



An
Bord
Pleanála

Board Direction
BD-001332-18
ABP-301076-18

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a Board meeting held on 03/10/2018.

The principal of developing a greenway in this general location is accepted, which would be consistent with national, regional and local policy, would enhance leisure and recreational facilities in the area, and would benefit the tourism sector and the economy of the area.

The Board however decided to refuse permission, generally in accordance with the Inspector's recommendation, for the following reasons and considerations.

Reasons and Considerations

1. The Board is not satisfied that the Local Authority has demonstrated that the proposed development would not adversely affect the integrity of the Raven Point Nature Reserve cSAC (Site code 000710), the Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (Site code 004076) and the Raven SPA (Site code 004019) in view of the Conservation Objectives for these sites. The increased level of usage by pedestrians/cyclists associated with the greenway will increase accessibility and human activity and potentially result in a significant negative impact on the existing Annex 1 habitats at the Raven Point Nature SAC and additional disturbance and displacement to birds using intertidal habitats at the Raven SPA. Furthermore, the Board is not satisfied that the long-term efficacy of the mitigation measures to protect the Greenland white fronted

geese and hen harrier populations and other bird species has been sufficiently demonstrated.

In overall conclusion, the Board is not satisfied that the proposed development would not adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites in view of the sites' Conservation Objectives.

2. It is considered that the proposed development, the design of which is predicated on significant mitigation measures including extensive screening, fencing and security measures of varying scale and design, would have significant and unacceptable negative effects on the environment and residential properties in the vicinity and would be detrimental to the attractive and sensitive visual and landscape amenities of the area. Furthermore, these negative impacts would arise even though the full extent of the greenway would be open only from 15th April to 15th September each year. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
3. Having regard to the information on file, it has not been demonstrated that the development would not have an adverse ecological and biodiversity impact arising from the loss of habitat and bird breeding sites in this ecologically sensitive area as a result of vegetation clearance and works during the construction phase, including the potential loss of trees. Furthermore, the Board is not satisfied that sufficient controls and mitigation measures have been put in place to manage the increased volume of pedestrians and cyclists who may have the propensity to diverge from the greenway route. As such, the potential arises for significant adverse ecological impacts on the fragile dune system and habitat and associated species at Raven Point. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Board Member

Date: 11/10/2018

Terry Prendergast

Note:

The Board concurred with the Inspector that there was a deficiency of information on the potential impacts of the development on existing agricultural land including severance, accessibility, viability and usability. It considered however that this matter could have been addressed by way of further information.

Likewise, the Board concurred with the Inspector that there was an absence of adequate information regarding the potential traffic and parking impacts of the development, in particular the risk of adverse traffic safety impact and congestion arising on the local road network in addition to overspill parking at the trail heads. It considered however that this matter could also have been addressed by way of further information.