



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Addendum Report **ABP-322575A-25**

Development

Construction of a data centre and all associated site works. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been submitted with the planning application.

Location

Mullafarry and Tawnaghmore Upper, Killala, Co. Mayo.

Planning Authority

Mayo County Council

Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

2460708

Applicant(s)

Mayo Data Hub Limited

Type of Application

Permission

Planning Authority Decision

Grant

Type of Appeal

Third Party

Appellant(s)

Colin Doyle

Observer(s)

An Taisce

Observer(s) – Section 132

An Taisce

Colin Doyle
JSA Planning

Inspector

Catherine Dillon

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1.0 Introduction

1.1. This report is an addendum to my original report dated 22nd December 2025. Both reports relate to a third party appeal against a notification of decision to grant permission issued by Mayo County Council for the construction of a data centre and associated works at Mullafarry and Tawnaghmore Upper, Killala, Co. Mayo.

1.2. At a meeting held on 8th April 2026, the Commission decided to defer consideration of the case and to request additional information to the appeal under Section 137 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Commission requested a response on the following:

The Commission notes that the following publications may form a material consideration in the determination of this appeal, with particular regard to the location of the proposed data centre and how the development might be in accordance (or otherwise) with the requirements of CRU/2025236 with respect to on-site generation and or/storage capacity and renewable energy additionality:

(i) Large Energy User Action Plan- Government of Ireland (January 2026)

(ii) Large Energy Users Connection Policy- CRU/2025236 (December 2025).

1.3. As this would constitute a new issue in the context of the appeal, the Commission in the interest of natural justice invited submissions from all parties.

2.0 Applicant's Response

2.1. The applicant as part of their submission included an Appendix from Ethos Engineering in response to the CRU Large Energy Users Connection Policy of their submission. Their submission is summarised as follows:

Large Energy User Action Plan (LEAP) (January 2026)

- Notes LEAP is not a statutory planning guideline, policy or direction made under the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended and is a matter to which ACP may have regard, but it does not bind ACP or otherwise to set the framework for the granting of planning permission.

- The majority of actions and objectives in LEAP relate to internal measures, such as the operators of the electricity transmission and distribution systems rather than the actions to be undertaken by project developers.
- LEAP commits to the publication of a National Planning Statement (NPS) under the 2024 Planning and Development Act, which will provide more clarity on large energy intensive sectors in green energy park developments and will not be sector prescriptive.
- Large Energy User (LEU) development will be facilitated where they are consistent with the NPF and Government policy.
- Data centre developments will continue to align with the principles set out within the Government Statement on Data Centres (2022), and a detailed explanation as to how the proposed development aligned with this Statement was submitted with the planning application and appeal.
- Proposed development aligns with the core objectives of LEAP, in that it represents an ‘energy park’ form of development in a regional location, outside of the Greater Dublin area, is strategically located on the electricity network, and close to substantial renewable projects.
- Development would have associated back up/dispatchable generation and will support the delivery of additional renewable energy via CPPAs, which were integrated as a key mitigation measure in the climate impact statement forming part of the EIAR and in the appeal response.
- Energy consumed by the development on site would be matched by renewable energy generation.
- Applicant confirms that any tenant of the proposed development will enter into CPPAs, prior to the operation of the data centre. Refers to 2 decisions by ACP where such an approach has been adopted.

(ii) CRU Large Energy Users (LEU) Connection Policy CRU/2025236 (December 2025)

- The LEU Connection Policy is not a policy of the Government and is not a statutory planning guideline, policy or direction.

- It is a decision of the CRU to require the System Operators (SOs) to assess each new data centre demand connection, and it is within the remit of ESB and EirGrid.
- Notes that the SOs have not yet published updated connection procedures for LEU applicants in response to the CRU's new LEU Connection Policy.

On Site or Proximate Dispatchable Generation and /or Storage Capacity

- The proposed Data Centre falls within the Maximum Import Capacity (MIC) equal to or greater than 10MVA.
- The site as designed includes generation capable of meeting the requirement for on-site dispatchable generation and participation in the wholesale market, in accordance with the CRU policy.
- Acknowledges this will require further detail at the design stage, however adjustments can be addressed using the proposed equipment and site layout.

Provision for Additional Renewable Generation

- Commitment to mitigate all residual GHG emissions from development via CPPAs, which go beyond the 80% requirement of the LEU Connection policy.

Location of the Proposed Data Centre Development

- Acknowledges that the suitability of the connection will be assessed having regard to network constraints and locational considerations, but this will form part of the TSO connection assessment process.
- Proposed development is in a regional location, outside the constrained Dublin area, in line with the LEU Connection Policy, adjacent to an existing power plant, and high voltage grid infrastructure.
- The wider Mayo county accommodates many renewable assets in particular wind which are regularly required to dispatch down/curtail their output to the grid.
- The CRU's LEU Connection Policy is clearly addressed to, and will be implemented by the SOs, and the applicant fully expects to achieve connection to the electricity system under this policy.

Conclusion

- Proposed development is closely aligned with the aims and objectives of the LEU Action Plan and with the CRU's LEU Connection Policy, in as far as the documents are relevant to the current planning system.

3.0 Third Party Response

- 3.1. Two third party responses were received to the S.137 notice. One from Colin Doyle and one from An Taisce. These are summarised as follows:

Colin Doyle

- 3.1.1. This response states that as his previous submission was based on climate impact grounds, that the LEAP policy and CRU policy would have little bearing on ACP's consideration of his appeal submission. The response is summarised as follows:
- There would be potential implications for grid connection of the development, and this would be a matter for EirGrid to decide.
 - If proximate generation is required, a new planning application would be required.

Comments on LEAP and implications for ACP decision

- LEAP set out to facilitate more LEUs to operate in the state, which would result in a departure of the State's legally binding GHG reduction and energy targets.
- LEAP may have some merit beyond 2030, however any claims of sustainability would rely on the availability of large quantities of renewable electricity from offshore windfarms.
- SEAI National Projections 2025, indicate a risk of slippage on offshore wind targets. It may take to mid-2030s before offshore wind energy could make a significant contribution.
- Development of data centres prior to 2030 would be premature, due to a continued reliance on fossil gas and associated GHG emissions which is contrary to CAP.
- The SEAI projection is relevant in terms of considering the mitigation potential of renewables through CPPAs.

Comments on CRU Decision 2025236

- CRU excluded consideration of climate impact from its analysis and would not imply compliance with climate policy or CAP 2025.
- CRU required that new LEUs should engage with CPPAs to obtain 80% renewable electricity on a 'glide path' of 6 years, but this figure was not supported by any analysis.
- Reality is that only a certain amount of renewable electricity can be deployed by 2030 (projected by SEAI) and any CPPA for 80% by new LEUs would be notional.
- CPPA in itself is not a credible GHG mitigation, and reiterates the difficulty in ensuring true 'additionality' of what is renewables.
- The CRU requirement for true 'additionality' would be impossible to comply with through a standard CPPA mechanism in time for 2030.
- If development is to align with the green energy park concept in LEAP, it would require significant additional renewable capacity in the vicinity of the site, or at least within the county.

Conclusion

- If ACP are minded to take on board the CRU 80% 'additional' renewables requirement, it would need to be set out in a condition that ensures true additionality, and which does not breach EU free market rules, and suggests a possible wording.
- If renewable energy could be conditioned to match 80% or 100% of the energy demand of the proposed development, it would not result in a decarbonisation of the electricity grid as it would be consumed by the new load.
- Concepts of green energy parks, flexible demand and renewables powering described in LEAP are not capable of changing the 2030 projection.

An Taisce

- 3.1.2. This is an extensive submission and includes copies from An Taisce and Friends of the Irish Environment submissions to the consultation process to the CRU on their LEU Connection Policy, and an attached legal opinion. These submissions in summary consider the Connection Policy must align with Section 15 of the Climate Act

obligations and the carbon budgets as well as requiring decisions by the System Operators to do the same, and that a connection measure approach is not appropriate.

Large Energy User Action Plan (LEAP)

- The LEAP narrowly focuses on data centres and other LEUs as economic opportunities.
- No attempt to assess the climate and emission implications of continued increases in LEU energy demand or the potential impacts of further LEU growth on the electricity grid and economic impacts of same.
- LEAP promotes directing new renewable energy capacity to data centres while failing to address the need to decarbonise the existing energy demand and ensure adherence to legally binding emission reduction obligations, including under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 as amended, EU climate law and the Paris agreement.
- Considers the Plan is not a material consideration to this appeal, and specific development applications more broadly, as it sets out actions related to forward planning and developing a 'plan-led approach' for LEU as well as actions related to the development of further policy statements, reporting mechanisms, market mechanisms, etc..
- Consider the proposed on-site measures for the development such as the solar capacity does not cover the significant overall energy demand to reasonably fit under the LEAP's position on co-location, as it represents approximately 0.1% of the 48MW average power demand of the development.
- No onsite storage is proposed for the development.

CRU Large Energy Users Connection Policy

- Inconsistent with the Climate Act and the Climate Action Plans 2024 & 2025 and as such consider it legally flawed, subject to a court challenge, and do not consider it should be taken into account as a material consideration in the determination of the appeal.

- The policy does not directly address emissions, therefore potential consistency with the CRU's plan cannot be presumed to mean consistency with S.15 of the Climate Act.
- On site power generation beyond back up capacity is limited to the solar installation, which is negligible in comparison to the facility's overall power demand and back-up generators.
- Unless a CPPA covers more than 100% of a data centre's peak grid generated demand and /or 100% of related emissions, it is not actually contributing to the decarbonisation of the energy system.
- Questions the current efficiency of CPPAs in decarbonising data centre demand, and that they are not included in CAP as mitigation for the electricity sector.
- The Policy should have undergone an SEA, and do not consider that it can reasonably be used in the determination of the subject appeal.

Conclusion

- If Commission consider LEAP and the CRU Connection Policy for LEU's as material, they do not consider the proposed development is in alignment with either publication.
- Renewable additionality has not been demonstrated by the applicant.
- Neither the LEAP nor the CRU policy have assessed their potential emission impacts, so compliance with them cannot be presumed to mean compliance with the requirements of the Climate Act, including Section 15.

4.0 Assessment

4.1. Many of the issues raised in the submissions from both the first and third parties have been substantially considered in the original report, and I therefore consider the main issues to be addressed in this addendum report relate specifically to the implications for the proposed development regarding the 2 following documents:

- Large Energy User Action Plan (LEAP) – Government of Ireland (January 2026),
- CRU Large energy Users Connection Policy -CRU/2025236 (December 2025),
and,

- Other issues raised in Section 137 notice.

4.2. Large Energy User Action Plan (LEAP) – Government of Ireland (January 2026)

- 4.2.1. The Large Energy User Action Plan (LEAP) published on 13th January 2026, provides guidance with regards to energy intensive sectors including ‘data centres.’ Through 17 actions it prepares for a ‘plan-led’ approach to the coordination of the most intensive Large Energy User (LEU) sectors with renewable energy supply, especially in the period beyond 2030, including the preparation of a National Planning Statement for Green Energy Parks.
- 4.2.2. The LEAP confirms that Ireland intends to facilitate data centre operations that play a pro-active and positive role in our energy system, its long-term security, and its transition to renewable electricity. The Plan does not preclude LEU developments outside of strategic plan-led locations. Developments which are consistent with the NPF and Government policy, across all regions, will remain possible in the period before and beyond 2030. Data centre developments will continue to adhere to the principles of the 2022 Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland’s Enterprise Strategy, which prioritises co-location with renewables.
- 4.2.3. The third parties in their response consider the LEAP is not relevant to the proposed development as it primarily relates to forward planning and developing a ‘plan-led approach’ for LEUs and is not therefore applicable to the assessment of the proposed development. I would agree that this document is a high level action plan that provides guidance to LEUs and promotes renewable energy.
- 4.2.4. The applicant considers the proposed development aligns with the Government’s Statement on Data Centres (2022), and the core objectives of LEAP, as it represents an ‘energy park’, form of development in a regional location outside the greater Dublin area, is strategically located on the electricity network, and proximate to existing and planned renewable energy generation assets. Furthermore, the applicant considers the development has associated backup/dispatchable generation and its energy use will be met via the delivery of new renewable generation through CPPAs.
- 4.2.5. Several actions in the Plan relate to Green Energy Parks (GEPs), and while not defining what a GEP is, notes the intention to consider how additional generation capacity from offshore renewable energy could be used to power Large Energy Users, which includes data centres, in combination with the co-location of renewable energy

supply and demand. There is no standard approach to developing GEPs, but in the accompanying document with the LEAP, site characteristics for GEPS include; having existing infrastructure in place and a legacy of industrial activity, proximity to the transmission system and available grid capacity, available land bank for development and expansion, availability of renewable sources of power (existing and proposed), and availability of thermal/dispatchable generation. The key power suppliers for GEPs in Ireland is stated as being offshore wind, onshore wind, and solar, backed-up by battery storage, with some form of dispatchable generation or power from the grid.

- 4.2.6. I have discussed the principle of the development in my first report, and acknowledge the regional location of the subject site, the proximity of the Tawnaghmore Power Station, Objective EDO 40 and section 12.13.3 of the CDP which outlines there are opportunities for a data centre or renewable hub in the adjoining business park and the proximity of several wind farms in the vicinity of the site. I am also cognisant that there is an extant permission for an existing data centre within the Asahi park site, which would impact on the existing grid capacity. Although the future tenant is not known for the data centre, the applicant states they are committed to CPPAs and have the provision of solar energy and back-up generators (400 hours per year/16 days) as part of the development.

Conclusion

- 4.2.7. The LEAP document states that Data Centre Developments will continue to adhere to the principles of the 2022 Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres, which prioritises co-location with renewables. I have assessed the proposed development against the 6 core principles of the Government Statement in the main report (Section 9.3). As stated within this section of my report, I note the applicant submitted 2 letters from renewable energy providers indicating there is a surplus in the region of the subject site, but have not provided any specifics regarding the surplus or agreements for example, from such providers that the proposed development could connect to the renewables in the area.
- 4.2.8. In my view LEAP is a policy plan-led document to provide certainty for LEUs beyond 2030, and whilst it does not prohibit the development of data centres, I consider the general ethos of this Plan promotes the use of renewables in data centre developments. Given the site's location as stated by the applicant to renewable

sources and being similar to a GEP location as envisaged in the LEAP, I do not consider, that the applicant has provided substantial evidence that would lead me to conclude that the development would have access to the existing renewable resources in the surrounding area. The use of PV panels on the roof (input 50kW), HVO power generators (73MW) would not in my view provide sufficient renewable sources for the development by the developer.

4.3. CRU Large Energy Users Connection Policy- CRU/2025236 (December 2025)

4.3.1. This decision paper was published on 12th December 2025 and applies to the connection of LEUs, including data centres, to the electricity network, and sets out a pathway for data centres seeking to connect to the electricity network. It aims to balance the security of electricity supply, grid constraints and meeting national carbon emission targets.

4.3.2. This decision paper introduces a number of elements as follows:

- i. Data centres with a Maximum Import Capacity (MIC) greater than 10 MVA, such as the appeal development, must provide dispatchable onsite or proximate generation and /or storage matching MIC (derated), separately connected and metered, and participate in the wholesale market.
- (ii) The connection cannot be operational or ramp up to its full MIC without achieving delivery of associated onsite or proximate generation and/or storage.
- (iii) Data Centres above 1MVA, must meet at least 80% of annual demand with renewable electricity generated in Ireland, with a 6 year glide path to compliance. The CRU highlight that renewable energy can be provided through CPPAs.
- (iv) SOs, (EirGrid, ESB Networks and GNI) assess whether a proposed connection is in a constrained or unconstrained location and to provide annual reports on existing and future grid network capacity.
- (v) Data Centre users must provide a credible plan for grid connection, identify specific renewable generation that will support the project and how they intend to meet the renewable electricity requirement. This can be provided through CPPAs with wind, solar etc, or through direct development of renewable projects.

(vi) Data centre users to provide annual reports to SO.

- 4.3.3. The applicant in their response prepared by Ethos Engineering regarding this decision paper, confirms the development is not located in a constrained site, and as currently designed includes generation capable of meeting the requirement of on-site dispatchable generation, participation in the wholesale market, and additional metering without amending the overall site layout. Furthermore, the applicant has committed that any future tenant would be required to enter into CPAAs for additional renewable electricity and evidence would be provided to the Planning Authority before the data centre becomes operational.
- 4.3.4. With regards to the specifics of the proposed development, the third parties consider the on-site power generation is negligible, the use of CPPAs covers new demand and does not achieve decarbonisation, and renewable additionality has not been demonstrated by the applicant. They are of the view that 'true' additionality can only be proven where a renewable project is delivered in tandem with a development or where it wouldn't have occurred anyway. It is considered the CRU requirement for 80% additional renewable energy supply would be difficult to enforce, but if the development is to align with the GEP concept in LEAP, the development would require significant additional renewable capacity in the vicinity of the site, or within the county.
- 4.3.5. I note the applicant's response in that they can achieve the criteria outlined in the decision paper. Furthermore, I consider CPPAs are recognised as having a role to play in supporting renewable 'additionality'. The applicant has committed that any future tenant would be required to enter into CPPAs, and evidence would be provided to the P.A before the data centre operation. However, in accordance with the Government Statement, it is a requirement that data centres engage collaboratively with the respective SO to understand available capacity and alleviate constraints. I still consider this has not been provided by the applicant. I do not consider it is within the remit of the P.A, as suggested by the applicant to assess agreements regarding CPPAs.

Conclusion

- 4.3.6. I consider this decision paper places the emphasis on the System Operators to determine whether the capacity of the electricity grid is in a constrained or unconstrained location to accommodate a data centre. The applicant has stated they

can provide dispatchable generation to match MIC but not how this would operate and I consider this crucial for ensuring grid stability and managing electricity demand effectively. I consider this is fundamental aspect of Government policy and a high level of proof is required, and this has not been forthcoming from the applicant.

- 4.3.7. The information submitted from all parties confirms my previous recommendation. No further issues arise in relation to EIA or AA.

4.4. Other Issues raised

- 4.4.1. Both the applicant and third party refer to previous appeal decisions made by the Commission regarding data centres.
- 4.4.2. The applicant in their most recent response make reference to two data centre appeal decisions by ACP, with regards to the Commission accepting the applicant entering into a CPPA agreement prior to the operation of the data centre, namely ACP Ref: 248544 and 313583. Whilst each appeal is assessed on its own merits, I note both relate to sites in Dublin, the former granted in 2018, and the latter in 2025. I can find no reference to a CPPA agreement in the former development but note in the more recent appeal, it had been demonstrated by the applicant the availability of renewable energy through a CPPA agreement, and that the applicant had provided evidence of a Transaction Connection Agreement with Eirgrid.
- 4.4.3. Colin Doyle in his submission refers to the Commission making an error in its decision to grant planning permission ACP Ref: 318180, in that the Commission considered that renewables that progress to market without Power System Operator (PSO) support can be considered 'additional'. This appeal related to a data centre site also in Dublin granted in 2025. This appeal was subject to a further information by the Commission, which included the applicant submitting a connection agreement from EirGrid and the applicant, and that the energy demand for the development had been factored into EirGrid's 10-year Generation Capacity Statement. However, it was acknowledged in the Inspector's report that a level of uncertainty exists in policy regarding how additionality can be measured, and that Government policy presents the option that additionality can be provided through CPPA projects that are not subsidised by PSO or through the Renewal Energy Support Scheme (RESS).

5.0 Recommendation

On the basis of the above assessment, I recommend that the Commission refuse to approve the proposed development subject to the reason below.

6.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. Having regard to the information on file, the application has failed to demonstrate that they have a fixed connection agreement to the grid, and that there is existing capacity in the electricity grid (without which the broader principles and allowances set out in the Government Statement on the role of Data Centres can be assessed), the lack of significant on site renewable energy to power the proposed development, the lack of evidence provided in relation to the applicant's engagement with Compulsory Power Purchase Agreements (CPPAs) in Ireland, and in the absence of a future occupier of the development to engage in EU Emission Trading Systems (ETS), it is considered the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposed development would be in accordance with the overarching objectives of the Climate Action Plan 2025, by reference to reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions and the broader principles and allowances set out in the Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres. Notwithstanding a number of renewable wind energy projects in the vicinity of the appeal site, the applicant has not provided any evidence that the proposed development could avail of locally generated renewable power for the development and that there is sufficient capacity in the grid to service the development. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and development of the area.

7.0 Recommended Draft Order

Application:

For permission under the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, in accordance with plans and particulars, lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála on 25th May 2025, by Mayo Data Hub Limited.

Proposed Development:

Construction of a data centre and all associated site works at Mullafarry and Tawnaghmore Upper, Killala, Co.Mayo.

Appeal:

Third party appeal against the decision to grant permission for the proposed development by Mayo County Council.

Decision:

Refuse permission for the above proposed development with the said plans and particulars based on the reasons set out below.

Matters Considered:

The Commission performed its functions in relation to the making of its decision, in a manner consistent with:

- (a) Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Act 2015, as amended by Section 17 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, (consistent with Climate Action Plan 2024 and Climate Action Plan 2025 and the national long term climate action strategy, national adaptation framework and approved sectoral adaptation plans set out in those Plans and in furtherance of the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State); and,
- (b) Directive 2000/60/EC, the Water Framework Directive and in a manner which achieves or promotes compliance with the requirements of the Directive.

In coming to its decision, the Commission had regard to the following:

- (c) 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.
- (d) Directive 2011/92/EU (The Environmental Impact Assessment Directive) as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU as implemented by Article 94 and Schedule

6 (paragraphs 1 and 2) of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended.

National and regional planning and related policy, including:

- (e) National Planning Framework First Revision April 2025 ;
- (f) Programme for Government- Our Shared Future 2020;
- (g) Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the northern and western region 2020-2032;
- (h) Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland's Enterprise Strategy 2022;
- (i) Large Energy User Action Plan January 2026;
- (j) CRU Large Energy Users Connection Policy December 2025;
- (k) Renewable Electricity Corporate Purchase Agreements Roadmap March 2022;
- (l) Harnessing Digital- The Digital Ireland framework 2022, and
- (m) Government Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply (2021)

Local Planning policy including in particular,

- (n) The provisions of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.

Appropriate Assessment Stage 1

The Commission completed an Appropriate Assessment screening exercise in relation to the potential effects of the proposed development on designated European sites, taking into account the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report submitted with the application, the Inspector's Report, and reports on file.

In completing the screening exercise, the Commission adopted the report of the Inspector and concluded that, by itself or in combination with other development in the vicinity, the proposed development would be not likely to have a significant effect on any European site in view of the conservation objectives of such sites, other than Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SAC (000458) and Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SPA (004036). There was therefore a requirement to carry out a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

Appropriate Assessment Stage 2:

The Commission considered the Natura Impact Statement and all other relevant submissions and carried out an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposed development on the Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SAC (000458) and Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SPA (004036), in view of the sites' Conservation Objectives. The Commission considered that the information before it was sufficient to undertake a complete assessment of all aspects of the proposed development in relation to the site's Conservation Objectives using the best available scientific knowledge in the field.

In completing the assessment, the Commission considered, in particular, the following:

- (a) the site specific Conservation Objectives for the European Sites,
- (b) the likely direct and indirect impacts arising from the proposed development both individually or in combination with other plans or projects, and
- (c) the mitigation measures which are included as part of the current proposal.

In completing the Appropriate Assessment, the Commission accepted and adopted the Appropriate Assessment carried out in the Inspector's report in respect of the potential effects of the proposed development on the aforementioned European sites, having regard to the site's conservation objectives.

In overall conclusion, the Commission was satisfied that the proposed development, by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of European site in view of the sites' conservation objectives. This conclusion is based on a complete assessment of all aspects of the proposed project and there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to the absence of adverse effects.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):

The Commission completed an Environmental Impact Assessment in relation to the proposed development, taking into account:

- (a) the nature, scale, location, and extent of the proposed development,
- (b) the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and associated documentation submitted in support of the application,

- (c) the submissions received from the applicant, planning authority, prescribed bodies and observers in the course of the application, and
- (d) the Inspector's report and addendum report.

The Commission considered that the environmental impact assessment report, supported by the documentation submitted by the applicant, adequately identifies and describes the direct, indirect, secondary and cumulative effects of the proposed development on the environment.

The Commission completed an environmental impact assessment in relation to the proposed development and concluded that, notwithstanding the implementation of the mitigation measures proposed as set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, the EIAR relies to a large extent on the electricity sectoral ceilings be met and net zero decarbonisation of GHG emissions by 2050 as committed to in the Programme for Government and set out in the Climate Act 2021.

The proposed development would be likely to have significant effects relating to emissions of GHG from energy generated from fossil fuels by the national grid during the operational phase of the development. Although the applicant has identified there is a significant level of renewable energy projects in the North Mayo area they have not indicated how the development would avail of these projects and have not providing any supporting documentation from any System Operators agreeing to a connection to power the proposed development.

Conclusions on Proper Planning and Sustainable Development

In addition to the foregoing, the Commission concluded:

1. Having regard to the information on file, the application has failed to demonstrate that they have a fixed connection agreement to the grid, and that there is existing capacity in the electricity grid (without which the broader principles and allowances set out in the Government Statement on the role of Data Centres can be assessed), the lack of significant on site renewable energy to power the proposed development, the lack of evidence provided in relation to the applicant's engagement with Compulsory Power Purchase Agreements (CPPAs) in Ireland, and in the absence of a future occupier of the development to engage in EU Emission Trading Systems (ETS), it is considered the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposed development would be in accordance with the overarching objectives of the Climate Action Plan

2025, by reference to reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions and the broader principles and allowances set out in the Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres. Notwithstanding a number of renewable wind energy projects in the vicinity of the appeal site, the applicant has not provided any evidence that the proposed development could avail of locally generated renewable power for the development and that there is sufficient capacity in the grid to service the development. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and development of the area.

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.

Catherine Dillon
Planning Inspector

14th August 2026