

**Views of the Elected Members at the March Month Meeting of  
Offaly County Council held on the 23 March 2026**

**Derrynadarragh wind farm comprising of 9 no. wind turbines, onsite 110kV substation, turbine  
delivery route and a grid connection route**

**Chief Executive Report - Strategic Infrastructure Development**

**1. Background**

The executive made a presentation to the elected members in respect of Offaly County Council's Chief Executive Report on the above Strategic Infrastructure Development, as required by Section 37E(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Cllr. N. Feighery advised the Cathaoirleach that he was withdrawing from the meeting for this agenda item in accordance with S.177 of the Local Government Act 2001 (Disclosure by member of local authority of pecuniary or other beneficial interests). Cathaoirleach J. Leahy advised that Cllr. Feighery would be recalled when the item had been finalised.

Mr. A. Murray, Director of Service, introduced Ms. Úna McCafferkey, Executive Planner, who brought the Members through the presentation. She advised that the applicant is Dara Energy Ltd and that the application was lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) on 5 February 2026. The proposal consists of nine wind turbines, an on-site 110 kV substation, a turbine delivery route, and a grid connection to the Bracklone substation. She noted that this is both a SID and RED III application, and that the Planning Authority Report is required to be submitted to ACP before 16 April 2026, with a decision due by 3 February 2027.

She noted that it is located in Kildare County Council, Laois County Council and Offaly County Council and the Turbine array is 1.7km south of Bracknagh, 5.24km northwest of Monasterevin and 6.5km northeast of Portarlinton. She noted the summary of the proposed developments includes:

- 10-year permission/ 35 year operational
- 9 no. wind turbines: 186 – 187m max tip height
- Total generation capacity of c. 64.8 MW
- Within Co. Offaly: T2, T3, T5, T8 and T9
- Within Co. Kildare: T1, T4, T6 and T7
- Proposed entrance from the R419 (construction and operation access)
- Upgrade works to existing site entrance (Derrlea Road) to the South – Construction only
- 9,360m of new internal access tracks & upgrading of 550m of existing tracks (with assoc. drainage)
- Installation of 11.4km of permanent high voltage(110kV) and communication cabling underground between the proposed on- site substation and the Bracklone Substation

- 1 no. permanent single span bridge crossing Cushina River.

She mentioned the request for further information and recommended that further information is sought with regard to the following:

1. Noise:
  - Additional developments to be considered as part of the assessment.
2. Transportation and Traffic:
  - Existing road condition / Road Safety Audit.
  - Road drainage detail.
  - Load details – haulage of felled trees.
  - Delivery details.
  - Road and Bridge Survey – proposed haul routes.
3. Cultural Heritage
  - Consider potential impact on noted protected structures.
  - Additional photomontages – sensitive viewpoint.
4. Community Gain
  - Additional details on proposed amenity space.
  - Justification for location / consider relocation of space.
  - She thanked the Members for their time and invited their views and questions.

## **2. Views of the Elected Members**

**Cllr. C. Murray Smale** stated that she has concerns that gaps remain within the plan, despite this being the second submission of the application. She noted that these gaps relate to the amenity space, the provisions for noise, vibration and cumulative impacts, as well as biodiversity effects, among other issues associated with wind energy infrastructure. She further noted that Offaly County Council is already exceeding its energy targets, and given the pipeline of additional renewable developments, expressed concern regarding the visual impact, other impacts (in particular the cumulative impact of wind farms) in the area and the need to protect local communities. She added that there had previously been discussion about winding down wind energy development, particularly in North Offaly, yet this does not appear to be the case as the Derrynadarragh project is now under consideration. She questioned at what point enough will be considered enough.

**Cllr. L. Quinn** expressed serious concerns regarding the roads that would be used to facilitate the proposed development. He referred specifically to the Mount Lucas to Portarlinton road—commonly known as the Bog Road—which had already been discussed earlier in the meeting in relation to the Uisce Éireann pipeline. He stated that this road cannot accommodate the level of traffic associated with the proposed development.

He noted that, while the road might be able to support such activity if it were properly upgraded by the Department, its current condition as a bog road means it cannot sustain the increased load. The need for financial assistance, including the need for a special development contribution was raised. He described the road as being in a very poor state and one of the worst in Offaly, despite being the most direct route from Mullingar to Portlaoise and widely used as an unofficial alternative to the N52

and Tullamore. He acknowledged that the Edenderry Municipal District team has recognised these issues and stated that the road requires significant investment to bring it up to an appropriate standard. The condition and capacity of the road network and the need for stringent planning conditions to be attached to any grant of permission was highlighted.

**Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick** stated that, at some point, we will have to say no, noting that Offaly has met—and exceeded—its targets, while other counties have not. He reiterated the concerns of other elected members in relation to the condition and capacity of the roads in this area. He remarked that, when looking out at night, the number of red lights visible across the sky illustrates the concentration of wind energy infrastructure in the area. He said that the county has already achieved what it was to achieve in terms of accommodating wind energy and expressed concerns in regard to the over concentration of wind farms in this area. He made reference that the siting of windfarms has moved from being on cutaway bogs, to being sited on prime agricultural lands and Coillte lands. He referenced the disparity in energy production between Co. Offaly and its neighbouring counties. He emphasised the importance of the Community Gain. It was also expressed that a condition in regard to the Near Neighbour Scheme should also be included in any permission and stated that greater levels of compensation should be provided. Concerns in relation to noise impacts and other impacts on residential amenities in the area, including the cumulative impacts arising from the numbers of wind farms in this area were also raised.

**Cllr. F. McDonnell** stated that North Offaly has now reached a saturation point in relation to wind turbines and noted that the turbines proposed today are significantly higher than those originally proposed. He expressed the view that the number and scale of wind turbines in this area is crazy and considers that there should be a pause on further wind energy development in the county.

**Cllr. P. Ormond** sought an update on the map of the RED III accelerated areas. Cllr. Ormond noted that Offaly has met and exceeded its wind energy targets, while other counties have not. He expressed concerns in relation to the implementation of the County's Wind Strategy and its relevance going forward. He noted that there must be a limit on what the county can provide and the need for recognition on what has been achieved already within the County to be factored into regional targets in the permitting of wind farms going forward.

**Cllr. C. Murray** agreed with the other Members in relation to matters raised. She stated that the roads cannot cope with the current level of traffic. She noted that she is regularly contacted about the poor condition of the roads and highlighted the intense frustration felt by people in the local community who must travel on roads that are not in good condition. She added that the roads, in their current state, are simply not sustainable.

**Cllr. J. Leahy, Cathaoirleach**, provided an overview of the matters raised by the members. He made reference to opportunities and the potential for future economic developments that may be attracted into the county due to the County's renewable energy policies. He also made reference to the increase in rates within the County, as a result of the extent of wind energy in the county. He agreed with the concerns raised regarding the condition of the roads (particularly in north / east Offaly) and added his support for the need for additional financial resources to address matters in respect of the condition of roads in North / East Offaly (community gain fund or a special pot of money). He concluded in

relation to addressing the matter of the cumulative number of wind farms in Offaly and stated that from a management perspective within the Council, there is limited capacity left for additional wind energy within the County and we will get to the point in time when enough is enough.

END.