



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

ABP-319344-24

Development

The continued operation of the existing 80 metre meteorological mast and all ancillary infrastructure for a period of up to five years.

Location

Raheenakeeran, Walsh Island, Geashill, Co. Offaly.

Planning Authority

Offaly County Council

Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

2360162

Applicants

Cushina Wind Limited

Type of Application

Permission.

Planning Authority Decision

Grant Permission.

Type of Appeal

Third Party

Appellants

Margaret & Joe Dunne.

Date of Site Inspection

13th September 2024.

Inspector

Dolores McCague

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Appendix 1 – Form 1: EIA Pre-Screening

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1.1. The site is located at Raheenakeeran, Walsh Island, Geashill, Co. Offaly. The site is located about 2.5 km from the R400 on an access road which is not suitable for car traffic, in an area of low-grade farmland.
- 1.1.2. The site is given as 2.01ha.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1.1. The proposed development as described in the public notices comprises the continued operation of the existing 80 metre meteorological mast which was erected as exempted development in accordance with Class 20A, Schedule 2, of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and all ancillary infrastructure for a period of up to five years.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

- 3.1.1. The planning authority (PA) decided to grant permission subject to 2 conditions:

1 The development shall be retained and carried out in accordance with the plans and particulars submitted to the Planning Authority on the 26th October 2023 and 29th January 2024 except where conditions hereunder specify otherwise.

Reason: In the interests of proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. This permission shall be valid for a period of five years from the date of this permission. On expiry of that period, the developer shall at their own expense, remove the structure and return the site to its original condition unless it's continued use or a revised structure is allowed by reason of a future planning permission.

Reason: In the interest of development control and to provide for the incorporation of new or improved technology.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.3. Planning Reports

- 3.3.1. There are two planning reports on the file, the first dated 13th December 2023, recommending a request for further information, which issued, includes:

Considered in the context of the development plan.

It is noted the subject site and the surrounding area is located within an area considered for wind energy development by Offaly County Council. According to the Planning Application, the 80m structure was erected on the 25th May 2023. The Applicant has stated in order to accurately record and predict the long-term meteorological conditions and to ensure the optimal technical operation of a potential wind energy development at this location due to the variability of Irish weather conditions it is proposed to operate the development in question for a period of 5 year. It is noted the subject site is not in close proximity to any residential properties.

Further information to be requested regarding necessary safety lighting.

In compliance with the Development Plan.

Appropriate Assessment Screening

Nearest European Sites:

Barrow and River Nore SAC – 6.25km

Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA – 18.8km

Slieve Bloom Mountains SAC – 18.8km

- No potential for significant effects / AA is not required.
- Given the location and the nature and size of the development applied for and the characteristics of European sites in the vicinity and the appropriate assessment guidelines it is considered that the development will be unlikely to have significant effects on any European sites

3.4. Other Technical Reports

- 3.4.1. Water Services, 12th December 2023 – conditions.
- 3.4.2. Area Engineer, 7th November 2023 - no objection.

3.5. Prescribed Bodies

- 3.5.1. Irish Aviation Authority, (IAA), 29th November 2023

The meteorological mast is positioned within the parachuting zone for EICL – Clonbollogue Aerodrome as identified within Ireland’s Aeronautical Information Publication. This is referenced in ENR 5.5 Aerial Sporting and Recreational Activities. The applicant should be conditioned to fit the mast with obstacle lighting. The light should be medium intensity, fixed red obstacle lighting with a minimum output of 2,000 candelas to be visible in all directions of azimuth which may require two fittings as a result and operation at 24/7.

The Authority has been advised by the Department of Defence – Property Management Branch that obstruction lighting should be incandescent or of a type visible to Night Vision equipment. Obstruction lighting fitted to obstacles must emit light at the near Infra-Red (IR) range of the electromagnetic spectrum, specifically at or near 850 nanometres (nm) wavelength. Light intensity to be of similar value to that emitted in the visible spectrum of light.

3.6. Third Party Observations

- 3.6.1. Third party observations on the file have been read and noted.

3.7. Further Information

- 3.7.1. Further Information request issued 19th December 2023. It includes:

Issues raised by IAA

Issues raised within the third-party submissions.

- 3.7.2. Further Information response was received 29th January 2024. It includes:

Prior to the construction of the meteorological mast, the Applicant engaged with the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) to inter alia determine the specification of warning lighting to be installed (see Annex 1). By way of response (see Annex 2), the IAA advised that; on the basis of the warning light specification details provided; it did not have any specific safety concerns. The Applicant can confirm that warning lighting was installed to the agreed specification and remains operational. The Applicant can further confirm that the installed warning lighting complies in full with the specifications as set out by the IAA in its submission to the Planning Authority. In particular, the warning lighting:-

- 1) is a 'Type C, Medium Intensity, Fixed Red' obstacle warning light;
- 2) has a minimum output of 2,000-candelas and is visible in all directions of azimuth;
- 3) is continuously operational (24/7);
- 4) is incandescent or visible to night-vision equipment;
- 5) emits light at the near Infra-red (IR) range of the electromagnetic spectrum, specifically at or near 850 nanometres (nm) of wavelength; and,
- 6) is of a similar value to light emitted in the visible spectrum of light.

In respect of proposed timeframes, the Applicant can confirm that the warning light, as specified by the IAA, is already fitted to the meteorological mast and is operational.

A letter to IAA from the applicant, dated 7th February 2023, is attached to the response.

A letter from IAA to the applicant dated 22nd February 2023 is attached to the response.

3.8. Further Reports

3.8.1. The second planning report, recommending permission includes:

Satisfied with responses.

The Applicant confirms that a Warning Light as specified by the IAA, is already fitted to the meteorological mast and is operational. A letter indicating no objections dated 22/2/2023 from IAA has been submitted

Satisfied with responses to third party observations.

4.0 Planning History

Invalid applications under ref no's 23/351 and 23/338 for a similar development to the subject development are noted in the planner's report.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

- 5.1.1. Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, is the operative plan. It includes:

The challenge is to facilitate, promote and achieve reasonable balance between responding to central Government policy on renewable energy and enabling energy resources within the Planning Authority's area to be harnessed in a way that is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development.

Chapter 5: Economic Development Strategy

ENTP-08: It is Council policy to prioritise, facilitate and promote the development of infrastructure that supports and attracts new economic activity-related investment in County Offaly.

Chapter 3 Climate Action and Energy

Wind Energy

The Council is therefore required to achieve a reasonable balance between responding to overall positive Government policy on renewable energy and enabling the wind energy resources of the Planning Authority's area to be harnessed in a manner that is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development.

Wind Energy Strategy

A County Wind Energy Strategy forms part of this Development Plan. The Strategy constitutes a plan led approach to wind energy development in County Offaly and sets out areas 'open for consideration' for wind energy developments and considerations for the evaluation of wind energy planning applications. Table 3.1 demonstrates County Offaly's contribution to realising overall national targets (under the Climate Action Plan 2019) on renewable energy and climate change mitigation, and in particular wind energy production and the potential wind energy resource during the plan period

Map No 10 'Wind Energy Strategy Designations' indicates that the site is within an area open for consideration for wind energy development.

Renewable Energy

CAEO-03 It is an objective of the Council to achieve a reasonable balance between responding to government policy on renewable energy and in enabling the wind energy resources of the county to be harnessed in an environmentally sustainable manner.

CAEO-05 It is an objective of the Council to implement the Council's Wind Energy Strategy as follows: 1. In 'Areas Deemed Open for Consideration for Wind Energy Development' as identified in Map No. 10 'Wind Energy Strategy Designations', the development of windfarms and smaller wind energy projects will be considered; 2. In all other areas, wind energy developments shall not normally be permitted – except as provided for under relevant exemption provisions in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended); and 3. Applications for re-powering (by replacing existing wind turbines) and extension of existing and permitted wind farms will be assessed on a case by case basis and will be subject to criteria listed in Development Management Standard 109 contained in Chapter 13 of Volume 1 of this County Development Plan and the Section 28 Ministerial Wind Energy Development Guidelines.

CAEP-16 It is Council policy to support the preparation of a comprehensive after use framework plan for the industrial peatlands and associated workshops, office buildings and industrial sites in the midlands and adjacent parts of the north west and southern regions, which meets the environmental, economic - and social needs of communities in these areas, and also demonstrating leadership in climate change mitigation and land stewardship. The Council recognises that the industrial peatlands in the midlands are a significant resource will transition to after uses ranging from amenity, tourism, biodiversity services, 'wild areas', flood management, climate mitigation, energy development, industry, education, conservation and many more.

CAEP-17 It is Council policy to investigate the potential for a Green Energy Hub on peatlands in the county and facilitate it if possible.

CAEP-18 It is Council policy to investigate the feasibility of an energy park with educational and amenity facilities relating to any future development of renewable energy projects of significant scale that comes forward over the lifetime of this Plan. Any development of renewable energy on cutaway bog will be required to provide increased opportunities for amenity access and educational facilities

CAEP-19 It is Council policy that planning applications for development on or immediately adjacent to peatlands shall be accompanied by assessments considering the following issues where relevant; peatland stability, hydrology, carbon emissions balance and ecological impact assessment.

CAEP-20 It is Council policy to support the implementation of any relevant recommendations contained in the National Peatlands Strategy 2015 and any subsequent revisions.

CAEP-25 It is Council policy to encourage and facilitate the production of energy from renewable sources, such as from bioenergy, waste material, solar, hydro, geothermal and wind energy, subject to proper planning and environmental considerations.

CAEP-37 It is Council policy to recognise the importance of wind energy as a renewable energy source which can play a vital role in achieving national targets in relation to reductions in fossil fuel dependency and therefore greenhouse gas emissions.

CAEP-38 It is Council policy that in assessing planning applications for wind farms, the Council shall:

(a) have regard to the provisions of the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006, the Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change 2017 and the Draft revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019 which are expected to be finalised in the near future;

(b) have regard to 'Areas Open for Consideration for Wind Energy Developments' in the Wind Energy Strategy Designations Map from the County Wind Energy Strategy;

(c) the impact of the proposed wind farm development on proposed Wilderness Corridors as detailed in Objective BLO-28 of Chapter 4;

(d) have regard to Development Management Standard 109 on wind farms contained in Chapter 13 of this Plan; and

(e) have regard to existing and future international, European, national and regional policy, directives and legislation.

CAEP-39 It is Council policy to consider the repowering and renewal of existing windfarm development on a case by case basis where the proposal does not result

in a net increase in the number of turbines and it is demonstrated that there is no adverse impact on the receiving environment, landscape, designated sites or residences in the area

Chapter 13 Development Management Standards

DMS-109 Wind Farms

When assessing planning applications for wind energy developments the Council will have regard to

The Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DoEHLG, (2006) and any amendments to the Guidelines which may be made; and

The Wind Energy Strategy Designations Map from the County Wind Energy Strategy showing areas identified as 'Areas Open for Consideration for Wind Energy Developments' and 'Areas not deemed suitable for Wind Energy Developments', and specific policy for wind development in these areas as outlined in Section 8 of the County Wind Energy Strategy;

In addition to the above, the following local considerations will be taken into account by the Council in relation to any planning application;

Impact on the visual amenities of the area;

Impact on the residential amenities of the area;

Scale and layout of the project, any cumulative effects due to other projects and the extent to which the impacts are visible across the local landscape;

Visual impact of the proposal with respect to protected views, scenic routes and designated scenic landscapes and proposed Wilderness Areas as detailed in Chapter 4 of this Plan;

Impact on nature conservation, ecology, soil, hydrology, groundwater, archaeology, built heritage and public rights of way;

Impact on ground conditions and geology;

Consideration of falling distance plus an additional flashover distance from wind turbines to overhead transmission lines;

Impact of development on the road network in the area;

Impact of the development on radio observatories and broadcast communications in the area; and

Impact on human health in relation to noise disturbance (including consistency with the World Health Organisations 2018 Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region), shadow flicker and air quality.

This list is not exhaustive and the Council may consider other requirements contained in the chapter on a case by case basis with planning applications should the need arise. Where impacts are predicted to arise as a result of the development proposed, suitably detailed mitigation measures shall be proposed.

5.2. Planning and Development Regulations 2001- 2024

Schedule 2, Part 1 Exempted Development – General

CLASS 20A (inserted by article 5 of S.I. No. 235/2008 Planning and Development Regulations 2008):

The erection of a mast for mapping meteorological conditions.

Conditions:

1. No such mast shall be erected for a period exceeding 15 months in any 24 month period.

2. The total mast height shall not exceed 80 metres.

3. The mast shall be a distance of not less than:

(a) the total structure height plus: (i) 5 metres from any party boundary, (ii) 20 metres from any non-electrical overhead cables, (iii) 20 metres from any 38kV electricity distribution lines, (iv) 30 metres from the centreline of any electricity transmission line of 110kV or more.

(b) 5 kilometres from the nearest airport or aerodrome, or any communication, navigation and surveillance facilities designated by the Irish Aviation Authority, save with the consent in writing of the Authority and compliance with any condition relating to the provision of aviation obstacle warning lighting.

4. Not more than one such mast shall be erected within the site.

5. All mast components shall have a matt, non-reflective finish and the blade shall be made of material that does not deflect telecommunications signals.

6. No sign, advertisement or object, not required for the functioning or safety of the mast shall be attached to or exhibited on the mast.

5.3. Natural Heritage Designations

- 5.3.1. The nearest Natura site is the River Barrow and River Nore SAC (site code 002162) approximately 6.25km straight line distance due south.

5.4. EIA Screening

- 5.4.1. Having regard to the nature and scale of the development and the nature of the receiving environment, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the development. The need for environmental impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded at preliminary examination stage, and a screening determination is not required, appendix 1 refers.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

- 6.1.1. The third party appeal from Margaret & Joe Dunne to the decision to grant permission includes:
- The purpose of the mast is to collect data on atmospheric conditions such as wind speed, direction, temperature and humidity. This helps to assess the feasibility of potential wind energy projects and provides crucial data for optimising wind turbine performance and site selection.
 - The applicant's written response to objections stated that each planning application must be considered on its own merits. However a representative from Gaeltech Energy Services visited each of their homes in Raheenkeeran and stated that there will be a wind farm at this site and they will put as many turbines as they can at this location and that they plan on installing the biggest turbines available.

- Visual impact of windfarms.
- Using Offaly's share of the national population as a proxy, 1.6% County Offaly is expected to generate 133.66MW of renewable energy by 2030. The permissions if constructed will bring total output in Offaly to 336.3MW.
- The mast is only a few metres from Clonsast. The County Wind Strategy states that the council is not in favour of any developments on a number of bogs including Clonsast due to its character, uniqueness and wilderness potential. The retention of the mast needs to be re-considered.
- Impact on birds – barn owls, birds of prey hawks buzzards etc, nesting hen harrier; witnessed at this site. Impact on migratory birds.
- Impact on wildlife.
- Groundwater vulnerability.
- Impact on their black honeybees.
- Habitat disruption; wildlife disturbance; visual and noise pollution; altered microclimate; and chemical exposure.

6.2. Applicant Response

Gaeltech Energy Services have responded to the appeal. The response includes:

- There is a high degree of repetition. They responded to the issues in their response to the request for further information.
- It is noted that at various stages in the appeal the appellant refers to the development of a wind farm at this location. The Applicant reiterates that the proposed development is for the temporary erection of a meteorological mast for a period of 5-years only, after which time it will be fully decommissioned and removed, unless a further planning permission for its extended operation is granted.
- The site is not in an area of high amenity.

- Visual Impact – not a windfarm; has a slender, semi-transparent profile, difficult to discern in the landscape and will not contribute to cumulative effects on the visual amenities of the area.
- Impact on Clonsast Bog – the mast is already in place, is a slender structure largely imperceptible and will have no likely significant effect on the character of the landscape including Clonsast Bog.
- Impact on birds – the proposed development includes bird diverters on the supporting guy wires to increase its visibility in the landscape to avian species and to minimise the risk of collision. This is a best practice measure. The assertion that the presence of the meteorological mast will affect migratory patterns and breeding activities of avian species is unfounded.
- The nearest SPA is Slieve Bloom Mountains c 18.8km away and the proposed development is unlikely to have a significant impact on the conservation objectives or integrity of the SPA. The site is not proximate to any SAC. The proposed development is unlikely to pose a risk of significant effects on any SAC.
- Groundwater vulnerability- all construction works were undertaken at extremely shallow depths (c3m) of an extremely minor scale and groundwater was not encountered. The development did not have any significant impact on groundwater flows or groundwater quality.
- Impact on black honeybees. The mast is installed in open ground and did not necessitate removal of hedgerow or other important habitat; absence of noise emissions. It's continued presence will have no likely impact on bee activity or on the ecosystems on which they depend.

6.3. Planning Authority Response

- 6.3.1. The Planning Authority have responded to the appeal requesting the Board to uphold their decision.

7.0 Assessment

- 7.1.1. I consider that the main issues which arise in relation to this appeal are appropriate assessment, the principle of the development, impact of windfarm development and the proposed development, and the following assessment is dealt with under those headings.

7.2. AA Screening

- 7.2.1. In accordance with obligations under the Habitats Directives and implementing legislation, to take into consideration the possible effects a project may have, either on its own or in combination with other plans and projects, on a Natura 2000 site, there is a requirement on the Board, as the competent authority in this case, to consider the possible nature conservation implications of the proposed development on the Natura 2000 network, before making a decision.
- 7.2.2. Appendix 2 to this report details my assessment under this heading.
- 7.2.3. There is no likelihood of impact on any Natura site.

7.3. The Principle of the Development

- 7.3.1. Map No 10 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 'Wind Energy Strategy Designations' indicates that the site is within an area open for consideration for wind energy development.
- 7.3.2. The proposed development is acceptable in principle.

7.4. Impact of Windfarm Development / Proposed Development

- 7.4.1. The grounds of appeal, notes that the subject development is associated with windfarm development and object to a windfarm in terms of its visual impact; that County Offaly will be providing more than it's fair share of national wind energy; impacts on natural heritage, including bogs - Clonsast bog and other bogs, impact on birds, impact on their black honeybees; and impact on groundwater.
- 7.4.2. The applicant response to the grounds of appeal notes that the mast is already in place, is a slender structure which is largely imperceptible and will have no likely

significant effect on the character of the landscape including Clonsast Bog. The proposed development includes bird diverters on the supporting guy wires to increase its visibility in the landscape to avian species and to minimise the risk of collision. This is a best practice measure. The assertion that the presence of the meteorological mast will affect migratory patterns and breeding activities of avian species is unfounded. The nearest SPA is Slieve Bloom Mountains c 18.8km away and the proposed development is unlikely to have a significant impact on the conservation objectives or integrity of the SPA. The site is not proximate to any SAC. The proposed development is unlikely to pose a risk of significant effects on any SAC. I accept these responses, in particular Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA is some 18km straight line distance from the site. The site synopsis for the SPA states that Hen Harriers will forage up to c. 5 km from the nest site, utilising open bog and moorland, young conifer plantations and hill farmland that is not too rank. Hen Harriers are unlikely to be affected by the proposed development.

- 7.4.3. It is stated in the grounds of appeal, that Barn owl has been recorded in the vicinity of the site. According to the Birdwatch Ireland website, threats to Barn owls in Ireland include rodenticide poisoning, road collision and habitat loss. There is no loss of suitable habitat involved.
- 7.4.4. Regarding groundwater vulnerability, the applicant has responded that all construction works were undertaken at extremely shallow depths (c3m) of an extremely minor scale and groundwater was not encountered. The continued operation of the mast will not involve groundworks therefore there is no risk to groundwater.
- 7.4.5. Regarding impact on black honeybees, the applicant has responded that the mast is installed in open ground and did not necessitate removal of hedgerow or other important foraging habitat and that its continued presence will have no likely impact on bee activity or on the ecosystems on which they depend. There is no loss of suitable habitat / flowering plants involved.
- 7.4.6. I accept the applicant response that the concerns in the grounds of appeal largely relate to a possible future windfarm development, whereas the proposed development is the continued use of an existing 80 metre meteorological mast which

was erected as exempted development in accordance with Class 20A, Schedule 2, of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and all ancillary infrastructure, for a period of up to five years. In my opinion there is no likelihood of impact on groundwater, natural heritage, the visual amenities of the area, aviation activities in the area or the parachuting zone for EICL – Clonbollogue Aerodrome and permission for the continued use of the meteorological mast should not be refused because of such impacts or due to a possible future windfarm development.

8.0 Recommendation

- 8.1.1. In accordance with the foregoing I recommend that planning permission be granted for the following reasons and considerations and in accordance with the following conditions.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

- 9.1.1. Having regard to the temporary nature and limited scale of the development the subject of this application; the distance from European sites, which are not likely to be impacted; and the provisions of the current Offaly County Development Plan; it is considered that, subject to the following conditions, the development would not impact significantly on the environment, injure the amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity, and would otherwise accord with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

10.0 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 plans and particulars received by the planning authority on the 29th January 2024, 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.

2 This permission shall be valid for a period of five years from the date of grant. On expiry of that period, the developers shall remove the structure and return the site to its original condition unless a further planning permission for its continued use is granted before the expiry of this permission.

Reason: In the interest of development control and to provide for the incorporation of new or improved technology

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.

Planning Inspector

16th October 2024

Appendix 1 - Form 1

EIA Pre-Screening

[EIAR not submitted]

An Bord Pleanála Case Reference	319344			
Proposed Development Summary	continued operation of the existing 80 metre meteorological mast which was erected as exempted development in accordance with Class 20A, Schedule 2, of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and all ancillary infrastructure for a period of up to five years			
Development Address	Raheenakeeran, Walsh Island, Geashill, Co. Offaly			
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA? (that is involving construction works, demolition, or interventions in the natural surroundings)		Yes	/	
		No	No further action required	
2. Is the proposed development of a class specified in Part 1 or Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and does it equal or exceed any relevant quantity, area or limit where specified for that class?				
Yes		Class.....	EIA Mandatory EIAR required	
No	/		Proceed to Q.3	
3. Is the proposed development of a class specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) but does not equal or exceed a relevant quantity, area or other limit specified [sub-threshold development]?				
		Threshold	Comment (if relevant)	Conclusion
No	/	N/A		No EIAR or Preliminary Examination required
Yes		Class/Threshold.....		Proceed to Q.4

4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted?		
No	/	Preliminary Examination required
Yes		Screening Determination required

Inspector: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2 AA Screening

Template 1: Screening the need for Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination
<p>I have considered the continued operation of the existing 80 metre meteorological mast in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.</p> <p>The subject site is located at Raheenakeeran, Walsh Island, Geashill, Co. Offaly approximately 6.25km straight line distance due north of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC (site code 002162).</p> <p>The proposed development comprises continued operation of the existing 80 metre meteorological mast.</p> <p>Conservation concerns were raised in the planning appeal in relation to wildlife in the area and in relation to the Slieve Bloom Mountains SPA which is c 18.8km away.</p> <p>Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any European Site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of development which involves continued temporary use of the structure. • Location-relative to the nearest European site and nearest SPA. • Taking into account screening report/determination by PA. <p>I conclude that on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development would not have a likely significant effect on any European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.</p> <p>Likely significant effects are excluded and therefore Appropriate Assessment (stage 2) (under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000) is not required.</p>