ADDENDUM TO WIND ENERGY STRATEGY REPORT (Prepared in December 2002)

Prepared for

Kilkenny County Council

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Introduction

Having regard to responses from Officials on the initial Wind Energy Strategy Report and following a workshop review of the emerging Landscape Strategy for County Kilkenny an up-dated version of the Wind Energy Section is proposed.

Furthermore, in response to comments from public representatives, wind sector interests and comments from the general public it has been determined that it is necessary to clarify the various types of wind energy that are under consideration.

The need to have regard to the likely pressure to examine applications within the whole county means that there needs to be a clarification policy – expressed in map form – to cover all areas.

For the purpose of clarity it is proposed to use the terms of the Renewable Energy Strategy Group[1] for area designations namely:-

- *Preferred Areas* - where permission would normally be granted, these comprise *intensive* development and extensive development (see below).
- *'Open for Consideration Areas'* – where applications would be examined on their merits – having regard to all applicable policy.
- *Unsuitable Areas* – where applications for wind energy are not encouraged.
- *Low Energy Areas*

A further category 'low energy' is included to denote areas where applications are unlikely due to the absence of a significant wind resource.

For the purpose of this strategy the following types of wind energy developments are anticipated:-

Intensive Wind Energy Developments consisting of industrial wind farms involving arrays of upwards of 30 turbines which range in maximum height from 75 – 130m. These are developed either cumulatively as a series of smaller units, or as one larger windfarm.

Extensive Wind Energy Developments consisting of smaller windfarms or arrays of individual turbines (1 – 5). These are often community or landowner based. They can occur over relatively broad areas in response to favorable wind resources. Heights and numbers vary.

[1] Department of Public Enterprise (July 2000).

Landowner Use Requirements consisting of undertakings with high on-site energy requirements.

The preliminary compatibility between these outline criteria is set out in Table 1 below.

KEY
√=Likely compatibility
X = Unlikely compatibility

AREAS / TYPES	*Intensive*	*Extensive*	*Landowner use*
Preferred Areas	√	√	√
Open for Consideration	X	√	√
Low Energy	X	X	√
Unsuitable Areas	X	X	X

Table 1 – Compatibility between Areas and Types

Definition of Areas
This section describes the preliminary criteria used to delineate the 3 basic area categories that form the preliminary basis for Wind Energy Strategy. Note that the final area definition also has to have regard to the potential for cumulative impact.

Preferred Areas

- Absence of significant designations (e.g. NHA)
- Low population concentrations
- Low landuse conflicts (e.g. tourism/settlement)
- Precedence of ABP permission(s)
- Likely wind resources
- Plausible grid connection impacts
- Compatibility with other Development Plan Policy
- Proportionate Residual Impacts

Open for Consideration

- Immediately adjoining 'Preferred Areas' (see all previous criteria)
- Patterns of pre-application enquiries
- Evidence of acceptability impact on designation (e.g. appropriate assessment of Habitat Impact)

Unsuitable Areas

- Conflicting Statutory Designations (e.g. NHA)
- Adjacent (1 – 3 km) population concentrations
- Conflicts with landuses (e.g. tourism /settlement/population)
- Conflicts with other Development Plan Policy
- Precedence of ABP refusals
- Unlikely Wind Resources
- Disproportionate Residual Impacts

These were evaluated in Map 1 – 8 of the previous report – (see Map 14) and the summarized result from the Workshop shop (see Map A & B)

These intrinsic factors are then evaluated further in light of the recommendation for the need to minimize the potential for county-wide visual impacts. The strategy pointed out that the current and emerging generation of wind turbines have hub height of between 70 – 100m - i.e. producing maximum heights in excess of the Millennium Spine (The Spike) in O'Connell Street, Dublin (120m) (i.e. maximum extended blade height).

Having regard to the bowl-like topography of County Kilkenny it is anticipated that a small number of windfarms on each of the principal uplands would rapidly (3 – 5 years) result in major visual impacts visible in every direction from Kilkenny city and it's environs.

Having regard to these considerations a strategy map amended (Map 14) has been produced. The areas are characterized as follows:-

P(I) *Preferred Intensive*: Areas where applications for Industrial Windfarms would normally be granted.

P(E) *Preferred Extensive:* Areas where landowner of community based groups of wind turbines would normally be granted.

O *Open for Consideration*: Areas where large and smaller development of wind turbines would be considered on their merits.

LE Low Energy Areas. Where windfarms will not normally be granted. Industrial turbines for landowner use only may be considered on a case- by-case basis.

NP *Non preferred Areas.* Where applications for windfarms are discouraged.

Note:

Significantly man altered landscapes for large scale industrial & infrastructural energy users will be deemed to be preferred areas on a case by case basis - subject to all other relevant provisions of the Development Plan.

The Development Plan for Belview shall be amended on foot of this section to make specific provision for large scale wind energy installations - subject to visual impact assessment.

Summary

The map indicates the recommended planning policy towards application for Wind Energy Developments in each of the areas. The map should be viewed in the context of the original report.

A note on Phasing and Development Plan Review

Attention is drawn to the provision for the Review of the County Development Plan. The proposed strategy should be adopted on a pilot basis to examine the impacts of implementing developments in the 'Preferred Areas' initially. On the basis of the precautionary principal – the effects of this initial strategy – on the landscape and on public perception – can be reviewed in light of experience after an interim (2.5 years) evaluation of the Development Plan.