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**Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2022**

**Planning Authority: Offaly County Council**

**Planning Register Reference Number: PL2/22/334**

**APPEAL** by Figile Limited care of J. Shiels Planning and Environmental Limited of 31 Athlumney Castle, Navan, County Meath against the decision made on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2022 by Offaly County Council to refuse permission for the proposed development.

**Proposed Development:** A small quarry/borrow pit for the extraction of circa 200,000 tonnes of sand and gravel on circa 3.2 hectares of lands. The development will include a site office (portacabin), toilet and holding tank, mobile wheelwash, mobile screening and crushing plant, car parking, temporary overburden storage, other ancillaries, and upgrade of existing agricultural entrance onto regional road r402 for duration of the works. the site will be restored to agricultural use including importation of inert soil and subject to a waste management facility permit and/or, notification under Article 27 of the European Communities (Waste Directive) Regulations 2011, S.I. No. 126 of 2011 at Esker More, Mount Lucas, Tullamore, County Offaly.

**Decision**

**REFUSE permission for the above proposed development in accordance with the reasons and considerations set out below.**

## Reasons and Considerations

1. It is Council policy as outlined in policy BLP-35, Areas of High Amenity, of the 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, Aggregates and Minerals, of the 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 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 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.



*M. Henchy*

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**Mary Henchy**

**Member of An Bord Pleanála**

**duly authorised to authenticate  
the seal of the Board.**

Dated this *26* day of *January* 2024.