

Deirdre Murphy
Sherins Cross
Ballyanna
Kilmallock
Co. Limerick
V35 WY89

The Secretary,
An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1,
D01 V902

Case Reference : PAX91.323780

I wish to object to the proposed development by Ballinlee Green Energy for the construction of a wind farm comprising of 17 turbines and associated infrastructure at Ballinlee County Limerick. Whilst I acknowledge the importance of renewable energy and the need for sustainable development, this proposal is inappropriate for this location and will have significant adverse impacts to the locality and its residents.

- I moved from Dublin to this area in 2023 with my husband and family. We lived in Dublin for many years but my husband longed to move back to his county of origin. As I am also originally from a rural area I craved the peace and tranquillity that a rural area would provide us. In 2021 we set our plans and dreams in motion and applied for planning permission. In 2022, we were granted planning permission, the construction of the house commenced in 2023 and we moved into our dream home with our three young children in 2024 amidst great excitement. At no stage during this process was there any mention of this proposed development. The engagement with key stakeholders i.e. the local community has been very poor. To operate a transparent and clear planning framework key developments like this should be heavily publicised. If, we had been aware of this proposed development we would certainly not have applied for planning permission.
There are a number of stipulations with our planning permission, such as we are not permitted to have lights on the gates at the road due as this would undermine the rural character and visual integrity of the landscape. In the event that lights were installed at the gate of our house this would have a minimal impact in comparison to the proposed turbines with tip heights exceeding 180 metres, which would be visually intrusive over a wide area. The proposed development would be visible from multiple scenic viewpoints, public roads and residential areas, undermining the rural character and visual integrity of the landscape. This visual impact is inconsistent with **Landscape policy objectives in the County Development Plan**, including
 - Objective EH 022- Protection of sensitive landscape areas and
 - Objective EH 023 Safeguarding of key scenic routes and viewpoints.
- The construction of 17 turbines will impact the site of the house with the turbines in close proximity. The closeness of large turbines is widely associated with reduced

property values and diminished attractiveness of rural areas for residential settlement.

- This development would discourage future rural housing and risk population decline contrary to the County Development Plan's rural sustainability objectives. As I have a young family this could impact their education. They attend a local rural primary school with already reducing numbers in the school. They attend activities and play for the local GAA club who are also struggling for playing resources. Any further pressure on numbers would see the club come under further pressure. They hope to attend third level in Limerick, if they have aspirations to remain in Limerick this development would discourage them to build or remain in the area.
- **The EIAR (Chapter 12 – Noise & Vibration)** concludes no significant health effects, but provides limited receptor specific analysis for homes within approximately 2km and does not assess low frequency noise or amplitude modulation. This conflicts with the WHO Environmental Noise Guidelines (2018), which link wind turbine noise to sleep disturbance and reduced quality of life. Independent baseline and post-construction monitoring, curtailment protocols and accessible community reporting are required.

My home is approximately 2km from the nearest turbine. My family includes a number of affected parties. My husband and I, the two bread winners in the family are required to travel to Dublin for work with at least one of us in Dublin each weekday. This requires getting up at 5 each morning. Having built a new home in Limerick I would not have expected to be in the midst of an industrial size development. This dream move to rural Ireland was a chance to move away from a built up large city to the peace and tranquillity of the countryside. This proposed development is not in keeping with my vision and reality of rural Ireland.

I have young children, some are light sleepers and sometimes wake at night. As they are in their formative years any further factors that may disturb sleeping patterns will have long term damage to their development.

*In addition one of our children suffers from **asthma**.*

The **World Health Organisation** states that " Noise is an underestimated threat that can cause a number of short- and long term, health problems such as for example sleep disturbance, cardiovascular effects, poorer work and school performance, hearing impairment etc. As children spend more time in bed than adults, they are more exposed to night noise.

The **WHO** also states that "children with pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma can be vulnerable to the effects of noise/ stress and /or sleep disturbance. These effects can be detrimental to the health of children. Child asthma can be triggered by stress"

“ With children the effects of noise induced annoyance from traffic, as well as neighbourhood noise, are evident in the respiratory system. The increased risk of illness in the respiratory system does not seem to be caused primarily by air pollutants but rather as the result of neighbourhood noise demonstrated by emotional stress “.

Our son has had a number of hospital admissions with his condition. This proposed development is therefore causing us much anxiety and worry.

- The local engagement was poor and a lot of research had to be done by the community to extract information regarding the potential impacts of this proposed development. Whilst there was some engagement, the meetings were not sufficiently publicised to facilitate real, meaningful and transparent engagement. I would like to have engaged with the promoters of the Ballinlee Wind Turbines. If someone was proposing to develop a big project I would expect engagement with the key stakeholders, in this case one of the key stakeholders is the community. The very fact that they did not engage directly indicates a clear lack of transparency and arouses suspicion.
- **Chapter 10 – Air Quality-** This chapter outlines the likely significant effects the construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed development will have on air quality. There are references to the increased dust from HGV movements and excavation which will affect nearby homes and farms.

Objective EH029 – Air Quality during Construction – *It is an objective of the council to protect environmental quality and implement site appropriate mitigation measures during construction and demolition phases of a development, with respect to air quality including dust.*

During the construction phase there will be emissions from vehicle exhausts. There will also be dust generated from excavation, moving and transporting soil and materials, in and around the construction site and on public roads. Weather conditions will play an important role in the quantity of dust generated. The potential for fugitive dust emissions is greatest during periods of prolonged dry weather. The potential risk of dust effects as a result of earth works is deemed to be high as outlined in **Chapter 1.4.2.1 – Air Quality Dust Emissions.**

In respect of the wind farm, as the total area of the site is over 110,000m² the dust magnitude for earthwork activities associated with the windfarm area can be classified as large. The potential risk of dust effects as a result of construction works was determined through use of the IAQM guidance risk rating matrix, and the risk rating is deemed to be high.

The above findings are of great concern to our family as our son suffers from asthma, eczema and our daughter suffers with allergies, hay fever and dermatitis. The WHO states “ that there is compelling evidence linking exposure to air pollution to the

incidence and exacerbation of asthma. Exposure to Air Pollution has been associated with increased exacerbation, hospitalisation and poor control of asthma.”

In addition in light of the fact they both have allergies and excema, we have concerns regarding how reduced air quality may exacerbate their conditions.

- **Chapter 6 – Biodiversity and Appendices 68-6**

Shortly after moving into our new home in April 2024 we noticed that a merlin was on site. The bird would arrive each morning and stay around at our patio door for a period of time, then it would disappear for the rest of the day. The entire family would marvel at this bird every day. In the new year we started to landscape the area around the house. As the works progressed we saw less and less of the Merlin until eventually he disappeared. His area had been intruded upon and disturbed which led to his displacement.

This a prime example of minor domestic works and the impact it has had on one bird. What impact will an industrial scale development have on local habitats? The truth is we will probably never know. What mitigants have been put in place? The construction will take place between 7 am and 7 pm Monday to Saturday and these hours may be extended. In order for wildlife, nature and habitats to exist they will need to relocate.

- **Traffic and Road Network Impacts:**

Chapter 16 – Material Assets – Traffic and Transport & Appendix 2 A CEMP – mentions the risks to rural road users, road deterioration and inadequate mitigation commitments.

- **Traffic, Access and Safety**

The proposed construction and maintenance traffic, including oversized turbine deliveries, would place severe pressure on the local road network, which is narrow rural and unsuitable for heavy industrial transport. There are legitimate concerns regarding road safety, fire tender access and the adequacy of emergency responses routes which are not clearly demonstrated in the application.

Conclusion:

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed Balinlee Wind farm:

- Conflicts with multiple policies and objectives of the Limerick County Development Plan 2022 – 2028
- Fails to protect the residential amenity, health and long term welfare of local communities,
- Would cause unacceptable visual noise and environmental impacts, and
- Does not represent proper planning or sustainable development in this rural location.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse permission for the proposed development in its entirety.

Deirdre Murphy
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Co. Limerick