



Board Direction

Ref: 17.PA0038

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a further Board meeting held on January 11th, 2016.

The Board decided, by a majority vote of 4:2, to refuse permission for the reasons and considerations set out below.

REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Having regard to:

- the Wind Energy Development Guidelines, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, June 2006) and, in particular, the provisions of Chapter 3 'Wind Energy and the Development Plan' and Chapter 6, 'Aesthetic Considerations in Siting and Design';
- the policies and objectives of the Meath County Development Plan 2013- 2019 including, inter alia, in respect of renewable energy, wind energy, tourism, cultural heritage, protected structures, views and prospects and landscape character assessment (noting the lack of a Wind Energy Strategy in the Plan);
- the need to treat wind farm development in this area with particular sensitivity given the proximity of the development to a large number of houses located in the open countryside and within a network of existing villages at Moynalty, Carlanstown, Castletown, Lobinstown and in the nearby town of Kells;
- the location of the proposed development in an area with a history of settlement and an associated legacy of places and features of cultural importance from many historical periods;
- the character of the receiving landscape;
- the scale, height and number of the proposed wind turbines;
- the submissions and observations received in relation to the proposed development, and
- the report and recommendation of the Inspector,

it is considered, that a windfarm of the scale, extent and height proposed would visually dominate this populated rural area, would seriously injure the amenities of property in the vicinity, would interfere with the character of the landscape and would not be in accordance with the overall development objectives of the current County Development Plan. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed development would not align with the Wind Energy Development Guidelines as this guidance document did not envisage the construction of such extensive large scale turbines in an area primarily characterised as a hilly and flat farmland landscape and in such proximity to high concentrations of dwellings. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

In deciding not to accept the Inspector's recommendation to grant permission, the Board considered that, notwithstanding the provisions of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan, and other national and European Union policies in support of renewable energy development (including wind), the impacts of this very large development on the substantial local residential population, and the impacts of the proposed development on landscape and cultural heritage, would not be acceptable in this location. The Board further considered that the number and height of the proposed turbines would significantly exceed the landscape's "medium potential capacity" to accommodate windfarm development as set out in the Landscape Character Assessment of the County Development Plan.

DETERMINATION OF COSTS

The Board noted the details of costs arising on the case for An Bord Pleanála and considered the claims made by the planning authority and by the following observers: Ronan O'Loughlin and Miriam Reilly; the Meath Wind Information Group and James and Mary Walsh.

The Board determined costs to be paid by the applicant as follows:

To ABP:	€70,050
To Planning Authority:	€34,870

The Board decided **not to award costs** to the observers in the case.

Having regard to:

- the submissions made on the case by the observers in writing;
- the submissions made and participation by the observers at the oral hearing and the responses and participation from the applicant at the hearing;

- the detailed and reasoned reports of the Board's inspector, and
- the Board's decision on the case;

it is considered that the Strategic Infrastructure Development application process has enabled full participation by the observers in the case and there are no particular circumstances arising that would justify the developer having to make a contribution towards the costs of the observers in this case.

Board Member: _____ Date: January 27th, 2016
Nicholas Mulcahy

Please issue a copy of direction with order.