

An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

Re: Case Ref: PAX09.324055 - Objection to Proposed Wind Turbine, Grid Infrastructure and Battery Energy Storage (BESS) Development by Dara Energy
Location: Inchacooley, Derrylea, and Surrounding Townlands

Date: 28/03/26

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing as local residents and members of the farming community in the Inchacooley and Derrylea area to formally object to the proposed development of nine wind turbines in the areas of Inchacooley, Derrylea, and surrounding townlands, together with associated grid infrastructure and a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).

We note that this application seeks a 10-year planning permission, with the proposed turbines having an operational lifespan of up to 35 years. This represents a long-term and effectively generational industrialisation of a rural landscape, the impacts of which would extend well beyond the current planning horizon.

A development of this duration would fundamentally alter the character of the area for decades, affecting not only current residents but future generations who will live, work, and farm on these lands. As such, it raises serious concerns as to whether the proposal aligns with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development, particularly in the context of a sensitive rural area such as ours.

This submission is made on the basis of serious concerns regarding public safety, environmental protection, residential amenity, and agricultural sustainability. These are all important considerations in the assessment of any proposed development.

1. Disproportionate and Inappropriate Development in a Rural Area

The scale, extent, and intensity of the proposed wind turbines, grid infrastructure, and BESS facility constitute an overdevelopment of a sensitive rural landscape. The proposal is incompatible with the established character of the area, which is defined by agricultural land use and natural heritage. The siting of such large-scale infrastructure in close proximity to family homes raises serious concerns regarding its suitability for this rural setting.

2. Prolonged Construction Impact on Homes and Daily Life

As residents living and working in this area, we are deeply concerned about the extended duration of construction works, which are expected to continue for weeks and potentially months.

This will involve:

- Continuous heavy drilling
- Ground vibration
- Trenching
- Persistent construction noise
- Heavy construction traffic on minor rural roads

These impacts will occur in close proximity to homes, seriously affecting daily life, sleep, mental wellbeing, and the ability to live and work in what is currently a quiet rural environment.

3. Traffic, Road Safety, and Impact on Farming Operations

The proposed development will result in a significant increase in heavy construction traffic on narrow rural roads that are not designed to accommodate such volumes.

This will create:

- Road safety hazards
- Traffic congestion
- Delays to daily activities, including school transport and commuting

As members of the local community, we are particularly concerned about the safety of families and children who rely on these roads on a daily basis.

From a farming perspective, the impact is especially severe. Proposed road restrictions and closures will force farmers to take detours of up to 80 km for the transport of:

- Livestock
- Silage and hay
- Slurry and essential farm materials

This is not feasible in a working farm environment and will result in increased costs, loss of valuable time during critical farming periods, and significant disruption to day-to-day operations. In addition, individual households may face detours of up to 15 km per journey, resulting in approximately 2,400 km of additional travel per month with rising fuel costs and wear and tear on all vehicles due to diversions because of road closures this will place significant and unjust financial burden on all local residents.

4. Animal Welfare Concerns

The welfare of livestock is a primary concern. The proposal will negatively impact animals through:

- Prolonged transport times leading to stress and fatigue
- Increased exposure to noise, vibration, and unfamiliar conditions
- Disruption of established routines and grazing patterns

These impacts raise serious animal welfare concerns which must be fully considered.

5. Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) – Unacceptable Risk to Rural Communities

The proposed siting of a BESS facility near family homes is of grave concern. The risks associated with BESS include:

- Thermal runaway fires
- Toxic and hazardous smoke emissions
- Explosion risk

In a rural context, these risks are amplified due to limited emergency response resources, longer response times, and lack of specialised firefighting capability. This represents a serious and unacceptable risk to human health and safety.

6. Public Health and Air Quality Impacts

The development will generate:

- Dust and airborne particles
- Noise pollution
- Traffic-related emissions

These impacts pose real concerns for human health, particularly for vulnerable individuals, including children, older residents, and those with respiratory conditions. **The cumulative health impact is a matter of serious concern.**

7. Emergency Services Access

The disruption to the road network raises serious concerns regarding unimpeded access for emergency services, which is a critical issue in rural areas.

8. Landscape, Heritage, and Amenity Impact

The proposed development will have a significant adverse visual impact on the Landscape.

“The Avenue” in Derrylea, with its mature trees of over 150 years, is a defining feature of the area’s heritage and identity. Any damage or alteration to this feature would represent an irreversible loss.

9. Biodiversity and Forestry Loss

The clearing of approximately 6.1 hectares of forestry will:

- Destroy habitats
- Reduce biodiversity
- Disturb protected species such as the hen harrier and barn owl

This represents a significant environmental concern.

10. Drainage, Water Table, Land Stability and Road Infrastructure Risks

The lands in this area are already known to have a high water table, which is a constant concern for farmers and residents.

There is a well-founded fear that construction works, excavation, and ground disturbance will:

- Raise the water table further by a potential rise of 150mm
- Lead to increased flooding and waterlogging
- Impact the usability and productivity of farmland
- Undermine ground stability

In addition, local rural roads are not designed to accommodate heavy construction traffic and are already in a weakened condition due to recent weather events.

The introduction of heavy vehicles is likely to further damage road surfaces, increase flood risk due to disrupted drainage and create hazardous conditions for residents and farm vehicles. The combined impact presents a serious long-term risk to environmental stability and farming sustainability.

11. Cumulative Impact of the Development

When considered in totality, the cumulative impacts of this development on residents, farming, infrastructure, the environment, and public safety are Significant.

There are serious concerns as to whether the scale, location, and intensity of the proposal are appropriate for this area.

Conclusion

As local residents and members of a long-established farming family, we strongly believe that this development is unsuitable for this location and would fundamentally alter the character, safety, and viability of our community.

Our family has deep roots in this area, and we have seen first-hand how the land, community, and way of life have been sustained over generations.

The lands surrounding us remain actively farmed and are an essential part of the local agricultural network. Any disruption caused by this development would have a direct and negative impact on farming activity, livestock welfare, and the long-term sustainability of the land.

This is not simply a proposal on paper—it will directly affect our home, our livelihoods, and the wider community.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that permission for this proposed development be refused on the grounds that it would have significant adverse impacts on the local community, environment, and farming livelihoods.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Michael & Elaine Fitzpatrick
Inchacooley
Monasterevin
Co. Kildare