



An
Bord
Pleanála

Board Direction
BD-012330-23
ABP-312599-22

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a Board meeting held on 31/05/2023.

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

Reasons and Considerations

1. On the basis of the information provided with the application and appeal and in the absence of a Natura Impact Statement which assesses the impact on the Connemara Bog Complex SPA (site code 004181) and the Inner Galway Bay SPA (site code 004031), and in the absence of additional habitat surveys in respect of the Connemara Bog Complex SAC (site no. 002034) the Board cannot be satisfied that the proposed development individually, or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on the above mentioned European sites in view of the sites' Conservation Objectives. In such circumstances the Board is precluded from granting permission.
2. The proposed development is located in an area where Wind Energy Developments are 'not normally permissible', as outlined in Map 15 of Renewable Strategy, Appendix 1 of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and in an area designated 'wind energy buffer' which extends 6km inland from the coast where there will be no designation of lands as being either "Acceptable in Principle" or "Open for Consideration" or "Strategic Area"

for wind energy development between An Spidéal to Minna in Cois Fharráige, policy objective RE9 of the County Development Plan refers. The proposed development would contravene Objective RE9 of the Galway County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3. It is a policy of the Council under 'policy objective LCM 1' of the Galway County Development Plan, 2022-2028, to preserve and enhance the character of the landscape where the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it. The site is located in an area designated in the Development Plan as 'Uplands and Bog Landscape' character area, nationally iconic landscapes of scenic, cultural, ecological and historic significance, with a 'high sensitivity' throughout. Notwithstanding uncertainty with respect to landscape and visual impact, having regard to the design, scale and visual prominence of the proposed wind turbine on an elevated position within its landscape setting, relative to the existing smaller-scale nearby turbines, the proposed development would seriously injure the amenities of the area by reason of visual intrusion with resultant visual overbearing impact within what is an expansive landscape setting where it would be visible from near and far. The proposed development would adversely interfere with the intrinsic character and qualities of landscape setting which it is considered necessary to preserve under the Development Plan. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, in particular 'policy objective LCM 1' to preserve and enhance the character of the landscape where the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it.
4. Due to a lack of information and clarity with respect to the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed development, it is not possible to conclude that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment nor was it possible to make a screening determination as to whether a sub-threshold environmental impact assessment report as required in respect of the proposed development. The Board is therefore not satisfied

that the proposed development would not have significant environmental impacts and is precluded from granting planning permission for the proposed development.

Board Member



Tom Rabbette

Date: 01/06/2023

