



Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government



Planning Circular Letter
PL 19/13

11 December 2013

To: Each County/City Manager,
Each Director of Planning,
Each Town Clerk of Planning Authorities,
An Bord Pleanála.

Review of 2006 Wind Energy Development Guidelines

I wish to advise that the Minister for Housing and Planning, Ms Jan O'Sullivan, T.D. has today announced the commencement of a public consultation process on proposed revisions to the 2006 Wind Energy Development Guidelines focusing on the issues of noise (including distance) and shadow flicker.

As an initial step in this process, Marshall Day Acoustics was commissioned to prepare a study on wind noise, which was a significant input into this review. Marshall Day Acoustics has extensive international experience in this field and has previously participated in reviews of the wind farm noise guidelines for the Australian and New Zealand Governments. The objective of their study was to obtain evidence upon which to evaluate the appropriateness of the existing Wind Energy Development Guidelines in relation to noise impacts and to suggest changes, where appropriate.

The proposed revisions to the guidelines and the Marshall Day Acoustics noise study are now available online at www.environ.ie.

The main proposed revisions to the guidelines are as follows:

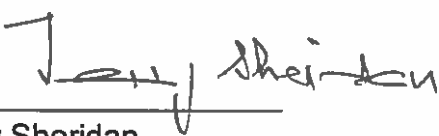
- The setting of a more stringent absolute outdoor noise limit (day and night) of 40 decibels (dB) for future wind energy developments

- A mandatory setback of 500 metres between a wind turbine and the curtilage of the nearest dwelling for amenity considerations.
- A condition be attached to all future planning permissions for wind farms to ensure that there will be no shadow flicker at any dwelling within 10 rotor diameters of a wind turbine. If shadow flicker does occur, the wind energy developer or operator should be required to take necessary measures, such as turbine shut down for the period necessary, to eliminate the shadow flicker.

Under the public consultation process, submissions can be e-mailed to windsubmissions@environ.ie. In the interests of transparency, all written submissions received will be made publicly available on the website of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. The closing date for submission of comments is 21 February 2014.

Following consideration of the submissions made during the public consultation period, the revisions to the Guidelines will be finalised and issued to planning authorities under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

I also wish to advise that over the coming months, the Department proposes to develop technical appendices to the Wind Energy Development Guidelines to provide detailed technical guidance to planning authorities, An Bord Pleanála and other stakeholders on assessing wind turbine noise, monitoring and enforcement of noise levels post construction, and on appropriate conditions to be attached to relevant planning permissions. These technical appendices to the Wind Energy Development Guidelines will be circulated simultaneously to the issue of the finalised Guidelines.



Terry Sheridan,
Principal Officer,
Planning Section.