



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

# Inspector's Addendum Report

## ABP-314517-22

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<b>Development</b>	Erection of 1 No. wind turbine (hub height 65m, blade length 23.5m) and the construction of an electrical substation, site access road and ancillary works
<b>Location</b>	Kildreenagh, Bagenalstown. Co Carlow
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Carlow County Council
<b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b>	21254
<b>Applicant</b>	Joe Hughes
<b>Type of Application</b>	Permission
<b>Planning Authority Decision</b>	Grant with Conditions
<b>Type of Appeal</b>	Third Party
<b>Appellant</b>	Emma Bolger & Thomas Millar. Cyril Murphy.
<b>Observer</b>	Josie Nolan. Patrick Murphy.
<b>Inspector</b>	Una O'Neill

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. The Board received an observation from Patrick Murphy on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2022. I have considered the content of the submission hereunder, in addition to the original Inspector's report.

## 2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposal is to erect a wind turbine on the site. The turbine would have a hub height of 65m, blade length of 23.5m and an overall tip height of 88.5m. A substation (25m<sup>2</sup>) will be provided to the west side of the proposed turbine.
- 2.2. The turbine will be connected to the substation via an underground cable. An overhead connection (c 480m) will be provided from the proposed substation to connect into the national grid, which remains to be agreed with EirGrid/ESB.

## 3.0 Observer

### Patrick Murphy

- The Native Irish Honey Bee is under threat of extinction.
- County Carlow is a Native Irish Honey Bee Conservation Area.
- Within the vicinity of the proposed wind turbine, there are a number of long term and well established apiaries. The proposed development is generally centralised to over a half dozen of these apiaries. Such a position is within the natural drone fields or Drone Congregation Area (DCA's), which is a specific place where male honey bees gather and wait for young queens to visit. They are different from most mating areas as they are high above ground, suspended in air. All honey bee mating takes place in these areas, never on the ground or in the hive.
- Changes in the electromagnetic fields, environmental noise, stray voltage, air pressure changes, turbulence, and vibration within the area will negatively impact the Drone Congregation Areas.
- This development could eliminate this critical breeding ground and have a detrimental effect on the Native Irish Bee population within this conservation area, which is already under threat of extinction.

## 4.0 Assessment

- 4.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, and having regard to the relevant local/regional/national policies and guidance, I consider hereunder the issue of the Native Irish Honey Bee as raised in an observer submission.
- 4.2. Concern is raised by an observer that the operation of the proposed wind turbine will negatively impact on the Drone Congregation Area of the Native Irish Honey Bee by virtue of the location of the wind turbine in a Conservation Area for the Native Irish Honey Bee and due to issues of electromagnetic fields, environmental noise, stray voltage, air pressure changes, turbulence, and vibration within the area.
- 4.3. As per the website of the 'Native Irish Honey Bee Society' (NIHBS), a number of voluntary conservation areas relating to the Native Irish Honey Bee have been established across the country. Some of the conservation areas relate to specific places, such as Kilkenny Castle, while others are not specific or mapped and relate to the general promoting of the Native Irish Honey Bee. In the case of Carlow, the conservation area is labelled as 'Carlow Beekeeping Association'. The NIHBS states the Irish Honey Bee has traits that make the bee most adapted to Irish climate and weather patterns and it is recognised as the only native honey bee species in Ireland. The NIHBS state that as honey bees mate in the open, outside of beekeepers control, it makes the native honey bee vulnerable to external threats, principally hybridization with bees from a different genetic stock imported from abroad and to diseases that might be imported, therefore, beekeepers are encouraged to keep only native bees in conservation areas as opposed to imported bees in order to preserve the Irish species. The National Biodiversity Centre also highlights the primary threat to the Native Irish Honey Bee is hybridisation with imported bees and disease, and recognises they are also threatened by habitat loss and chemical use in our landscape.
- 4.4. In terms of ecology, the site of the proposed wind turbine is currently under grass, forming part of a larger field, which is in agricultural use. It is not proposed to remove any trees or hedgerows within the field where the wind turbine is located. The land take relating to the proposed turbine and associated works is limited and the grass habitat loss involved from the existing field is not significant or of particularly high

value, with such grassland dominant in the surrounding area. I do not consider the location of the wind turbine within a limited part of this landscape will threaten the ability of the Native Irish Honey Bee to congregate in drones. While the observer states that the location of the wind turbine is within a Drone Congregation Area (DCA), I note no specific information has been submitted in relation to the exact siting of DCAs in this area, and I note that DCAs locate based on a number of varying factors and within a general range of aviaries in the wider area. There is no information submitted to support that this particular field is an important DCA. I note that bees will naturally avoid obstacles in the landscape, be that a wind turbine, a rural house or a farm shed. I further note that bees typically congregate in DCAs at a height of c. 5-35m above ground and the height of the wind turbine is greater than this. In relation to issues of electromagnetic fields, environmental noise, stray voltage, air pressure changes, turbulence, and vibration, there is a lack of convincing evidence or scientific support that wind turbines negatively impact honey bees and their pollination efforts.

- 4.5. In conclusion, I am satisfied that given the scale of the development and its location within the landscape, the proposed single turbine will not negatively impact the Native Irish Honey Bee.

## 5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1. I refer to the previous inspector's report and recommendation on this application dated 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022. Having regard to this additional submission, I am satisfied that there will not be an impact on the Native Irish Honey Bee.

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Una O'Neill  
Senior Planning Inspector

5<sup>th</sup> January 2022