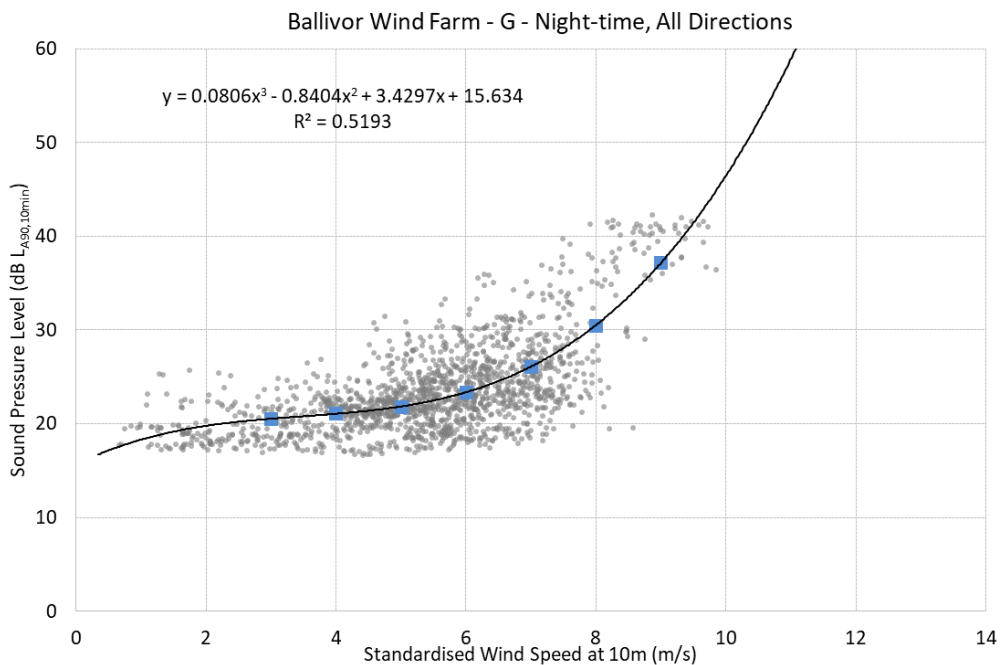


Figure 11-16 Location F (H198) Background Noise Levels LA90, 10 min dB – Night-time

11.5.1.7 Location H (H218)

11.5.1.7.1 Daytime Quiet Periods

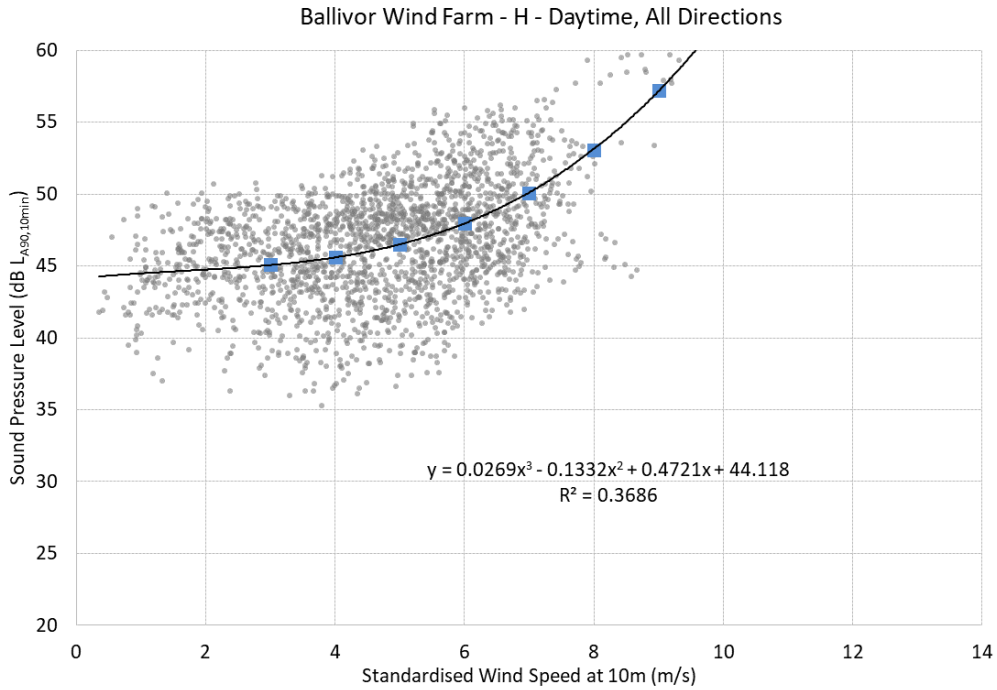


Figure 11-17 Location H (H218) Background Noise Levels $L_{A90, 10 \text{ min}}$ dB –Daytime

11.5.1.7.2 Night-time Periods

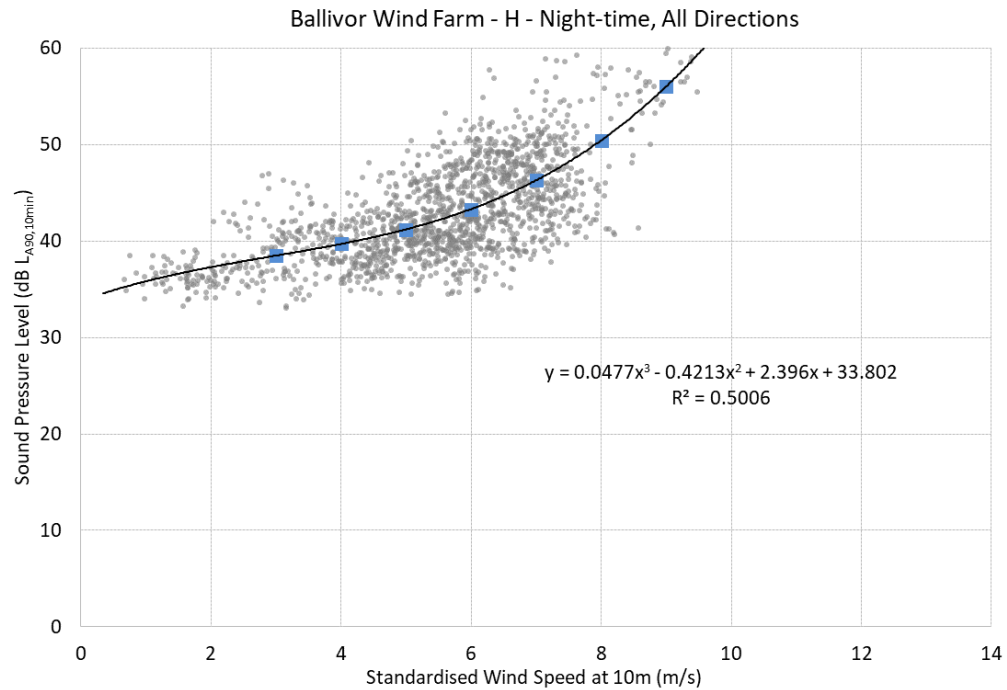


Figure 11-18 Location H (H218) Background Noise Levels $L_{A90, 10 \text{ min}}$ dB – Night-time

11.5.1.8 Summary

Table 11-12 presents the various derived $L_{A90,10min}$ noise levels for each of the monitoring locations for daytime quiet periods and night-time periods. These levels have been derived using analysis carried out on the data sets in line with guidance contained the IoA *GPG* and its SGN No. 2 *Data Collection*.

Table 11-12 Derived Noise Levels of $L_{A90,10min}$ for Various Wind Speeds

Location	Period	Derived $L_{A90,10min}$ Levels (dB) at various Standardised 10m Height Wind Speed (m/s)					
		4	5	6	7	8	9
A	Day	24.9	25.8	27.5	30.1	33.7	37.8
	Night	17.4	19.1	22.1	26.3	31.6	37.4
B	Day	29.6	30.6	32.5	35.4	39.3	43.6
	Night	23.1	24.4	27.1	31.2	36.6	42.7
C	Day	27.2	28.8	30.7	32.8	35.2	37.9
	Night	22.4	24.6	27.1	30.1	33.5	37.7
D	Day	23.7	24.3	26.3	29.8	34.3	39.1
	Night	17.0	18.5	21.4	25.8	31.6	38.1
E	Day	24.4	25.0	26.8	29.8	33.9	38.7
	Night	17.1	18.3	21.1	25.5	31.3	37.9
G	Day	27.4	28.0	29.1	30.9	33.3	36.5
	Night	21.1	21.8	23.4	26.1	30.5	37.2
H	Day	45.6	46.5	48.0	50.1	53.1	57.2
	Night	39.7	41.2	43.3	46.3	50.4	56.0
Minimum	Day	23.7	24.3	26.3	29.8	33.3	36.5
	Night	17.0	18.3	21.1	25.5	30.5	37.2

The background noise data is used to derive appropriate noise limits for each of the noise sensitive locations where measurements took place. At all remaining locations, a background noise envelope based on the lowest average levels across the various locations at each wind speed is used, considered separately for daytime and night-time.

11.5.2 Wind Turbine Noise Criteria

With respect to the relevant guidance documents outlined in Section 11.3.2.2.1 the following noise criteria curves have been identified for the Proposed Development. The criteria curves have been derived

following a detailed review of the background noise data conducted at the nearest noise sensitive locations.

It is proposed to adopt a lower daytime threshold of 40 dB $L_{A90,10\text{-min}}$ for low noise environments where the background noise is less than 30 dB(A). This follows a review of the prevailing background noise levels and is considered appropriate in light of the following:

- The EPA document ‘Guidance Note for Noise: Licence Applications, Surveys and Assessments in Relation to Scheduled Activities (NG4)’ proposes a daytime noise criterion of 45 dB(A) in ‘areas of low background noise’. The proposed lower threshold here is 5 dB more stringent than this level.
- It is reiterated that the 2006 Wind Energy Development Guidelines states that “*An appropriate balance must be achieved between power generation and noise impact.*” Based on a review of other national guidance in relation to acceptable noise levels in areas of low background noise it is considered that the criteria adopted as part of this assessment are robust.

Based on the guidance listed above, the proposed operational limits in $L_{A90,10\text{min}}$ for the Proposed Development are:

- 40 dB $L_{A90,10\text{min}}$ for quiet daytime environments of less than 30 dB $L_{A90,10\text{min}}$;
- 45 dB $L_{A90,10\text{min}}$ for daytime environments greater than 30 dB $L_{A90,10\text{min}}$ or a maximum increase of 5 dB above background noise (whichever is higher), and;
- 43 dB $L_{A90,10\text{min}}$ or a maximum increase of 5 dB above background noise (whichever is higher) for night time periods.

At NSLs corresponding to landowners involved in the Proposed Development the operational noise limits are 45 dB $L_{A90,10\text{min}}$ for daytime and night time periods, or a maximum increase of 5 dB above background noise (whichever is higher) for both daytime and night-time periods.

A worst-case envelope, based on the lowest average levels at the various wind speeds for both day and night-time, is also presented in Table 11-13. Therefore, the noise criteria curves for this assessment will be based on this baseline noise level envelope for all NSLs where background noise measurement was not undertaken.

Table 11-13 outlines the derived noise criteria curves based on the information contained within Table 11-12.

Table 11-13 Noise Criteria Curves

Location	Period	Derived $L_{A90,10\text{min}}$ Levels (dB) at various Standardised 10m Height Wind Speed (m/s)					
		4	5	6	7	8	9
A	Day	40	40	40	45	45	45
	Night	43	43	43	43	43	43
B	Day	40	45	45	45	45	48.6
	Night	43	43	43	43	43	47.7
C	Day	40	40	45	45	45	45

Location	Period	Derived $L_{A90, 10\text{ min}}$ Levels (dB) at various Standardised 10m Height Wind Speed (m/s)					
		4	5	6	7	8	9
	Night	43	43	43	43	43	43
D	Day	40	40	40	40	45	45
	Night	43	43	43	43	43	43.1
E	Day	40	40	40	40	45	45
	Night	43	43	43	43	43	43
G	Day	40	40	40	45	45	45
	Night	43	43	43	43	43	43
H	Day	50.7	51.5	52.7	54.7	57.5	61.4
	Night	44.7	46.1	48	50.6	54.2	58.9
Minimum	Day	40	40	40	40	45	45
	Night	43	43	43	43	43	43

11.6 Likely Significant Effects and Associated Mitigation Measures

11.6.1 Do-Nothing Scenario

If the Proposed Development were not to proceed, environmental monitoring and site management would continue, and the implementation of peatland rehabilitation plans across all bogs as required under IPC License would occur. Likewise, the PCAS scheme at Bracklin West would continue to be implemented.

If the Proposed Development were not to proceed, the existing noise environment will remain largely unchanged notwithstanding other possible wind turbine developments in the area. In areas where traffic noise is a significant source in the environment, increases in traffic volumes on the local road network would be expected to result in slight increases in overall ambient and background noise in the area over time. In respect of vibration, there would continue to be no source of significant vibration in the area.

11.6.2 Construction Phase Potential Impacts

A variety of items of plant will be in use for the purposes of site preparation, construction of turbines, roads, substation, and grid connection options. There will be vehicular movements to and from the site that will make use of existing roads. Due to the nature of these activities, there is potential for generation of significant levels of noise. These are discussed in the following Sections.

The predicted noise levels referred to in this section are indicative only and are intended to demonstrate that it will be possible for the contractor to comply with current best practice guidance. It should also be noted that the predicted “worst case” levels are expected to occur for only short periods of time at a very limited number of properties. Construction noise levels will be lower than these levels for most of the time at most properties in the vicinity of the Proposed Development.

11.6.2.1 Turbines, Hardstands, Met Mast, Substation, Grid Connection, Borrow Pits, Internal Roads and Road Widening

11.6.2.1.1 Noise

Due to the nature of construction activities, it is difficult to calculate the actual magnitude of noise emissions to the local environment. However, the standard best practice approach used to predict typical noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptor is by using guidance set out in BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014 *Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites – Noise*.

The methodology adopted for the assessment of construction noise is to analyse the various elements of the construction phase in isolation. For each element, the typical construction noise sources are assessed along with typical sound pressure levels and spectra from BS 5228 at various distances from these works.

The noise levels referred to in this section are indicative only and are intended to demonstrate that it will be possible for the contractor to comply with current best practice guidance. The predicted “worst case” levels are expected to occur for only short periods of time at a very limited number of properties. Construction noise levels will be lower than these levels for most of the time at most properties in the vicinity of the Proposed Development site.

Construction activities will be carried out during normal daytime working hours (i.e. weekdays 0700 – 1900hrs and Saturdays 0700 – 1400hrs). However, to ensure that optimal use is made of good weather period or at critical periods within the programme (i.e. concrete pours) or to accommodate delivery of

large turbine component along public routes it could be necessary on occasion to work outside of these hours. Any such out of hours working will be agreed in advance with the Local Authority.

Turbines and Hardstands and Meteorological Mast

Works for the turbines are at a significant distance from the closest noise sensitive receptors, with the nearest noise-sensitive location (NSL) to the northern group of turbines being H057 at a distance of approximately 815 m from T17 and in the southern group, the nearest NSL being H179 at a distance of approximately 827 m from T03.

Two permanent meteorological mast is proposed at the coordinates shown in **Table 11-14**.

Table 11-14 Met Mast Details

Description	Coordinates (ITM)	
	Easting	Northing
Met Mast 1	663677	752816
Met Mast 2	661518	756596

The nearest noise-sensitive location to any of the proposed masts is H057 at a distance of 429m from proposed Met Mast 1.

Several indicative sources that would be expected on a site of this nature have been identified and noise predictions of their potential impacts prepared to nearby houses. The assessment is representative of a worst-case; construction noise levels will be lower at properties located further from the works.

Table 11-15 details the noise levels associated with typical construction noise sources assessed in this instance along with typical sound pressure levels and spectra from BS 5228 – 1: 2009. Calculations have assumed an on-time of 66% for each item of plant i.e. 8 hours over a 12-hour assessment period.

Table 11-15 Typical Construction Noise Levels – Turbines and Hardstanding, Substation, Grid Connection and Met Mast

Item (BS 5228 Ref.)	Activity/Notes	Plant Noise level at 10m Distance (dB L _{Aeq,T}) ⁷	Predicted Noise Level (dB L _{Aeq,T}) at distance (m)	
			429 m	815 m
HGV Movement (C.2.30)	Removing soil and transporting fill and other materials	79	40	33
Tracked Excavator (C.4.64)	Removing soil and rubble in preparation for foundation	77	38	31
Excavator Mounted Rock Breaker (C9.12)	Excavation in rocky areas	85	46	39

⁷ All plant noise levels are derived from BS5228: Part 1

Item (BS 5228 Ref.)	Activity/Notes	Plant Noise level at 10m Distance (dB L _{Aeq,T}) ⁷	Predicted Noise Level (dB L _{Aeq,T}) at distance (m)	
			429 m	815 m
Piling Operations (C.12.14)	Standard pile driving	88	50	43
General Construction (Various)	All general activities plus deliveries of materials and plant	84	45	38
Concrete Mixer Truck and Concrete Pump (C.4.27)	Turbine Foundations	75	36	29
Dumper Truck (C.4.4)	Backfilling Turbine Foundations	76	37	30
Mobile Telescopic Crane (C.4.39)	Turbine Erection	77	38	31
Dewatering Pumps (D.7.70)	If required	80	41	34
JCB (D.8.13)	For services, drainage and landscaping	82	43	36
Vibrating Rollers (D.8.29)	Road surfacing	77	38	31
Cumulative Predicted Construction Noise Level		–	53	47

It is concluded that there will be no significant noise impact associated with the construction of the turbines, hardstanding and met mast therefore no specific mitigation measures are required.

Substation and Grid Connection

The substation is to be located at coordinates E663029 N755322. The nearest NSL to the proposed substation site is H238 at approximately 570m to the northwest. As a worst-case example assuming the same construction activities as outlined in Section 11.6.2.1, it is predicted that the likely worst-case potential noise levels from construction activities associated with the substation will be in the order of 50 dB L_{Aeq,T} at Location H238. This level of noise is within the construction noise criterion outlined in Table 11-15.

A connection between the proposed substation and the national electricity grid will be necessary to export the electricity generated by the Proposed Development. In this instance, the grid connection works are limited to the construction of a loop-in arrangement to the existing overhead line which passes close to the substation. The nearest NSL to the extent of these works is H238 at a distance of approximately 500m from the grid connection point. Similarly, assuming that same construction activities as outlined in Section 11.6.2.1, it is predicted that the likely potential noise levels from construction activities associated with the substation will be in the order of 54 dB L_{Aeq,T} at Location H0238. This level of noise is within the construction noise criterion outlined in Table 11-15.

As detailed in the Construction Environment Management Plan (Appendix 4-3), the below measures will be implemented during the construction phase. Therefore it is concluded that there will be no significant noise impact associated with the construction of the substation and grid connection.

Proposed measures to control noise include:

- Keep local residents informed of the proposed working schedule, where appropriate, including the times and duration of any abnormally noisy activity that may cause concern.
- Ensure that any extraordinary site work continuing throughout 24 hours of a day occurring outside of the core working hours (for example, crane operations lifting components onto the tower) will be programmed, when appropriate, so that haulage vehicles would not arrive at or leave the site between 19:00 and 07:00, with the exception of abnormal loads that would be scheduled to avoid anticipated periods of high traffic flows.
- Select inherently quiet plant where appropriate – all major compressors would be ‘sound reduced’ models fitted with properly lined and sealed acoustic covers, which would be kept closed whenever the machines are in use.
- All ancillary pneumatic percussive tools will be fitted with mufflers or silencers of the type recommended by the manufacturers.
- Instruct that machines will be shut down between work periods (or when not in use) or throttled down to a minimum.
- Vehicles will be loaded carefully to ensure minimal drop heights so as to minimise noise during this operation.
- Diesel generators will be enclosed in sound proofed containers to minimise the potential for noise impacts;
- Plant and machinery with low inherent potential for generation of noise and/or vibration will be selected. All construction plant and equipment to be used on-site will be modern equipment and will comply with the European Communities (Construction Plant and Equipment) (Permissible Noise Levels) Regulations;
- Regular maintenance of plant will be carried out in order to minimise noise emissions. Particular attention will be paid to the lubrication of bearings and the integrity of silencers;
- All vehicles and mechanical plant will be fitted with effective exhaust silencers and maintained in good working order for the duration of the works;
- Compressors will be of the “sound reduced” models fitted with properly lined and sealed acoustic covers which will be kept closed whenever the machines are in use and all ancillary pneumatic tools shall be fitted with suitable silencers;
- Machines, which are used intermittently, will be shut down during those periods when they are not in use;
- Training will be provided by the ECoW to drivers to ensure smooth machinery operation/driving, and to minimise unnecessary noise generation.

Construction of Internal Roads

It is proposed to construct new internal roads as part of the development. Review of the road layout has identified that there are a number of NSLs at various distances: H203 at a distance of approximately 80m from the site entrance on the R156, H222 at approximately 205m near the site entrance into Bracklyn Bog and H097 at approximately 245m from the proposed internal road in Lisclogher Bog. All other locations are at greater distances with the majority at significantly greater distances. The full description of the new roads is given in Chapter 4 of the ELAR.

Table 11-16 details the typical construction noise levels associated with the proposed works for this element of the construction. Calculations have assumed an on-time of 66% for each item of plant.

Table 11-16 Typical Construction Noise Emission Levels – Internal Roads

Item (BS 5228 Ref.)	Plant Noise Level at 10m Distance (dB $L_{Aeq,12hr}$) ⁸	Highest Predicted Noise Level at Stated Distance from Edge of Works (dB $L_{Aeq,12hr}$)		
		83	205	245
HGV Movement (C.2.30)	79	52	42	41
Tracked Excavator (C.4.64)	77	50	40	39
Dumper Truck (C.4.4)	76	49	39	38
Vibrating Rollers (D.8.29)	77	50	40	39
Total Construction Noise (cumulative for all activities)		60	51	49

This level of noise is within the construction noise criterion outlined in **Table 11-1**, therefore it is concluded that there will be no significant noise impact associated with the construction of the internal roads, therefore no specific mitigation measures are required.

Road Widening Works

As detailed in Chapter 4, the proposed turbine route will be via the M3, exiting at Junction 6 onto the R125 before turning northwest onto the R154 Trim Road. The delivery route enters Trim town before turning south onto the R161 for approximately 7.5km where it meets the R156. The delivery route continues west for approximately 11.1km along the R156 through Ballivor Village before reaching the proposed site entrances off the R156. The proposed route is shown on **Figure 4-25**.

Accommodating works will be required in two locations:

- Junction between the R156 and the R161 approximately 6.5km southwest of Trim: The junction accommodation works will comprise the road-widening within third-party land in order to facilitate turning of delivery vehicles carrying turbine components and other abnormal loads, from the R161 onto the R156 as well as the provision of off-road parking and storage facilities. The proposed widening will measure 3,751m² and the area of land take for the proposed parking and storage facilities measure 5,375 m².
- East of Ballivor Village on the R156: Accommodating works will be required on the R156 approximately 3.6km east of Ballivor Village. Here, road-widening within third-party land will be required in order to facilitate turning west of delivery vehicles carrying turbine components and other abnormal loads, toward Ballivor Village on the R156. The land take will also provide off-road parking and storage facilities. The proposed accommodation works area on the road will measure 1,809m² and the area of land take for the proposed parking and storage facilities will measure 6,770m².

⁸ All plant noise levels are derived from BS 5228: Part 1

The closest NSL to the accommodating works at the junction between the R156 and R161 is approximately 25m from the proposed works area. Within 50m-100m there are two more NSLs. The closest NSL to the accommodating works area on the R156 east of Ballivor Village is approximately 50m from the proposed works area. There is one more NSL within 100m from the proposed works area. Typical construction plant items and their associated noise levels at various distances are presented in Table 11-17.

Table 11-17 Typical Construction Noise Levels for the Junction Accommodation

Item (BS 5228 Ref.)	Plant Noise Level at 10m Distance (dB LAeq,12hr)	Highest Predicted Noise Level at Stated Distance from Edge of Works (dB LAeq,12hr)			
		25m	50m	100m	150m
HGV Movement (C.2.30)	79	67	60	53	49
Tracked Excavator (C.4.64)	75	65	58	51	47
Vibrating Rollers (D.8.29)	77	65	58	51	47
Total Construction Noise		71	64	57	53

At noise-sensitive locations at 25 m distance from construction works, predicted noise levels from construction activities are in excess of the significance threshold of 65dB LAeq,1hr, However, the impact will be temporary. At locations at 50 distance and beyond, predicted noise levels from construction activities are 64 dB LAeq,12hr or less, below the significance threshold of 65dB LAeq,12hr.

11.6.2.2 Vibration

As would be expected, vibration associated with construction activities is typically greater in magnitude in close proximity to the plant or equipment generating the vibration. In this instance there is no requirement for rock breaking; considering the low levels of vibration close to construction sources and the dissipation of vibration over distance, there will be no vibration impact on sensitive locations in the area surrounding the development and related works.

11.6.2.2.1 Description of Effects

With respect to the EPA criteria for description of effects, the potential worst-case associated effects at the nearest noise sensitive locations associated with the construction of Turbines, Hardstands, Substation, Grid Connection, Internal Roads, and Road Widening of the proposed development are described below.

Quality	Significance	Duration
Negative	Slight	Short-term

It is not likely that there will be any significant cumulative impacts at NSL's should these various elements of the construction phase (i.e. Turbines, Hardstands, Met Mast, Substation, Grid Connection, Internal Roads and Road Widening) be undertaken simultaneously.

11.6.2.3 Borrow Pits

Three borrow pits is proposed at the following coordinates:

Table 11-18 Borrow Pit Coordinates

Borrow Pit Name	Easting	Northing
Craddanstown (BP2)	661694	755956
Carranstown (BP1a and BP1b)	664201	754953

No rock breakers or blasters are proposed for extracting material from these borrow pits. However, it is likely that processing and crushing of cobbles and boulders will be required at all borrow pits to achieve the grading requirements for use in construction. Sound power levels for the plant items in each borrow pit plant is presented in Table 11-19.

Table 11-19 Typical Plant Noise Levels

Item	BS 5228 Ref:	dB L _w Levels per Octave Band (Hz)								dB(A)
		63	125	250	500	1k	2k	4k	8k	
Tracked Excavator (each of 6 no)	C.2.21	75	76	72	68	65	63	57	49	71
HGV Movement	C.2.30	85	74	78	73	73	74	67	63	79
Dump Truck	C.4.2	85	80	77	72	74	70	65	58	78
Tracked Semi-Mobile Crusher	C.9.15	98	98	97	94	91	88	82	72	96
Semi-mobile screen/stockpiler	C.10.15	93	86	79	78	75	71	69	62	81

A construction noise model has been prepared to consider the expected noise emissions from the proposed construction works for the two scenarios outlined above. A percentage on-time of 66% has been assumed for the noise calculations. The predicted levels are detailed in Table 11-20, at the 10 no. NSLs with the highest predicted noise levels due to the borrow pit activity.

Table 11-20 Noise Levels at NSLs due to borrow pit activity

NSL Ref	Predicted Noise Level (dB L _{eq,1hr})
H057	62
H049	61

H044	61
H037	59
H036	58
H047	58
H056	58
H031	58
H033	57
H035	57

Review of the data contained in Table 11-19 confirms the following:

- a) Predicted construction noise levels for borrow pits are well within the best practice construction noise criteria outlined in Table 11-6.
- b) The closest borrow pit to the NSLs in Table 11-20 is the offsite borrow pit.

It is assumed that construction works at the borrow pits will only occur during daytime periods only (07:00 to 19:00hrs).

11.6.2.3.1 *Description of Effects*

With respect to the EPA criteria for description of effects, the potential worst-case associated effects at the nearest noise sensitive locations associated with the proposed borrow pit construction are described below.

<i>Quality</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Negative	Slight	Short-term

11.6.2.4 **Construction Traffic**

This section has been prepared in order to review potential noise impacts associated with construction traffic on the local road network. The information presented in Chapter 14 has been used to inform the assessment here. The following situations are commented upon here:

- > Stage 1a – Site Preparation & Ground Works, including substation
- > Stage 1b – Site Preparation – Concrete Pouring
- > Stage 2a – Turbine Construction Stage – Extended Artic Deliveries
- > Stage 2b – Turbine Construction Stage – Other Conventional Deliveries

Based on information in Chapter 14, the daily traffic flows in terms of vehicles and %HGV are presented in Table 11-21.

Table 11-21 Projected Construction Traffic Volumes for Noise Assessment

Route	Stage	Flows (vehicles)	%HGV
1 M3 south of Dunshaughlin	Existing	27,654	12
	1a	28,136	14
	1b	27,924	13
	2a	27,744	12
	2b	27,746	12
2 R125	Existing	7,246	16
	1a	7,728	21
	1b	7,516	18
	2a	7,336	16
	2b	7,338	16
3 R154 (east of Trim)	Existing	12,097	20
	1a	12,024	19
	1b	11,811	17
	2a	11,631	16
	2b	11,633	16
4 R161 (between Trim and Doolistown)	Existing	720	4
	1a	1,202	48
	1b	1,020	25
	2a	810	5
	2b	812	5
	Existing	4,462	9

Route	Stage	Flows (vehicles)	%HGV
5 R156 (between Doolistown and Ballivor)	1a	4,944	17
	1b	4,732	12
	2a	4,552	9
	2b	4,554	9
6 M3 north of Dunshaughlin	Existing	4,462	9
	1a	27,154	14
	1b	26,941	13
7 M4 east of Kinnegad	Existing	31,672	16
	1a	32,155	18
	1b	31,942	17
8 M4 Mullingar	Existing	24,578	12
	1a	25,060	13
	1b	24,848	12
9 N52	Existing	6,792	11
	1a	7,275	17
	1b	7,062	14

Based on the assumptions presented above changes in noise level based on the existing flows have been estimated and is presented in Table 11-22.

Table 11-22 Estimated Changes in Traffic Noise Levels

Route	Stage	Change in Traffic Noise Level dB(A)	Estimated Number of Days
1 M3 south of Dunshaughlin	1a	+0.3	26
	1b	+0.1	484
	2a	0.0	47

Route	Stage	Change in Traffic Noise Level dB(A)	Estimated Number of Days
	2b	0.0	26
2 R125	1a	+1.1	26
	1b	+0.6	484
	2a	+0.1	47
	2b	+0.1	26
3 R154 (east of Trim)	1a	+0.7	26
	1b	+0.3	484
	2a	0.0	47
	2b	0.0	26
4 R161 (between Trim and Doolistown)	1a	+8.4	26
	1b	+6.1	484
	2a	+0.8	47
	2b	+1.0	26
5 R156 (between Doolistown and Ballivor)	1a	+2.2	26
	1b	+1.1	484
	2a	+0.1	47
	2b	+0.2	26
6 M3 north of Dunshaughlin	1a	+0.4	484
	1b	+0.2	26
7 M4 east of Kinnegad	1a	+0.3	484
	1b	+0.1	26
8 M4 Mullingar	1a	+0.4	484

Route	Stage	Change in Traffic Noise Level dB(A)	Estimated Number of Days
	1b	+0.2	26
9 N52	1a	+1.3	484
	1b	+0.6	26

In the majority of cases, the increase in noise levels due to additional construction traffic on each of the routes is predicted to be less than 2 dB or less for all Stages along all routes. With respect to the assessment criteria outlined in Section 11.3.2.1.2 the magnitude of this impact is not significant.

At the R161 between Trim and Doolistown, during stages 1a and 1b, increases in traffic noise levels greater than 5dB are predicted. With respect to the assessment criteria outlined in Section 11.3.2.1.2 the magnitude of this impact is significant. However, the overall predicted noise level at 10m from the road edge for these stages are 65 dB $L_{Aeq, 12hr}$ for Stage 1a and 63 dB for Stage 1b. With reference to Table 11-1 for daytime periods for category A, these values remain within the 65 dB $L_{Aeq, 12hr}$ criterion for construction noise.

Description of Effects

With respect to the EPA criteria for description of effects, the potential effects associated with the additional traffic generated during the construction phase of the proposed development are for the majority of locations:

<i>Quality</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Negative	Imperceptible to Not Significant	Short-term

At the R161 between Trim and Doolistown, during construction stages 1a and 1b, the change in noise level is significant in the short term and intermittent; however, the predicted noise level due to traffic along this road remains within the construction noise of 65dB $L_{Aeq, 12hr}$. The pre-mitigation short term effects are:

<i>Quality</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Negative	Significant	Short-term

Construction noise mitigation measures are detailed in section 11.6.4.1.

11.6.3 Operational Phase Potential Impacts

11.6.3.1 Turbine Noise Assessment

The noise levels for the Proposed Development site have been calculated for a set of 272 no. noise sensitive receivers identified within 3.5 km of the proposed turbines.

The IOA GPG states that all existing and permitted wind energy developments which contribute to the noise level at NSLs must be assessed cumulatively with the proposed development. Therefore this assessment includes Bracklyn wind farm which has been granted planning permission by An Bord Pleanála (Ref 311565-21).

An omni-directional assessment has been completed assuming all noise locations are downwind of all turbines at the same time. The predicted levels have been compared against the adopted noise criteria curves as detailed in Table 11-23 presents the details of the exercise at four locations where potential exceedances are predicted: H061, H062, H083, H097 and H239. Results for the full set of houses are presented in Appendix 11-4.

Table 11-23 Review of Cumulative Predicted Turbine Noise Levels against Relevant Criteria

House ID	Description	Predicted Noise Level dB L _{A90} at Standardised Wind Speed at 10m A.G.L.					
		4	5	6	7	8	≥9
H061	Dwelling	32.4	36.5	40.1	40.9	40.9	40.8
	Daytime Limits	40	40	40	40	45	45
	Potential Daytime Exceedance	–	–	0.1	0.9	–	–
	Night Limits	43	43	43	43	43	43
	Potential Night time Exceedance	–	–	–	–	–	–
H062	Dwelling	32.4	36.5	40.1	40.9	40.9	40.8
	Daytime Limits	40	40	40	40	45	45
	Potential Daytime Exceedance	–	–	0.1	0.9	–	–
	Night Limits	43	43	43	43	43	43
	Potential Night time Exceedance	–	–	–	–	–	–
H083	Dwelling	32.8	37.5	40.6	41	41	41
	Daytime Limits	40	40	40	40	45	45
	Potential Daytime Exceedance	–	–	0.6	1.0	–	–
	Night Limits	43	43	43	43	43	43

House ID	Description	Predicted Noise Level dB LA90 at Standardised Wind Speed at 10m A.G.L.					
		4	5	6	7	8	≥9
	Potential Night time Exceedance	–	–	–	–	–	–
H097	Dwelling	32.3	37.2	40.2	40.6	40.6	40.5
	Daytime Limits	40	40	40	40	45	45
	Potential Daytime Exceedance	–	–	0.2	0.6	–	–
	Night Limits	43	43	43	43	43	43
	Potential Night time Exceedance	–	–	–	–	–	–
H239	Dwelling	32.4	36.5	40	40.9	40.8	40.7
	Daytime Limits	40	40	40	40	45	45
	Potential Daytime Exceedance	–	–	–	0.9	–	–
	Night Limits	43	43	43	43	43	43
	Potential Night time Exceedance	–	–	–	–	–	–

Contours of omni-directional noise levels for standard mode operation rated power wind speed (i.e. highest noise emission) have been presented in Appendix 11-5. The cumulative predicted noise levels at various wind speeds have been compared against the noise criteria curves outlined in Table 11-13. The predicted omni-directional noise levels for all turbines operating in standard mode has identified some exceedances during daytime periods at certain noise sensitive locations at 6 and 7 m/s.

11.6.3.1.1 Locations H060, H061, H062 and H239

It is noted that NSLs H061, H062, and H239 are located to the west of Bracklyn wind farm. As the distances to Bracklyn turbines are less than the distances to Ballivor turbines, the predicted noise contribution from Bracklyn wind farm are correspondingly greater than that of Ballivor. This is demonstrated in Table 11-24:

Table 11-24 Comparison of noise contributions at Bracklyn and Ballivor wind farms

Wind Farm / Turbine	Predicted noise Level, dB LA90 at standardised 7 m/s wind speed		
	H061	H062	H239
Bracklyn	40.4	40.4	40.4
Ballivor	30.8	30.8	30.1

Wind Farm / Turbine	Predicted noise Level, dB L _{A90} at standardised 7 m/s wind speed		
	H061	H062	H239
Total	40.9	40.9	40.8

As can be seen in Table 11-24, the noise contributions of the proposed Ballivor wind farm to the total wind turbine noise levels at these locations are of the order of 10dB less than those due to Bracklyn wind farm, therefore in accordance with Section 5 of the IOA GPG, it is not necessary to consider noise mitigation measures in respect of these NSLs.

Moreover, the noise criteria presented here are based on lowest noise levels among the noise survey locations at Ballivor wind farm rather than at the specific locations H061, H062 or H239 which are much closer to Bracklyn wind farm than to the proposed Ballivor wind farm.

The remainder of this section is an assessment of the predicted cumulative noise levels at these specific locations, using the background noise levels and resulting noise criteria curves from the Bracklyn EIAR.

In the Bracklyn EIAR⁹, H060 was used as a background noise measurement location, labelled as H03 in Chapter 11 of the Bracklyn EIAR. For reference:

- H061 in this EIAR is labelled H02 in the Bracklyn EIAR;
- H062 in this EIAR is labelled H01 in the Bracklyn EIAR, and
- H239 in this EIAR is labelled H03 in the Bracklyn EIAR.

Following the same methodology as this EIAR, the background noise levels measured at H239 (labelled H03 in the Bracklyn EIAR) lead to noise criteria as shown in Table 11-25. In accordance with the IOA GPG guidance, the background noise levels measured at H003 are also used for the assessment of wind turbine noise at nearby H01 and H02.

Table 11-25 Noise criteria at H239/H003 from the Bracklyn EIAR Table 11.11

House ID	Description	Predicted Noise Level dB L _{A90} at Standardised Wind Speed at 10m A.G.L.					
		4	5	6	7	8	≥9
H060 /H003	Dwelling	40	40	45	45	45	48.4

Thus, using background noise levels measured at H060 and applied also to H061 and H062, the predicted cumulative noise levels are within noise criteria as:

Table 11-26 Review of Cumulative Predicted Turbine Noise Levels against criteria in Bracklyn EIAR

⁹ The noise assessment and preparation of the Bracklyn EIAR chapter was also carried out by AWN Consulting.

House ID	Description	Predicted Noise Level dB LA90 at Standardised Wind Speed at 10m A.G.L.					
		4	5	6	7	8	≥9
H061	Dwelling	32.4	36.5	40.1	40.9	40.9	40.8
	Daytime Limits	40	40	45	45	45	48.4
	Potential Daytime Exceedance	–	–	–	–	–	–
	Night Limits	43	43	43	43	43	43
	Potential Night time Exceedance	–	–	–	–	–	–
H062	Dwelling	32.4	36.5	40.1	40.9	40.9	40.8
	Daytime Limits	40	40	45	45	45	48.4
	Potential Daytime Exceedance	–	–	–	–	–	–
	Night Limits	43	43	43	43	43	43
	Potential Night time Exceedance	–	–	–	–	–	–
H239	Dwelling	32.4	36.5	40	40.9	40.8	40.7
	Daytime Limits	40	40	45	45	45	48.4
	Potential Daytime Exceedance	–	–	–	–	–	–
	Night Limits	43	43	43	43	43	43
	Potential Night time Exceedance	–	–	–	–	–	–

11.6.3.1.2 Locations H083 and H097

This section addresses the remaining two locations identified in Table 11-23 where exceedances were found, H083 and H097, which are between the proposed wind farm and Bracklyn wind farm, by considering the effect of wind direction.

As presented in Section 11.3.7.3 above, the effect of the directionality of noise emissions from wind turbines means that certain wind directions, noise levels are less than the values presented Table 11-23, as a given noise-sensitive location is not downwind of all turbines at the same time. This is important in the cases of H083 and H097.

Directional noise prediction models have been developed to identify the number and magnitude of exceedances to the noise criteria at the various noise sensitive locations with the proposed turbines operating in standard mode. The cumulative noise level for H083 and H097 are presented Table 11-27.

Table 11-27 Predicted directional noise levels at H083 and H097

House ID	Description	Predicted Noise Level dB LA90 at Standardised Wind Speed at 10m A.G.L.					
		4	5	6	7	8	≥9
H083	North	30.5	35.3	38.3	38.6	38.6	38.5
	Northeast	30.3	35.1	38.1	38.4	38.4	38.3
	East	30.5	35.3	38.3	38.6	38.6	38.5
	Southeast	31.2	36.0	39.0	39.3	39.3	39.2
	South	31.3	36.1	39.1	39.4	39.4	39.3
	Southwest	31.4	36.2	39.2	39.5	39.5	39.4
	West	31.4	36.2	39.2	39.5	39.5	39.4
	Northwest	30.9	35.7	38.7	39.0	39.0	38.9
	Daytime Limits	40	40	40	40	45	45
	Potential Daytime Exceedance	None	None	None	None	None	None
H097	North	31.1	35.9	38.8	39.1	39.1	39.1
	Northeast	30.7	35.5	38.4	38.7	38.7	38.7
	East	30.3	35.1	38.0	38.3	38.3	38.3
	Southeast	30.2	35	37.9	38.2	38.2	38.2
	South	29.7	34.5	37.4	37.7	37.7	37.7
	Southwest	30.1	34.9	37.8	38.1	38.1	38.1
	West	30.1	34.9	37.8	38.1	38.1	38.1
	Northwest	30.9	35.7	38.6	38.9	38.9	38.9
	Daytime Limits	40	40	40	40	45	45
	Potential Daytime Exceedance	None	None	None	None	None	None

Review of the tables above shows that once the effect of wind direction is taken into account, the predicted noise levels are within the criteria and therefore no mitigation measures are necessary.

11.6.3.1.3 Description of Effects

It is not considered that a significant effect is associated with the operation of this development, since the predicted residual noise levels associated with the Proposed Development will be within the relevant best practice noise criteria curves for wind farms. As previously discussed, the following guidance is relevant

for this assessment, “Wind Energy Development Guidelines” published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2006 and in the Department of Trade & Industry (UK) Energy Technology Support Unit (ETSU) publication “The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms” (1996).

While noise levels at low wind speeds will increase due to the development, the predicted levels will remain low, albeit a new source of noise will be introduced into the soundscape.

With respect to the EPA criteria for description of effects, the potential worst-case cumulative effects at the nearest noise sensitive locations associated with the operation of the turbines at both Ballivor and Bracklyn wind farms are described below.

<i>Quality</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Negative	Moderate	Long-term

11.6.3.2 Substation

As previously stated, the proposed substation is located at a distance of approximately 570m from H238, at the coordinates shown in Table 11-31 below.

Table 11-28 Proposed Substation Location

Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM)	
Easting	Northing
590918	744776

The substation will be operational 24/7 and the noise impact at the nearest NSL has been assessed to identify the potential greatest impact associated with the operation of the Substation at the nearest NSL.

The following extract from the EirGrid Evidence Based Environmental Studies Study 8: Noise – Literature review and evidence-based field study on the noise effects of high voltage transmission development (May 2016) states the following in relation to noise impacts associated with 110kVA substation installations:

“The survey on the 110kV substation at Dunfirth indicated that measured noise levels (L_{Aeq}) were less than 40dB(A) at 5m from each of the boundaries of the substation. This is below the WHO night-time free-field threshold limit of 42dB for preventing effects on sleep and well below the WHO daytime threshold limits for serious and moderate annoyance in outdoor living areas (i.e. 55dB and 50dB respectively). Spectral analysis of the data recorded at this site demonstrated that there were no distinct tonal elements to the recorded noise level. To avoid any noise impacts from 110kV substations at sensitive receptors, it is recommended that a minimum distance of 5m is maintained between 110kV substations and the land boundary of any noise sensitive property.”

The substation installation will have comparable noise emissions to the 110kV unit discussed above and considering the distance between the substation and the nearest noise sensitive location (i.e. 570m from location H238) the noise from the operation of the proposed substation is not significant and any noise emissions from the substation will be inaudible at the nearest NSL.

It is therefore concluded that noise emissions from the operation of the substation will be negligible, the noise from the substation will be inaudible at the nearest NSL and will have no impact on the operation noise emissions from the Proposed Development.

<i>Quality</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Neutral	Imperceptible	Long-term

11.6.4 Construction Phase Mitigation Measures

Regarding construction activities, reference will be made to BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014 *Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites – Noise*, which offers detailed guidance on the control of noise & vibration from demolition and construction activities. The following measures will be adopted during construction:

- managing the hours according to the CEMP [Appendix 4-3] during which site activities likely to create high levels of noise or vibration are permitted;
- establishing channels of communication between the contractor/developer, Local Authority and residents;
- appointing a site representative responsible for matters relating to noise and vibration;
- monitoring typical levels of noise and vibration during critical periods and at sensitive locations;
- keeping site access roads even to mitigate the potential for vibration from lorries.

Furthermore, a variety of practicable noise control measures will be employed. These include:

- selection of plant with low inherent potential for generation of noise and/ or vibration;
- placing of noisy / vibratory plant as far away from sensitive properties as permitted by site constraints, and;
- regular maintenance and servicing of plant items.

11.6.4.1 Construction Phase Mitigation Measures – Noise

The contract documents will clearly specify that the Contractor undertaking the construction of the works will be obliged to take specific noise abatement measures and comply with the recommendations of British Standard BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014 *Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites – Noise*. The following list of measures will be implemented on site, to ensure compliance with the relevant construction noise criteria:

- No plant used on site will be permitted to cause an on-going public nuisance due to noise.
- The best means practicable, including proper maintenance of plant, will be employed to minimise the noise produced by on site operations.
- All vehicles and mechanical plant will be fitted with effective exhaust silencers and maintained in good working order for the duration of the contract.
- Compressors will be attenuated models fitted with properly lined and sealed acoustic covers which will be kept closed whenever the machines are in use and all ancillary pneumatic tools shall be fitted with suitable silencers.
- Machinery that is used intermittently will be shut down during periods when not in use.

- Any plant, such as generators or pumps, which is required to operate close to NSL's outside of general construction hours will be surrounded by an acoustic enclosure or portable screen.
- During the course of the construction programme, supervision of the works will include ensuring compliance with the limits detailed in Section 11.3.2 using methods outlined in British Standard BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014 *Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites – Noise*.
- The hours of construction activity will be limited to avoid unsociable hours where possible. Construction operations shall generally be restricted to between 7:00hrs and 19:00hrs Monday to Saturday. However, to ensure that optimal use is made of good weather periods or at critical periods within the programme (i.e. concrete pours, rotor/tower deliveries) it will be necessary on occasion to work outside of these hours.

11.6.4.2 Construction Phase Mitigation Measures – Vibration

While it was concluded in above that there will be no significant vibration impacts associated with the construction of the Proposed Development and that no specific mitigation measures were required, it is recommended that vibration from construction activities will be limited to the values set out in Section 11.4.1.3.

It should be noted that these limits are not absolute but provide guidance as to magnitudes of vibration that are very unlikely to cause cosmetic damage. Magnitudes of vibration slightly greater than those in the table are normally unlikely to cause cosmetic damage, but construction work creating such magnitudes should proceed with caution. Where there is existing damage, these limits may need to be reduced by up to 50%.

Considering the distances between locations where works with the potential to generate significant vibration will take place and the nearest NSL's, no significant impact will be experienced. Therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

Rock blasting is not proposed for the construction phase of the Proposed Development.

11.6.5 Operational Phase Mitigation Measures

An assessment of the operational noise levels has been undertaken in accordance with best practice guidelines and procedures as outlined in Section 0 of this Chapter. The findings of the assessment, presented in Section 0 confirms that the predicted operational noise levels will be within the relevant best practice noise criteria curves for wind farms at all locations.

In the unlikely event that an issue with low frequency noise is associated with the Proposed Development, an appropriate detailed investigation will be undertaken. Due consideration will be given to guidance on conducting such an investigation which is outlined in Appendix VI of the EPA document entitled *Guidance Note for Noise: Licence Applications, Surveys and Assessments in Relation to Scheduled Activities* (NG4) (EPA, 2016). This guidance is based on the threshold values outlined in the Salford University document *Procedure for the assessment of low frequency noise complaints, Revision 1, December 2011*. If an exceedance of the threshold values is confirmed, measures to mitigate LFN at noise-sensitive locations will be implemented through operational controls for the relevant turbine type, which may include turbine curtailment and/or stopping turbines under specific operational conditions.

Similarly, in the event that a confirmed complaint is received which indicates potential amplitude modulation (AM) associated with turbine operation, the operator will employ an independent acoustic consultant to assess the level of AM in accordance with the methods outlined in the Institute of Acoustics (IoA) Noise working Group (Wind Turbine Noise) Amplitude Modulation Working Group (AMWG)

namely, *A Method for Rating Amplitude Modulation in Wind Turbine Noise* (August 2016) or subsequent revisions.

The measurement method outlined in the IoA AMWG document, known as the ‘*Reference Method*’, will provide a robust and reliable indicator of AM and yield important information on the frequency and duration of occurrence, which can be used to evaluate different operational conditions including mitigation.

These mitigation measures, if required, will consist of the implementation of operational controls for the relevant turbine type, which will include turbine curtailment and/or stopping turbines under specific operational conditions.

11.6.5.1 Monitoring

Commissioning noise surveys will be undertaken to ensure compliance with any noise conditions applied to the development. In the unlikely instance that an exceedance of these noise criteria is identified, then the assessment guidance outlined in the IoA GPG and *Supplementary Guidance Note 5: Post Completion Measurements (July 2014)* will be followed and relevant corrective actions will be taken.

For example, implementation of noise operational modes resulting in curtailment of turbine operation can be implemented for specific turbines in specific wind conditions to ensure predicted noise levels are within the relevant noise criterion curves/planning conditions. Such curtailment can be applied using the wind farm SCADA system without undue effect on the wind turbine operation. Following implementation of these measures, noise surveys will be repeated to confirm compliance with the noise criteria.

11.6.6 Decommissioning Phase

In relation to the decommissioning phase, similar overall noise levels as those calculated for the construction phase would be expected, as similar tools and equipment will be used. The noise and vibration impacts associated with any decommissioning of the Proposed Development are considered to be comparable to those outlined in relation to the construction of the Proposed Development (as per Section 11.6.2). There is no item of plant that would be expected to give rise to noise levels that would be considered out of the ordinary or in exceedance of the levels outlined in Section 11.5.7.

Considering that in all aspects of the construction and decommissioning the predicted noise levels are expected to be below the appropriate Category A value (i.e. 65dB $L_{Aeq,T}$) at current noise sensitive locations for the decommissioning phase.

11.6.6.1 Decommissioning Phase Mitigation

The mitigation measures that will be considered in relation to any decommissioning of the site are the same as those proposed for the construction phase of the development, i.e. as per Section 11.6.2.

11.7 Description of Residual Effects

11.7.1 Do-Nothing Scenario

If the Proposed Development were not to proceed, environmental monitoring and site management would continue, and the implementation of peatland rehabilitation plans across all bogs as required under IPC License would occur. Likewise, the PCAS scheme at Bracklin West would continue to be implemented.

If the Proposed Development were not to proceed, the existing noise environment will remain largely unchanged considering the permitted wind turbine developments in the area. In areas where traffic noise is a significant source in the noise environment, increases in traffic volumes on the local road network would be expected to result in slight increases in overall ambient and background noise in the area over time.

11.7.2 Construction Phase

During the construction phase of the project there will be some effect on nearby noise sensitive properties due to noise emissions from site traffic and other construction activities. However, given the distances between the main construction works and nearby noise sensitive properties, and the fact that the various element construction phase of the development are temporary in nature, it is likely that the combination of the various noise sources will not be excessively intrusive at any single noise-sensitive location. Furthermore, the application of binding noise limits and hours of operation, along with implementation of appropriate noise and vibration control measures, will ensure that noise and vibration effect is kept within the guidance limits.

With respect to the EPA’s criteria for description of effects, in terms of these construction activities, the potential worst-case associated effects at the nearest noise sensitive locations associated with the various elements of the construction phase are described below.

11.7.2.1 Turbines, Hardstands, Met Mast, Substation, Grid Connection, Internal Roads and Road Widening

The predicted construction noise and vibration effects associated with on-site construction activities including are short-term and slight and are summarised as follows:

Quality	Significance	Duration
Negative	Slight	Short-term

11.7.2.2 Construction Traffic

The effects associated with the overall noise levels from construction traffic at the majority of locations is summarised as follows:

Quality	Significance	Duration
Negative	Imperceptible to Not Significant	Short-term

At the R161 between Trim and Doolistown, during construction stages 1a and 1b, the effects are:

Quality	Significance	Duration
Negative	Significant	Short-term

As discussed above, the impact for construction traffic at this one road is short term and intermittent; however, the predicted noise level due to traffic along this road remains within the construction noise of 65dB $L_{Aeq, 12hr}$.

11.7.2.3 Borrow Pit Activity

The predicted worst-case noise and vibration effects associated with proposed borrow pit construction at NSL's are summarised as follows:

Quality	Significance	Duration
Negative	Slight	Short-term

11.7.3 Operational Phase

11.7.3.1 Noise

11.7.3.1.1 Wind Turbine Noise

The predicted noise levels associated with the Proposed Development will be within best practice noise criteria curves recommended in Irish guidance 'Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities' therefore, it is not considered that a significant effect is associated with the Proposed Development.

While noise levels at low wind speeds will increase due to the development and specifically the operation of the turbines, the predicted levels will remain low, albeit new sources of noise will be introduced into the soundscape.

The predicted residual operational turbine noise effects are summarised as follows at the closest noise sensitive locations to the site:

Quality	Significance	Duration
Negative	Moderate	Long-term

The above effect should be considered in terms that the effect is variable and that this assessment considers periods of the greatest potential effect.

11.7.3.1.2 Substation Noise

The associated effect from the day to day operation of the substation is summarised as follows:

Quality	Significance	Duration
Negative	Imperceptible	Long-term

11.7.3.2 Vibration

There are no expected sources of vibration associated with the operational phase of the Proposed Development. In relation to of vibration the associated effect is summarised as follows:

Quality	Significance	Duration
Negative	Imperceptible	Long-term

11.7.4 Decommissioning Phase

During the decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development, there will be some effect on nearby noise sensitive properties due to noise emissions from site traffic and other on-site activities. Similar overall noise levels as those calculated for the construction phase would be expected, as similar tools and equipment will be used. The noise and vibration impacts associated with any decommissioning of the site are considered to be comparable to those outlined in relation to the construction of the Proposed Development.

With respect to the EPA criteria for description of effects, the anticipated associated effects at the nearest noise sensitive locations associated with the decommissioning phase are described below.

Quality	Significance	Duration
Negative	Slight	Short-term

11.7.5 Cumulative Effects of other wind farms

11.7.5.1 Construction Phase

In terms of construction phase noise, there is potential that Bracklyn and Ballivor wind farms be constructed at the same time. However, due to the distance between the elements of each development, it is not considered that a significant cumulative effect is likely. Moreover, the Ballivor turbine delivery route (See section 11.6.2.1.1) runs to the east of the proposed development whereas the route for Bracklyn runs to the west of Bracklyn Wind Farm, thus different roads are used and there is significant cumulative effect is unlikely.

11.7.5.2 Operational Phase

The above operational noise assessment has considered the potential cumulative impacts of the Proposed Development in combination with other wind energy developments in the area as required by best practice guidance discussed in Section 11.3.2.2.1 and as detailed in Section 11.3.

As concluded in Section 11.6.3.1, the predicted noise levels associated with the Proposed Development, which takes into account the Bracklyn wind farm, will be within best practice noise criteria curves recommended in Irish guidance ‘*Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities*’.

It is therefore considered that a significant effect is not associated with the Proposed Development in combination with other wind farm developments.

<i>Quality</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Negative	Moderate	Long-term