

An
Bord
Pleanála

Board Direction
BD-015012-24
ABP-314660-22

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a Board meeting held on 10/01/2024.

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

Reasons and Considerations

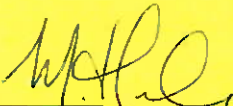
- 1 It is Council policy as outlined in policy BLP-35, Areas of High Amenity, of the current Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, to protect and preserve the county's areas of high amenity, including the Eiscir Riada and other eskers. The subject site is identified on the map in figure 4.18 of the County Development Plan as 'other eskers'. The proposed development would therefore materially contravene policy BLP-35 and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- 2 It is Council policy as outlined in policy REDP-19, Aggregate and Minerals, of the current Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 to ensure that extractions (quarries / sand and gravel pits) which would result in a reduction of the visual amenity of Areas of High Amenity, including eskers and esker landscapes should not be permitted. The proposed development would result in a reduction of the visual amenity of this area of high amenity and would therefore materially contravene policy REDP-19 and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

- 3 It is an objective of the Council as outlined in objective BLO-09 of the current Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, to consider, in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Westmeath County Council, the Geological Survey of Ireland and others, the potential designation of the north Offaly esker landscape as a UNESCO Geopark, to promote the unique geological heritage of the area. The proposed development would conflict with the achievement of this objective and would accordingly be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

- 4 It is an objective of the Council as outlined in objective BLO-08 of the current Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, to, where possible, increase access to esker and geological sites and encourage appreciation of esker and geological heritage. The proposed development would conflict with the achievement of this objective and would accordingly be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

- 5 In the absence sufficient information on the importation of material, an assessment of this aspect of the proposal is not possible, and it cannot be determined that the proposed development would not lead to adverse environmental impacts or impacts on European site.

Board Member



Mary Henchy

Date: 11/01/2024