

An  
Bord  
Pleanála

**Board Direction**  
**BD-019308-25**  
**ABP-319216-24**

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a Board meeting held on 27/03/2025.

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

## **Reasons and Considerations**

The Board made its decision consistent with the:

- Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended;
- Climate Action Plan 2024;

And in coming to its decision, the Board had regard to the following:

(a) European legislation, including of particular relevance:

- Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) and Directive 79/409/EEC as amended by 2009/147/EC (Birds Directive) which set the requirements for Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora throughout the European Union.
- EU Renewable Energy Directive 2009/28/EC which aims to promote the use of renewable energy and amending Directive EU/2023/2413 which aims to speed up the EU's clean energy transition.

(b) National and regional planning and related policy, including:

- (i) National policy with regard to the development of alternative and indigenous energy sources and minimisation of emissions from greenhouse gases.
  - (ii) Wind energy Guidelines: Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2006 and the draft guidelines published in 2019.
  - (iii) The objectives and targets of the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030.
- (c) Regional and local planning policy, including:
- (i) Regional Spatial Economic Strategy for the Southern Region;
  - (ii) Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028.
- (d) Other relevant national policy and guidance documents.
- (e) The nature, scale and design of the proposed development as set out in the planning application and the pattern of development in the vicinity.
- (f) The likely consequences for the environment and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which it is proposed to carry out the proposed development and the likely significant effects of the proposed development on European sites.
- (g) The reports of the local planning authority and the further information provided by the applicant to the local planning authority.
- (h) The submissions made on the planning application to the local authority and to An Bord Pleanála in connection with the appeal.
- (i) The report and the recommendation of the Inspector, including the examination, analysis and evaluation undertaken in relation to Appropriate Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment.

### **Appropriate Assessment: Stage 1**

The Board noted that the proposed wind farm development is not directly connected with or necessary for the management of a European Site. The Board completed an Appropriate Assessment screening exercise in relation to the potential effects of the



proposed development on designated European Sites, taking into account the Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment submitted with the application and the report and screening assessment completed by the Inspector. The Board agreed with the inspector's assessment and conclusion that the European Sites for which there is potential for significant effects are Killarney National Park, Macgillicuddy's Reeks and Caragh River Catchment Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 000365) and Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains Special Protection Area (Site Code 004162). The Board concluded, in agreement with the Planning Inspector, that Appropriate Assessment is required for these European Sites.

## **Appropriate Assessment Stage 2**

The Board considered the Natura Impact Statement and associated documentation submitted with the application and appeal, the mitigation measures contained therein, the submissions and observations on file, and carried out an Appropriate Assessment of the implications of the proposed wind farm development for European Sites in view of the conservation objectives for Killarney National Park, Macgillicuddy's Reeks and Caragh River Catchment Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 000365) and Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains Special Protection Area (Site Code 004162). The Board considered that the information before it was adequate to allow the carrying out of an Appropriate Assessment and to allow it to reach complete, precise and definitive conclusions for Appropriate Assessment.

In completing the assessment, the Board considered, in particular, the likely direct and indirect impacts arising from the proposed development, both individually and in combination with the other plans and projects (including all aspects of the entire windfarm project as addressed in the Inspector's assessment) and taking into account the mitigation measures which are included as part of the current proposal, in view of the conservation objectives for the European Sites. The Board accepted and adopted the Appropriate Assessment carried out in the Planning Inspector's report with respect to the potential effects of the proposed development on the integrity of the aforementioned European Sites, having regard to the Sites' conservation objectives.

In overall conclusion, the Board was satisfied that the proposed development, by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, (including all aspects of the entire windfarm project as addressed in the Planning Inspector's assessment) would not adversely affect the integrity of European Sites, in view of the conservation objectives of those Sites and there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to the absence of such effects. This conclusion is based on a complete assessment of all aspects of the proposed project, both alone and in combination with other plans and projects of relevance, (including all aspects of the entire windfarm project as addressed in the inspector's assessment) and took into account all submissions received during the course of the application.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment**

The Board completed an Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed development, taking into account:

- (a) The nature, scale, location and extent of the proposed development;
- (b) The Environmental Impact Assessment Report and associated documentation submitted with the application;
- (c) The submissions received during the course of the application; and
- (d) The Planning Inspector's report.

The Board considered that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, supported by the documentation submitted by the applicant during the course of the application, adequately considers alternatives to the proposed development and identifies and describes adequately the direct, indirect, secondary and cumulative effects of the proposed development on the environment. The Board agreed with the examination, set out in the Inspector's report, of the information contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, and associated documentation submitted by the applicant and submissions made in the course of the planning application.



## **Reasoned Conclusion of the Significant Effects:**

The Board considered that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report supported by the documentation submitted by the applicant during the course of the application, provided information which is reasonable and sufficient to allow the Board to reach a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the proposed development on the environment, taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment. The Board is satisfied that the information contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report is up to date and complies with the provisions of EU Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU. The Board considered that the main significant direct and indirect effects of the proposed development on the environment are those arising from the impacts listed below.

The main significant effects, both positive and negative, are:

**Population and human health** – Short term positive economic and employment impact during construction phase, with long-term positive effects during operation resulting from a sustainable renewable energy supply. Slight negative impact is anticipated from traffic noise, volume and dust during construction. With the application of mitigation, largely comprising implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan, no significant residual effect upon human health / safety is expected. In addition, with the implementation of mitigation, and installation of a blade shadow control system, the project will not result in significant impacts upon population in relation to shadow flicker.

**Biodiversity** – Slight to moderate significant negative residual effect identified relating to bats and birds, and significant adverse impact resulting from the loss of wet heath and blanket bog habitat. The impact upon bats and birds would not be at a population level. Mitigation measures include control of water quality control; an Ecological Clerk of Works; restricted access to bog and heath; revegetation of bare surfaces; pre-construction surveys; buffer zones; protection of bats; measures to minimise impact upon Kerry Slug; implementation of a Habitat Enhancement Plan; measures to reduce collision risk and monitoring. While the EIAR concludes that the significant effect to wet heath and blanket bog habitat will be adequately compensated through implementation of a Habitat Enhancement Plan for the project, it is required that turbine T1 is also omitted to ensure that the environmental effects

of the proposed wind farm are within acceptable parameters with reference to objective BE 15-2 of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028.

**Land, soils, geology, water, air quality or climate** - With the implementation of mitigation through management measures in a Construction Environmental Management Plan, as well as surface water management, there is no risk of significant negative impacts.

**Noise and vibration** – No significant residual effects are predicted with respect to noise and vibration. Mitigation includes adherence to regulations for the control and abatement of noise during construction and the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

**Material assets (land use, telecommunications, electricity networks, air navigation, quarries, and utilities)** - Mitigation includes avoidance, implementation of measures through a Construction Environmental Management Plan for the project, aeronautical lighting/communications, and measures to protect water and limit the production of waste. No significant residual effects are predicted to result with respect to material assets including land use, telecommunications, electricity networks, air navigation, quarries, and utilities (gas, water and waste), arising from the project.

**Material assets – traffic and transportation** – Direct, negative, negligible to minor impact, that is short-term, will arise during the construction phase. With respect to mitigation, a Traffic Management Plan is attached to the Construction and Environmental Management Plan for the project. No right turn entry is proposed and mitigation includes signage and road markings to prevent such manoeuvres.

**Archaeology and cultural heritage** – No direct impact upon cultural heritage and low potential for the presence of unrecorded archaeological features on the site. With respect to two recorded archaeological sites within the project site, the settings of these archaeological sites will be subject to short-term, slight, negative indirect impact during the construction phase. Mitigation includes archaeological monitoring, surveys, use of buffer zones and recording of any discovered features, which will be retained in-situ. With the application of mitigation, no predicted significant effects are anticipated upon cultural heritage resource (including archaeology).



**Landscape and visual impacts** – Negative effects ranging from imperceptible, neutral, slight to moderate are identified. Cumulative impact is concluded to be low. There are no significant effects upon landscape and visual impact anticipated as part of the project.

Having regard to the above, the Board is satisfied that the proposed development would not have any unacceptable direct or indirect effects on the environment. The Board is satisfied that the reasoned conclusion is up to date at the time of making the decision. The Board completed an Environmental Impact Assessment in relation to the proposed development and concluded that, subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures proposed and subject to compliance with the conditions set out herein, the effects on the environment of the proposed development by itself, and, cumulatively with other development in the vicinity, would be acceptable. In doing so, the Board adopted the report and conclusions of the reporting Inspector.

### **Conclusions on Proper Planning and Sustainable Development**

It is considered that the proposed development would accord with European, national, regional and local planning policy provision. The Board was satisfied that an approval for the proposed development would be consistent with the national climate ambitions and with the relevant provisions of the Climate Action Plan 2024. Furthermore, the Board has performed its functions in relation to the making of its decision, in a manner consistent with Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Act 2015. The Board considered that by reason of scale, form and extent, that, subject to compliance with the following conditions, the proposed development would be in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028, would not seriously injure the visual amenities of the area, or of property in the area, would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety, noting the permitted access arrangements from the national road network as granted by An Bord Pleanála under case reference ABP-317889-23 (planning authority Register Reference 23646) and would constitute an appropriate form of development at this location. The proposed development, would therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. In coming to this conclusion, specific regard was had to the local planning authority conclusion that

the proposed development would be in material contravention to Objective BE 15-2 (protection of sites, habitats and species) and Objective ET 13-7 (consideration of commercial wind energy development) of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The Board noted that the proposed location of turbine T1 within the subject site is at the edge of and hydrologically connected to a more extensive intact H7130\* Blanket bog priority Annex I habitat, in favourable condition, outside of the windfarm site. In the absence of sufficient justification in the application or appeal, the Board shared the inspector's finding that adverse effect upon this habitat as a result of both its loss from the development footprint (turbine and access road), as well as adverse effects resulting from construction activities to facilitate the same, would be contrary to Objective BE 15-2 which requires the protection, and where possible enhancement of areas of local biodiversity value, and Objective ET 13-7 which requires wind energy development in areas 'open to consideration' to avoid adverse impact upon locations of significant ecological value. The Board also noted and agreed with the inspector that the relocation of T1 and associated works including the access track, away from this favourable priority Annex I habitat could reasonably be possible and in noting that any such proposal would require consent, the Board also shared the inspector's recommendation to omit T1 from the current proposal in a grant of permission.

The Board considered that in light of the condition of existing habitats on the site, in particular the unfavourable condition of habitats proximate to proposed turbines T2 and T3, and the favourable condition of the priority Annex I habitat proximate to proposed turbine T1, that the proposed development would positively respond to the aforementioned objectives with the omission of turbine T1, as well as all other relevant policies and objectives under the Development Plan. The Board considers that, having regard to the omission of T1 and associated access road element and hardstanding areas, as required under this order, no material contravention of the development plan arises.



## Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as amended by the further information response received by Cork County Council dated 6<sup>th</sup> day of December 2023, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

**Reason:** In the interest of clarity and of proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. Turbine referenced as 'T1' together with associated hardstands and access tracks, shall be omitted from the development hereby permitted. For clarity, the permitted wind farm shall relate to four wind turbines only. Revised drawings showing compliance with these requirements shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

**Reason:** In the interest of biodiversity.

3. The mitigation and monitoring measures identified in the Natura Impact Statement shall be implemented.

**Reason:** In the interest of clarity and for the protection of European Sites during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development.

4. The mitigation measures and monitoring commitments identified in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report shall be implemented.

**Reason:** In the interest of clarity and the protection of the environment during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development.

5. The construction of the proposed development shall be managed in accordance with a final Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. This shall include details of the temporary construction compound to serve the southern cluster (which will also be used as a permanent operational compound). The Construction and Environmental Management Plan shall include but not be limited to operational controls for dust, noise and vibration, waste management, protection of soils and groundwaters and surface waters, protection of flora and fauna, site housekeeping, emergency response planning, site environmental policy, waste management, project roles and responsibilities.

Works near watercourses shall be carried out in consultation with and in accordance with Inland Fisheries Ireland standards Guidelines on the Protection of fisheries during Construction work in and adjacent to Waters (IFI, 2016). No soil shall be stored in flood risk zones. Imported material shall be suitable to the peat soil/subsoil and bedrock of the site (hydrochemistry). The Construction and Environmental Management Plan shall include a draft decommissioning plan for the turbines, to include reuse and/or recycling of turbine components. A revised plan shall be submitted and agreed in advance of decommissioning.

**Reason:** In the interest of environmental protection and residential amenity.



6. Noise levels generated by the wind farm following commissioning by itself or in combination with other existing or permitted wind energy development in the vicinity, when measured externally at noise sensitive locations, shall not exceed:

- (i) For the daytime period 0700 to 2300, in quiet environments, where background noise is less than 30dB(A)L90 T10, a maximum noise level of 40dB(A)L90 T10,
- (ii) For daytime periods, 0700 to 2300, where the background noise level exceeds 30dB(A)L90 T10, the greater of 45dB(A)L90 T10, or 5dB(A) above background levels,
- (iii) For the nighttime period 2300 to 0700, for all noise environments, 43dB(A)L90 T10.

The wind farm shall not give rise to amplitude modulation, tonal or impulsive noise at noise sensitive locations.

Prior to the commissioning of the wind farm, the developer shall submit and agree in writing with the planning authority a Noise Compliance Monitoring Programme (NCMP) for the operational wind farm. The NCMP shall include a detailed methodology for all sound measurements, including frequency of monitoring and recording of results, which shall be made publicly available. The NCMP shall be fully implemented during the operation of the wind farm.

**Reason:** In order to protect the amenities of noise sensitive properties in the vicinity of the development.

7. (a) Appropriate software shall be employed on each of the turbines to ensure that there will be no shadow flicker at any existing nearby dwelling. Turbine shutdown shall be undertaken by the wind energy developer or operator in order to eliminate the potential for shadow flicker.
- (b) A report shall be prepared by a suitably qualified person in accordance with the requirements of the planning authority indicating compliance with the above shadow flicker requirements at dwellings. Within 12 months of the commissioning of the wind farm, this report shall be prepared and submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority. The developer shall outline proposed measures to address any recorded non-compliances, controlling turbine rotation if necessary. A similar report may be requested by the planning authority at reasonable intervals thereafter.

**Reason:** In the interest of residential amenity.

8. Site development and building works shall be carried out between the hours of 0700 to 1900 Mondays to Fridays inclusive, between 0800 to 1400 on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and public holidays. Deviation from these times shall only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written agreement has been received from the planning authority and in accordance with measures outlined in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

**Reason:** To safeguard the amenity of property in the vicinity.

9. Drainage arrangements including the attenuation and disposal of surface water, shall comply with the requirements of the relevant Section of the Council for such works and services. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall submit to the planning authority for written agreement a Stage 2 - Detailed Design Stage Storm Water Audit. Upon completion of the development a Stage 3 Completion Stormwater Audit to demonstrate Sustainable Urban Drainage System measures have been installed and are working as designed and that there has been no misconnections or damage to



storm water drainage infrastructure during construction, shall be submitted to the planning authority for written agreement.

**Reason:** In the interest of public health and surface water management.

10. The developer shall engage a suitably qualified (licensed eligible) archaeologist to monitor (licensed under the National Monuments Acts) all site clearance works, peat removal / topsoil stripping, groundworks, dredging, tree removal, and/or the implementation of agreed preservation in-situ measures associated with the development. Prior to the commencement of such works the archaeologist shall consult with and forward to the local authority archaeologist or the National Monuments Service (NMS) as appropriate a method statement for written agreement. The use of appropriate tools and/or machinery to ensure the preservation and recording of any surviving archaeological remains shall be necessary. Should archaeological remains be identified during the course of archaeological monitoring, all works shall cease in the area of archaeological interest pending a decision of the planning authority, in consultation with the NMS, regarding appropriate mitigation (that is, preservation in-situ or by record/excavation).

The developer shall facilitate the archaeologist in recording any remains identified. Any further archaeological mitigation requirements specified by the planning authority, following consultation with the NMS, shall be complied with by the developer.

Following the completion of all archaeological work on site and any necessary post-excavation specialist analysis, the planning authority and the NMS shall be furnished with a final archaeological report describing the results of the monitoring, and any subsequent required archaeological investigative work/excavation required. All resulting and associated archaeological costs shall be borne by the developer.

**Reason:** To ensure the continued preservation, either in situ or by record, of places, caves, sites, features or other objects of archaeological interest.

11. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall submit to the and agree in writing with the planning authority, details of an obstacle warning light scheme which can be visible to night vision equipment.

**Reason:** In the interest of aviation safety.

12. Details of aeronautical requirements shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. Subsequently the developer shall inform the planning authority and the Irish Aviation Authority of the co-ordinates of the as constructed positions of the turbines and the highest point of the turbines (to the top of the blade spin).

**Reason:** In the interest of air traffic safety.

13. The following design requirements shall be complied with:
  - (a) The wind turbines including masts and blades, and the wind monitoring mast, shall be finished externally in a light grey colour.
  - (b) Cables within the site shall be laid underground.
  - (c) The wind turbines shall be geared to ensure that the blades rotate in the same direction.
  - (d) No advertising material shall be placed on or otherwise be affixed to any structure on the site without a prior grant of planning permission.

**Reason:** In the interest of visual amenity.

14. The delivery of large-scale turbine components for the construction of the wind farm shall be managed in accordance with a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with the



planning authority prior to commencement of development. This plan shall provide details of the road network to be used by construction traffic, including over-sized loads, detailed proposals for 'Access Point' sightlines (including those to be retained after the construction phase), and detailed arrangements for the protection of bridges, culverts or other structures to be traversed, as may be required. The plan should also contain details of how the developer intends to engage with and notify the local community in advance of the delivery of oversized loads.

**Reason:** In the interest of public safety and residential amenity.

15. On full or partial decommissioning of the turbines or if the turbines cease operation for a period of more than one year, the mast and the turbine concerned shall be removed and all decommissioned structures shall be removed, and foundations covered with soil to facilitate re-vegetation, within three months of decommissioning.

**Reason:** To ensure satisfactory reinstatement of the site upon cessation of the project.

16. In the event that the proposed development causes interference with telecommunications signals, effective measures shall be introduced to minimise interference with telecommunications signals in the area. Details of these measures, which shall be at the developer's expense, shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commissioning of the turbines and following consultation with the relevant authorities.

**Reason:** In the interest of protecting telecommunications signals and of residential amenity.

17. The Habitat Enhancement Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the commitments outlined therein.

**Reason:** In the interest of biodiversity.

18. Measures outlined in the submitted Kerry Slug Management Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the commitments outlined therein.

**Reason:** In the interest of biodiversity.

19. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall lodge with the planning authority a cash deposit, a bond of an insurance company, or such other security as may be acceptable to the planning authority, to secure the reinstatement of public roads which may be damaged by the transport of materials to the site, coupled with an agreement empowering the planning authority to apply such security or part thereof to the satisfactory reinstatement of the public road. The form and amount of the security shall be as agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of agreement, shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

**Reason:** In the interest of traffic safety and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

20. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall lodge with the planning authority a cash deposit, a bond of an insurance company, or such other security as may be acceptable to the planning authority, to secure the satisfactory reinstatement of the site upon cessation of the project coupled with an agreement empowering the planning authority to apply such security or part thereof to such reinstatement. The form and amount of the security shall be as agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of agreement, shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

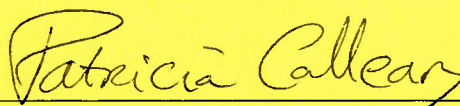


**Reason:** To ensure satisfactory reinstatement of the site.

21. The developer shall pay to the planning authority a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority that is provided or intended to be provided by or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The contribution shall be paid prior to commencement of development or in such phased payments as the planning authority may facilitate and shall be subject to any applicable indexation provisions of the Scheme at the time of payment. Details of the application of the terms of the Scheme shall be agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of such agreement, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála to determine the proper application of the terms of the Scheme.

**Reason:** It is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that a condition requiring a contribution in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Act be applied to the permission.

**Board Member**

  
Patricia Calleary

**Date:** 27/03/2025