

Summer 2022

Bord na Móna

Draft Amenity Plan for the Proposed Ballydermot Wind Farm



Introduction

The vision of this draft Amenity Plan is to provide a new local and regional recreational resource that provides for co-location with the proposed Ballydermot Wind Farm and potential future uses of the site. The scale of the site and its proximity to other tourist activities in the area means that it has the potential to become a site of national tourist interest, an ecotourism destination related to peatlands.

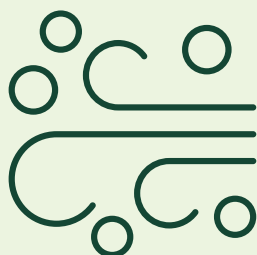
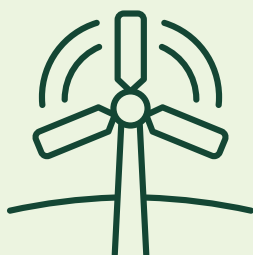
This Draft Amenity Plan has been produced in consultation with team members from Bord na Móna Renewable Energy, community feedback received from the proposed Ballydermot Wind Farm Consultation events held from October 2020 – January 2021 and June – September 2021 along with desktop research and site visits.

The Ballydermot Wind Farm Draft Amenity Plan provides a comprehensive layout of amenity facilities for the proposed Wind Farm. This Draft Amenity Plan will be submitted as part of the planning application for the proposed wind farm development. The Draft Amenity Plan does not seek to impinge on areas of high ecological or other environmental value within the site nor on any adjacent land use. The amenities will tie in with and complement the proposed wind farm infrastructure and the peatland rehabilitation works. The amenity facilities will also link in with

future connectivity in the surrounding settlements and sites / areas of interest. These include the towns / villages of Edenderry, Allenwood, Lullymore, Rathangan, Clonbullogue, etc. and the Grand Canal.

The key amenities identified in this Draft Amenity Plan include:

- a strategic route network that provides access links to surrounding settlements and sites of interest.
- a network of internal paths and cycleways that provide looped routes and a dedicated equestrian trail.
- a natural play park.
- trail infrastructure such as benches and shelters.
- waymarker posts and orientation information boards.
- key amenity access infrastructure such as car parks and toilets.



Much like the nearby Mountlucas Wind Farm development and associated amenity facilities, the proposed Ballydermot Wind Farm has the potential to deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits at the local, regional and national level. Some of these are outlined here:

Job Creation: the development is an opportunity to create jobs not only linked to the wind farm operations but also from the tourism potential that such an amenity site offers. These can be either through tourism linked to wildlife watching or from the extensive recreational and amenity facilities provided.

Health and Well-Being: access to such a large amenity park with off-road facilities will provide local communities opportunities for exercise and outdoor recreation, which has become even more important after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Biodiversity: the rehabilitation of such a large area of natural habitat will have significant benefits for wildlife in the region.

Heritage and Culture: the development offers the opportunity to conserve and interpret key parts of the local heritage and culture of the area.

Environmental: the restoration of peatland and wetland habitat on this scale will facilitate the capture of significant quantities of carbon. The wind energy produced will also provide a clean and renewable source of energy that can reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

Energy: the wind farm will generate a significant amount of clean and renewable energy to meet national demand.

Other Economic Activities: the scale of this project will allow for other business activities that complement the wind farm and amenity proposals, be they on site or in adjoining areas.





Legend



Proposed Development Area



Towns

Bord na Móna

Ballydermot Wind Farm Development Study Farm

DRWG No.
BNM-DWF-PG-10-04

Scale:
1:40,000

Drawn by:
GR

Date:
22/07/2022



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Site Location

The proposed Ballydermot Wind Farm is a large site of approximately 5,880 hectares on the Offaly and Kildare border (please refer to map on previous page). The site covers an area of Bord na Móna peatland that has been previously used for peat extraction.

The site has good existing access mainly by road and the Grand Canal. The M4 and M6 motorways run approximately 25km to the north of the site and M7 approximately 15km to the south. It is bounded by the Regional Road R402 to the north connecting to the R401 to the west and south, the R414 to the east and R403 also to the east. Several regional roads link into the surrounding settlements and a local road runs through the site connecting the towns of Edenderry and Rathangan. The site is approximately an hour from Dublin and just over two hours from Cork and Galway.

The Grand Canal main line runs to the north of the site and the Grand Canal Barrow Line runs to the south of the site. Existing walking/cycle paths on the canal routes have the potential to be linked into the proposed amenity facilities at Ballydermot Wind Farm.

There are several towns and villages that surround the site including Allenwood, Carbury, Clonbullogue, Derrinturn, Edenderry and Rathangan.



Draft Amenity Plan

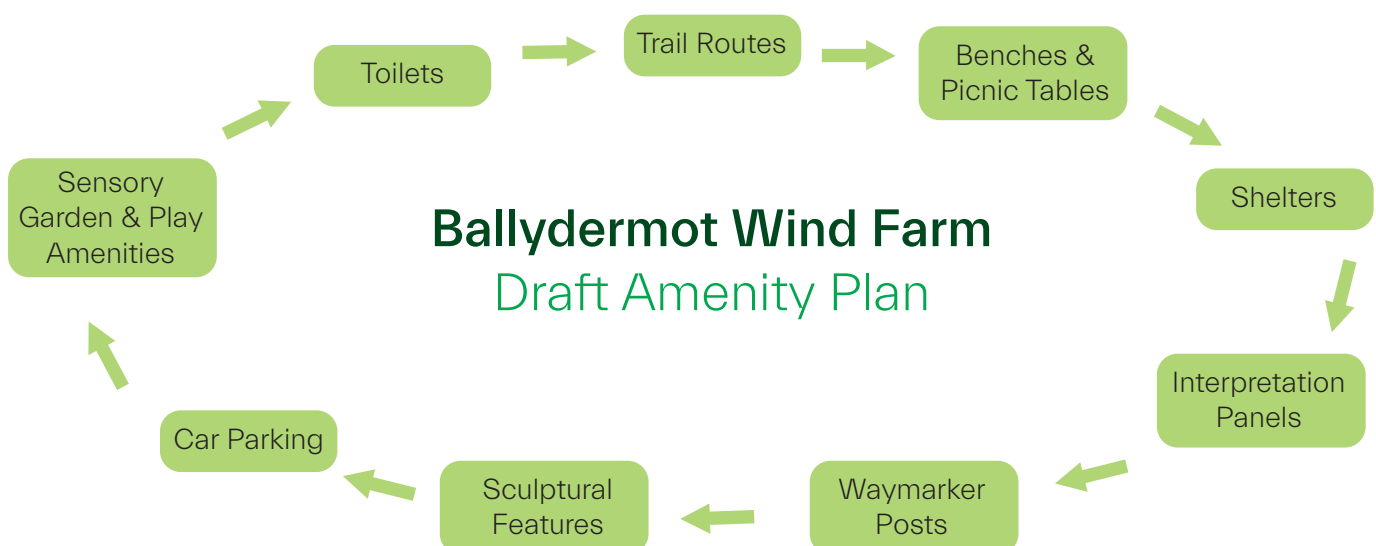


The proposed Ballydermot Wind Farm will include the construction of new access roads to install and maintain the wind turbines. The Draft Amenity Plan utilises this new infrastructure as a basis for most of the proposed trails for walking, cycling and horse riding. Additional amenity links are also provided to create loops and increase accessibility within the site. Former railway lines, existing roads and machine passes are also utilised. This approach is used on other Bord na Móna wind farms including Mountlucas and Cloncreen.

The Draft Amenity Plan proposes the creation of a network of trails that will cater for a range of users

including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. The Draft Amenity Plan also considers how this internal network of trails connects with, and complements surrounding trails which link with neighbouring settlements, visitor centres and sites of interest.

The Draft Amenity Plan proposes various trail infrastructure, amenities and facilities to maximise the visitor experience and enjoyment of the site. This includes car parking, toilets, sheltered resting spaces, seating, picnic areas, signage, a natural play area and sculptural features and interpretative signage.



Proposed Trail Routes

The Draft Amenity Plan includes several waymarked trails of different lengths, ranging from short to epic, which will accommodate walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The routes have been designed to be circular and tie in with the network of existing roads, former railway lines and proposed internal wind turbine roads to minimise disturbance to wildlife and the peatland.

The trails include:

- Nine waymarked circular walking/cycling trails ranging from 1.3km to 21km.
- A dedicated 9km circular trail for equestrian users only.
- A trail connecting the Grand Canal Blueway to the east and Cloncreen Wind Farm to the west.
- Proposed connections to neighbouring sites of interest including Killinthomas Wood, the Grand Canal Blueway and Cloncreen Wind Farm with potential for future connectivity to other neighbouring sites of interest.
- Approx. 60km of waymarked routes (walking, cycling, and equestrian) on Bord na Móna lands within the Ballydermot Wind Farm. Please see the draft amenity map on the previous page for further details.

Benches and Picnic Tables

Simple rustic style benches with armrests are proposed throughout the site. Every effort will be made to use recycled/reusable materials where possible. Typical examples of such materials would be reclaimed timber or recycled plastic. Picnic table sets of a similar design will be installed at various locations to provide users with opportunities to rest and enjoy lunch on their visit. They will be designed to be wheelchair accessible.

Shelters

Simple shelters are proposed at key locations around the site. Benches/picnic tables will be located within or beside the shelters to create areas for rest on longer walks.

Interpretation Panels

Interpretation and orientation signage will be strategically located throughout the site to guide, inform and maximise enjoyment of the site for all users. The style of all signage will be consistent throughout. Natural materials such as corten steel will be used to provide a durable finish that will visually blend in with the natural landscape and create a visual link to other site furnishings including the proposed benches. Interactive signs that play recordings such as bird calls or historic recordings to be included with the potential for these signs to be powered by renewable energy sources and crankshaft systems.



Examples of Interpretative Signage Designed in Consultation with the Local Community for the Amenity Facilities at Bord na Móna's Cloncreen Wind Farm.



Examples of benches from Irish Recycled Products that have been installed on other Bord na Móna Wind Farms.

Waymarker Posts

Waymarker posts will be used at key junctions throughout the site to guide users along designated trails. They will include:

- Tall finger posts with labelled markers at main path intersections to highlight routes to special features such as car parks or sites of interest.
- Smaller waymarker bollards at path junctions with colour coded directional discs to direct people along designated trails.

The posts and bollards will be made from recycled plastic.



Style of waymarker posts proposed for use along the trails.

Sculptural Features

Sculptures will feature on walking trails near the Ballydermot Works Car Park and the Edenderry Car Park to increase awareness and understanding of the heritage of the site. They will also act as points of interest for trail users.

Car Parking

There are four new car parks proposed to service access to the site by vehicle. Three of the car parks are for general pedestrian and cycling use and will be distributed geographically across the site. These are intended to provide a range of options to access the site. A separate parking area for equestrian users is proposed on the eastern side of the site. Please refer to the amenity map on the next page for the proposed locations.

Sensory Garden & Play Amenities

A natural adventure play area is proposed as part of the Draft Amenity Plan. Natural play uses a mix of natural materials and features including earth mounding, boulders, logs and fallen trees, trees and other vegetation to create play opportunities.

A sensory garden will be located next to the natural play area. This space will have a range of play features, materials, paving surfaces and planting that stimulate the various senses. This will include large sensory play boards / panels, a kinetic wind sculpture and sensory path surfaces.



Examples of sensory play features including a sensory play panel and paths.

Please return your feedback on this Amenity Plan Consultation to the Project Team via the FREEPOST envelope included or email to:
ballydermotwindfarm@bnm.ie
by **Friday 30th September 2022**.

The views submitted by you on our proposals, along with results from further studies, will help us to identify the best plan to take forward into the planning process.

Bord na Móna

