



COMHAIRLE | CLARE  
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

**By Email & Registered Post**

Your Ref.: ACP-324155-26

Our Ref.: GR

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026

An Coimisiún Pleanála  
64 Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1  
D01 V902

AN COIMISIÚN PLEANÁLA	
LDG-	<u>088080-26</u>
ACP-	_____
25 MAY 2026	
Fee: €	_____ Type: _____
Time: <u>9:15</u>	By: <u>Reg post</u>

**Proposed 10 Year Planning Permission for Cahermurphy Wind Farm consisting of 8 No. Wind Turbines, 110kV electrical substation and ancillary development located in the townlands of Cahermurphy, Carrowmagry South, Castlepark, Caheraghacullin, Doolough, Drummin, Kilmihil and Knocknahila More South, Co. Clare**

A Chara,

I refer to the above and **enclose** herewith the following:-

1. Chief Executive's Report dated 01<sup>st</sup> May 2026.
2. Draft Minutes of the May Monthly Meeting of Clare County Council.

Mise le Meas,

**Kieran O'Donnell**  
Administrative Officer  
Planning, Placemaking & Economic Development

Enc.

An Roinn Pleanála  
Pleanáil, agus Forbairt Eacnamaíoch, Tuaithe agus Pobail  
Áras Contae an Chláir, Bóthar Nua, Inis, Co. an Chláir, V95 DXP2

Planning Department  
Planning, Economic, Rural and Community Development  
Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare, V95 DXP2



**CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED)**  
**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE) ACT 2006**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF**  
**SECTION 37E (4) OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED)**  
**IN RELATION TO SID WINDFARM APPLICATION**

**ACP REFERENCE: 324155-26**

**1.0 Introduction**

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 37E (4) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, following on from the submission of a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) to An Coimisiún Pleanála, known as the Cahermurphy Windfarm. The development consists of 8 no. wind turbines with an energy output between 50.4MW to 57.6 MW, with a 35-year operational lifespan. A 10-year permission is sought and the application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS). A separate, concurrent application for underground electrical cabling (110kV), which will connect the wind farm to the existing Moneypoint 110kV electrical substation, has also been lodged with the Commission ([VA03.324156](#)). The specific components of the subject development are as follows:

- Construction of 8 no. wind turbines with a blade tip height range from 180m to 185m inclusive, a hub height range from 98.5m to 110.5m inclusive and a rotor diameter range from 149m to 163m inclusive with associated foundations, hard-standing and assembly areas;
- Construction of 1 no. permanent 110 kV electrical substation including 2 no. control buildings, lightening protection, welfare facilities, car parking, and all associated electrical plant and apparatus, security fencing, external lighting, underground cabling, wastewater holding tank and all associated infrastructure, apparatus and landscaping;
- Underground electrical cabling (33kV) and communications cabling connecting the wind turbines to the proposed on-site 110kV electrical substation and associated ancillary works;
- Erection of 1 no. Meteorological Mast of 100m metres above existing ground level for the measuring of meteorological conditions, including a lightning rod which will extend above the mast;
- Construction of new permanent access roads and upgrade of existing roads to provide access within the site and to connect the wind turbines and associated infrastructure;
- Upgrade of 1 no. new existing agricultural/forestry access to the site, off the L6254 local road, to serve as the sole entrance to the wind farm during its operational phase and to facilitate the delivery of the construction materials and turbine components to site during the construction and operational phases (including the installation of security fencing and gates);
- Development of 2 borrow pits;



### **3.0 Planning Policy Context**

#### **3.1 National Planning Framework (2025)**

National Policy Objective 70:

Promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a climate neutral economy by 2050.

National Policy Objective 71:

Support the development and upgrading of the national electricity grid infrastructure, including supporting the delivery of renewable electricity generating development.

#### **3.2 Wind Energy Development Guidelines – DHPLG – June 2006**

These guidelines state that the assessments of individual wind energy development proposals need to be conducted with a “*plan led*” approach. Areas should be identified that are considered suitable or unsuitable for wind energy development. In areas identified as suitable for wind energy development there will be an assumption that such development will be acceptable in principle to the Planning Authority. The guidelines seek to assist Planning Authorities in their assessment of wind energy applications in terms of location, design, spatial context and technical considerations.

#### **3.3 Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines DHPLG - December 2019.**

At time of writing, the Draft Revised Guidelines have not yet been adopted, and the relevant guidelines remain those published in 2006.

#### **3.4 Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (Southern Regional Assembly)**

The Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region came into effect on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. Section 8.2 “Strategic Energy Grid” states that “*There is significant potential to use renewable energy across the Region to achieve climate change emission reduction targets. With costs actively driven down by innovation in solar, onshore and offshore wind in particular, the renewable industry is increasingly cost competitive. The RSES supports renewable industries and requirements for transmission and distribution infrastructure*”. Regional Policy Objective RPO 99 ‘Renewable Wind Energy’ states:

It is an objective to support the sustainable development of renewable wind energy (on shore and off shore) at appropriate locations and related grid infrastructure in the Region in compliance with national Wind Energy Guidelines.

#### **3.5 Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029**

Development Plan Objective: **CDP6.17 Energy Supply**

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

To contribute to the economic development and enhanced employment opportunities in the county by:

- i. Enabling the development of a self-sustaining, secure, reliable and efficient renewable energy supply and storage for the county;
- ii. Facilitating the county to become a leader in the production of sustainable and renewable energy for national and international consumption through research, technology development and innovation; and
- iii. Supporting on-land and off-shore renewable energy production in line with CDP Objective 3.3

Development Plan Objective: **CDP8.12** Renewable Energy Development

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

To support the implementation of the *National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP)*, the *Clare Wind Energy Strategy* and the *Clare Renewable Energy Strategy* to facilitate the development of renewable energy developments in rural areas to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050 subject to the requirement of the RES SEA Environmental Report and the mitigation measures arising from the CDP Appropriate Assessment as contained in Volume 10(a).

Development Plan Objective: **CDP11.44** Energy Security

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

To promote and facilitate the sustainable development, maintenance and upgrading of electricity and gas network infrastructure, to integrate renewable energy sources, thereby creating a secure and efficient energy supply and storage system for County Clare which is ready to meet increased demand as the regional economy grows.

Development Plan Objective **CDP11.47**: Renewable Energy

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a To encourage and to favourably consider proposals for renewable energy developments, including community owned developments, and ancillary facilities in order to meet national, regional and county renewable energy targets, and to facilitate a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the promotion of a low carbon economy;
- b To assess future renewable energy-related development proposals having regard to the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy 2023-2029 in Volume 5 of this plan and associated SEA and AA;
- c To support the sustainable development of renewable wind energy (on-shore and offshore) at appropriate locations and of its related grid infrastructure in County Clare, in accordance with all relevant policies, guidance and guidelines pertaining to the protection of the environment and protected habitats and species, and to assess proposals having regard to the *Clare Wind Energy Strategy* in Volume 6 of this plan and the associated SEA and AA, or any subsequent updated adopted strategy and to national Wind Energy Guidelines;
- d To prepare a new and updated Wind Energy Strategy for County Clare during the lifetime of this Development Plan, subject to the publication of the update to the *Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2006*;
- e To strike an appropriate balance between facilitating renewable and wind energy-related development and protecting the residential amenities of neighbouring properties;
- f To support and facilitate the development of new options and technological advances in relation to renewable energy production and storage, that may emerge over the lifetime of this Plan;
- g To support the integration of indigenous renewable energy production and grid injection;
- h To ensure that all proposals for renewable energy developments and ancillary facilities in the County are in full compliance with the requirements of the SEA and Habitats Directives and Objective CDP3.3 of this plan; and
- i To promote and market the County as a leader of renewable energy provision;

Development Plan Objective **CDP 14.2** Settled Landscape

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

To permit development in areas designated as 'settled landscapes' to sustain and enhance quality of life and residential amenity and promote economic activity subject to:

- Conformity with all other relevant provisions of the Plan and the availability and protection of resources.
- Selection of appropriate sites in the first instance within this landscape, together with consideration of the details of siting and design, are directed towards minimising visual impacts.
- Regard being given to avoiding intrusions on scenic routes and on ridges or shorelines.

Developments in these areas will be required to demonstrate:

- That the site has been selected to avoid visual prominence.
- That the site layouts avail of existing topography and vegetation to reduce visibility from scenic routes, walking trails, water bodies, public amenities and roads.
- That design for buildings and structures reduce visual impact through careful choice of forms, finishes and colours, and that any site works seek to reduce visual impact.

Development Plan Objective: **CDP15.3** European Sites

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To afford the highest level of protection to all designated European sites in accordance with the relevant Directives and legislation on such matters;
- b) To require all planning applications for development that may have (or cannot rule out) likely significant effects on European sites in view of the site's Conservation Objectives, either in isolation or in combination with other plans or projects, to submit a Natura Impact Statement in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended); and
- c) To recognise and afford appropriate protection to any new or modified SPAs or SACs that are identified during the lifetime of this development plan, through the planning application process, bearing in mind proposals for development outside of a European site may also have an indirect effect.

Development Plan Objective **CDP15.12** Biodiversity and Habitat Protection

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To protect and promote the sustainable management of the natural heritage, flora and fauna of the county both within protected areas and in the general landscape through the promotion of biodiversity, the conservation of natural habitats and the enhancement of new and existing habitats, and through the integration of Green Infrastructure (GI), Blue Infrastructure and ecosystem services including landscape, heritage, biodiversity and management of invasive and alien species into the Development Plan;
- b) To promote the conservation of biodiversity through the protection of sites of biodiversity importance and wildlife corridors, both within and between the designated sites and the wider Plan area;
- c) To support the implementation of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan, National Biodiversity Action Plan and National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan;

- d) To ensure there is no net loss of potential Lesser Horseshoe Bat feeding habitats, treelines and hedgerows within 2.5km of known roosts;
- e) To implement and monitor the actions as set out in the Clare County Biodiversity Plan; and
- f) To promote biodiversity net gain in any new plans/projects/policies to promote development that leave biodiversity in a better state than before.

Development Plan Objective **CDP16.8** Sites, Features and Objects of Archaeological Interest  
It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To safeguard sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally;
- b) To secure the preservation (i.e. preservation in situ or in exceptional cases preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, and of sites, features and objects of archaeological and historical interest generally.
- c) In securing such preservation, to have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht;
- d) To have regard to the government publication 'Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage 1999' in relation to protecting sites, features and objects of archaeological interest;
- e) To advocate for greater financial assistance for the maintenance and improvement of features of archaeological interest in County Clare.

### 3.6 Clare Wind Energy Strategy

The subject site is primarily within the 'Strategic' designation for windfarm developments (7 turbines), as well as being within an area 'Acceptable in Principle' (1 turbine), as set out in the Wind Energy Strategy.

Under the Wind Energy Strategy, 'Strategic Areas' are considered to be eminently suitable for wind farm development and are of strategic importance because of:

- Good/excellent wind resources
- Access to grid
- Distance from properties and
- Outside any Natura 2000 sites

Projects within these areas must:

- Demonstrate conformity with existing and approved wind farms to avoid visual clutter.
- Be designed and developed in line with the Wind Energy Development Guidelines, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2006) in terms of siting, layout and environmental studies.
- Provide a Habitats Directive Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitat Regulations if the site is located in close proximity to a Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Area.
- Be developed in a comprehensive manner avoiding the piecemeal development of the areas designated as 'strategic'.

Target wind energy generation from strategic areas is 400 MW.

Areas 'Acceptable in Principle' are considered suitable for wind farm development because of:

- Sufficient wind speeds,
- Access to grid network, and
- Established patterns of inquiries.

Projects within these areas must:

- Demonstrate conformity with existing and approved wind farms to avoid visual clutter.
- Be designed and developed in line with the Planning Guidelines in terms of siting, layout and environmental studies.
- Provide a Habitats Directive Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitat Regulations if situated in proximity to a Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Area.

Target wind energy generation from Acceptable in Principle areas is 150 MW

The windfarm is primarily located in the Slieve Callan Uplands Landscape Character Area (LCA). The proposed turbines are sited in marginal upland characterised by commercial forestry, agricultural and bog lands. The landscape in this LCA has a medium to low landscape sensitivity rating to wind energy. Two of the eight proposed turbines are located within the Malbay Coastal Farmlands LCA which is designated as 'High' sensitivity to windfarm developments as set out in the Wind Energy Strategy.

The location of the subject site relative to the 'Acceptable in Principle' designation is set out in Figure 2, below.

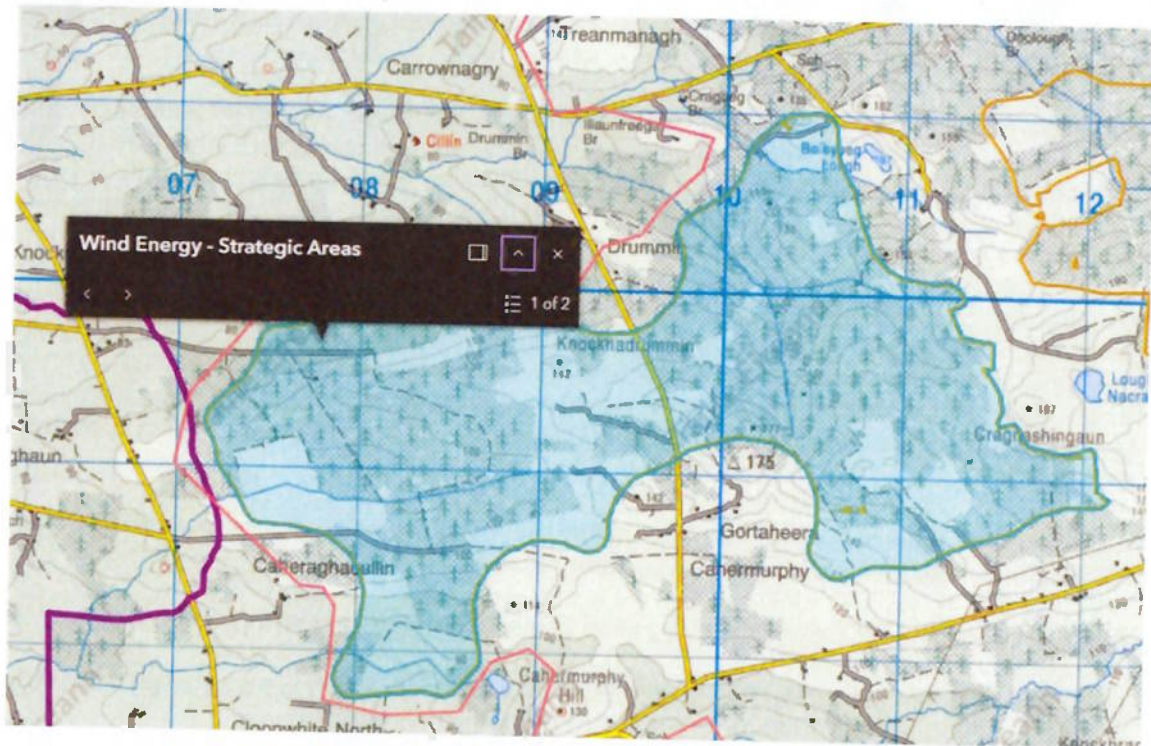


Figure 2: Site location relative to Strategic (blue) and Acceptable in Principle (red)

#### **4.0 Relevant Planning History**

**20/658:**

Application by MCRE Windfarm Ltd (MCRE) for the development of a windfarm of 10 no. turbines and associated works. This application is largely on the same site as the current SID application. It was refused by the Planning Authority and initially refused by An Bord Pleanála (PL03.311044 refers). Following a High Court Order that decision was quashed and remitted back to the Board (assigned file no. PL03.318525). No decision has been made on this application to date.

**19/159:** Permission granted for an amendment to a previously permitted Wind Farm in the townland of Cahermurphy, Kilmihil, Co. Clare (Clare County Council Pl. Ref. P14-551, An Bord Pleanála PL03.245189) A ten-year planning permission is sought for the proposed development which will amend the height of the turbine no. 3 only of the previously permitted Cahermurphy Wind Farm. The proposed development will consist of the provision of a larger wind turbine with a tip height of up to 150m (increase in tip height of 19m from the previously approved 131 m turbine) at the previously permitted location of turbine no. 3 and associated site works

**18/492:** Permission granted for revisions to a previously permitted electrical substation and all associated works. The proposed development constitutes a revision and reduction of the substation design previously permitted at the same location under the provisions of Clare County Council Planning Reference 14-551 (An Bord Pleanála PL03.245189)

**14/551:** Permission refused by Clare County Council, Granted on Appeal by An Bord Pleanála (PL03.245189) on 28/7/2016, for:

a ten year planning permission to construct a windfarm and all associated infrastructure in the townland of Cahermurphy, Kilmihil. The proposed windfarm will comprise a) the provision of a total of 4 No. wind turbines, with a maximum ground to top blade tip height of up to 131m, b) upgrading of existing and provision of new internal access roads, c) provision of a wind anemometry mast ( up to 90m in height ), d) borrow pit, e) an electricity sub-station with control rooms and f) associated equipment, underground electricity connection cabling, temporary construction compound and all ancillary site works, and includes the upgrading of site access junctions. The current proposed development is intended to replace an existing planning permission for a six turbine wind farm development permitted under Pl. Ref. 03-2071, as extended by Pl. Ref. 09-267 and pl. Ref. 13-507 which is valid until 2019. This application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

**13-507** – Granted - to Extend the Appropriate Period of Planning Permission P09/267 and P03/2071 for a 6mw Windfarm and associated facilities.

**09-267** – Granted - for Extension of Duration in respect of planning ref no. P03/2071.

**03-2071** – Granted (at appeal PL03 .205692) - to erect 6 No. 1 MW wind turbines, 1 No. 40m Wind Monitoring Mast (Temporary) Service roadways and control house .

## **5.0 Views of the authority on the effects of the proposed development on the environment and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the authority**

### **5.1 Planning Policy**

Under the Clare Wind Energy Strategy (WES) the majority of the subject site is located within an area designated as 'Strategic' for wind energy developments. The Strategy recognises the potential for this area for large to medium sized windfarms based on its topography and noting the proximity to Moneypoint. The development as proposed would facilitate between 50.4MW to 57.6 MW of power.

The Commission is advised that the existing WES was originally prepared in 2009 and incorporated into the then 2005 - 2011 Clare County Development Plan by means of a variation on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2009. This strategy was then incorporated into the 2011 – 2017 Development Plan and in line with Circular Letter PL 20-13, the strategy was also incorporated, unchanged, into subsequent Development Plans including the current (2023-2029) Development Plan. The Planning Authority await the publication of the finalised Section 28 wind energy guidelines, before preparing any new or updated wind energy strategy (CDP Objective 11.47 (d)).

Specifically, with regard to the subject site location, it is noted that the proposal is located within an area primarily designated as 'Strategic' in the WES due to available wind resources, distance from properties and proximity from European site. Thus, solely from a planning policy perspective, the Planning Authority recognises that the development as proposed would, in principle, be in compliance with the designations as set out in the current County Development Plan and associated Wind Energy Strategy noting also European, national and regional level policy objectives with respect to renewable energy.

The Planning Authority notes the significant level of existing and proposed windfarm developments in the West Clare area and is concerned that the manner in which further proposals are being advanced lacks a coordinated or strategic approach. This has clear implications for the proper assessment of cumulative impacts, particularly in relation to visual and residential amenity, landscape character, construction activity and associated road impacts, as well as potential effects on wildlife and biodiversity. The submission of a separate concurrent application for grid connection infrastructure compounds these concerns and reinforces the perception of piecemeal development. While the Planning Authority recognises the objectives of CDP Policy 11.47, which seek to support renewable energy development in line with national, regional and county targets and the transition to a low-carbon economy,

It should be noted therefore that the existing wind energy strategy has been in place for over 16 years and remains the planning policy framework that guides wind energy developments. Over this period of time there has been advancements in turbine technology in terms of their energy output and also in terms of their height and scale, whereby it is noted in this instance the tip height of the turbines is between 180m to 185m – representing the highest turbines proposed to be developed in the county. There is a concern that the existing Section 28 guidelines do not account for such heights and scale of turbines, and in the absence of updated Section 28 guidance it is considered that the cumulative impacts arising in the wider area are material considerations. In this context, it is considered that the proposal would result

in an undue proliferation of turbines at this location, notwithstanding its designation within the Wind Energy Strategy.

## **5.2 Visual Amenity**

The subject site is located within a 'Settled Landscape' where Objective CDP 14.2 applies. Under this designation, developments are required to demonstrate the sites have been selected to avoid visually prominent locations, that layouts avail of existing topography and vegetation to reduce visibility from scenic routes, walking trails, water bodies public amenities and roads; and that design for buildings and structures reduce visual impact through careful choice of forms, finishes and colours.

The landscape type here is similar to that identified in the Departmental Guidelines as 'Mountain Moorland' which recognise that given the typical extensive areas of continuous unenclosed ground, larger wind energy developments may be accommodated because they correspond in terms of scale. The guidelines for these landscape areas advise that a random layout with irregular spacing and high turbines may be appropriate for these areas also. The turbines as proposed in this instance are to have a total tip height of up to 180-185m. Under the landscape character assessment of the wind energy strategy, this area is considered to have capacity to accommodate small to large windfarms.

In support of the application the applicants have carried out a detailed landscape impact assessment and have included a number of photomontages from surrounding areas. Given the spatial extent of the site, together with the height and overall scale of the development it is considered that the proposal would significantly alter the overall character and appearance of this landscape. The photomontages as submitted with the application are noted and the impact of the development on the landscape is particularly evident from the local viewpoints. In terms of longer-range viewpoints particular concern relates to the following:

Photomontage no. 3 is a viewpoint north of Kilmihil Village. This shows the proposed development relative to the existing Cahermurphy windfarm. It is clear that the turbines are distinct from the existing structures in terms of their height and will dominate the ridgeline at this location. This photomontage also shows the proximity of existing dwelling houses to the site.



*Figure no. 3: Extract from EIAR (photomontage no.3)*

Photomontage no. 4 is taken from outside Miltown Malbay on the R474 which is a designated Scenic Route. The proposed development introduces additional turbines along this viewpoint consistent with existing and permitted turbines in the area. The new proposal would extend above the skyline and alter its established profile. From the Scenic Route, the visual effect is readily evident, with wind energy development becoming the dominant feature within the landscape and the primary focus of views when travelling this section of the route. In this regard, the proposal would make a significant contribution to the overall change in landscape character and further demonstrates the cumulative visual impact arising when considered alongside other windfarm developments in the area.



Figure no. 4: Extract from EIAR (photomontage no.4)

Photomontage no. 9 is from Doughmore, from a coastal location looking inland. This is a view across a relatively flat landscape with a ridgeline in the long range. There are a number of houses in the near to mid-range and Slieve Callan windfarm is also in view. This is an open viewpoint which gives a clear indication of the overall height and scale of the turbines within the landscape and the prominence of same within the wider area.



Figure no. 5: Extract from EIAR (photomontage no.9)

The Planning Authority recognise that the majority of the site is designated as 'Strategic' in the wind energy strategy, and the proposal being sited within same, and utilising land so designated would appear in principle to comply with the strategy. However, it is clear to the Planning Authority that the proposal would significantly alter the landscape character at this location. The turbines as proposed (tip height of 180-185m) would be the highest turbines permitted in the County. Given the spatial extent of the site, the height, scale and number of the turbines as proposed, it is considered that the proposal would be injurious to the visual amenities of the area and would have a significant visual impact, both locally and over greater distances from houses, roads, amenity locations and scenic routes. In addition it is considered that the proposal would expand the proliferation of wind turbines across this open landscape negatively impacting on the amenities and altering the character of the area.

### **5.3 Residential Amenity**

In respect of residential amenity issues, the Commission is advised that it is an objective of the Development Plan as set out under CDP 11.47 to strike an appropriate balance between facilitating renewable and wind energy-related development and protecting the residential amenities of neighbouring properties.

The Planning Authority notes the analysis in terms of shadow flicker and noise as carried out in the EIAR where it is noted that there will be some exceedances noise levels. The curtailment measures (12.6.2 of EIAR) for noise are noted and it would appear subject to the implementation of same then any issues may be addressed. In term of amplitude modulation the applicants propose to investigate such matters in the event they arise. However there is a concern in respect of reliance on curtailment measures and post operational noise management issues to address impacts to local properties.

It is considered that if the Commission are minded to grant permission in this instance, then it is respectfully recommended that full details of the mitigation and noise management measures are clarified before permission is granted and how same will be implemented in order to address any concerns arising from local residents at the operational stage.

#### 5.4 Traffic

The haul route for the turbines is from Foynes Port, N69, M18, onto the N68, R484 and along the local roads to the site (L-2082 and L-2048) as set out below (figure no. 6). Temporary accommodation works along the route from the R484 to the site will also be required to enable access in particular for larger vehicles. The main traffic implications that may arise in respect of this development are during the construction period and set out in the EIAR as follows:

- During the 10 days when the concrete foundations are poured, this would result in an increase in traffic levels by 8.6% on the N68, 14.9% on the R484, and an increase of 54% on the local road leading to the site.
- During the remaining 344 days for site preparation and ground works, traffic levels would increase from 3.5% on the N68, 6.1% on the R484 and 22.3% on the local road.
- During the 22 days when the various large component parts of the wind turbine plant are delivered to the site using extended articulated HGVs, the increase in traffic volumes will range by 2.1% on the N68, to 3.6% on the R484 between the N68 and Kilmihil. On the L-2082 traveling north from Kilmihil it is forecast traffic volumes will increase by 13.4%, with a 16.7% increase forecast on the short section of the L-2048.

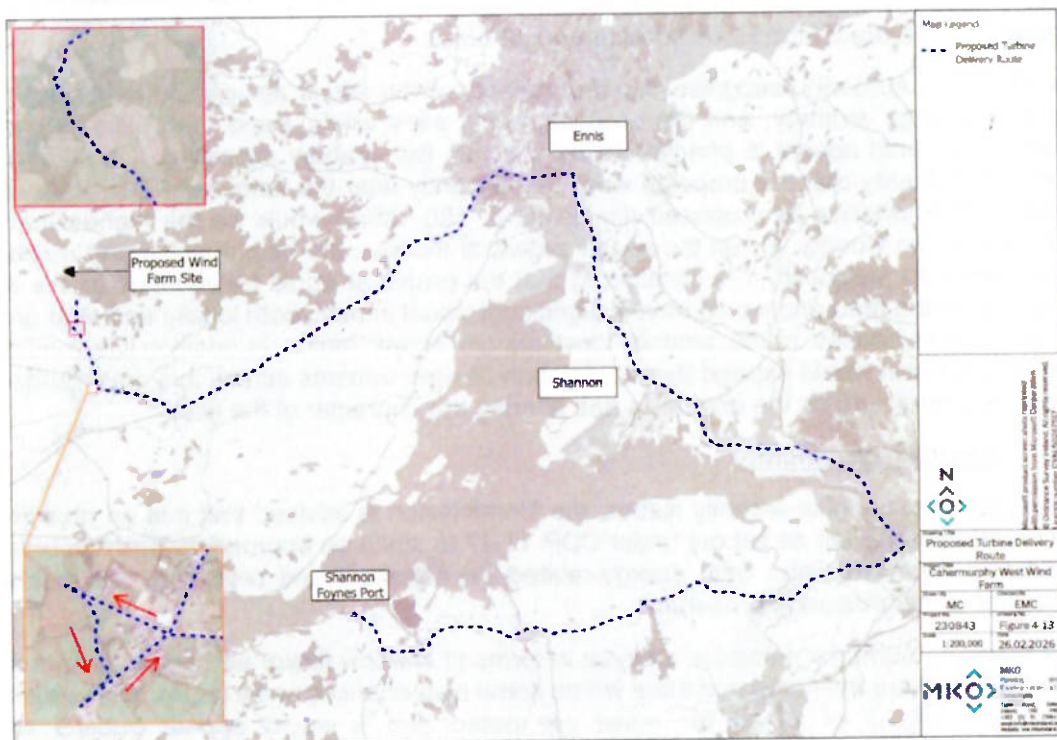


Figure no. 6: Extract from EIAR showing Haul Route

The Planning Authority has serious concerns in respect of the impact of this development on the public road network, and in particular the local roads serving the site which will be mostly affected by this development. At present these roads are poor in terms of capacity and width and the subject development will inevitably give rise to impacts on the structure of the road.

In addition there is a concern that any road closures will have a knock-on impact on the wider road network by reason of diversions and use of other roads which may not have capacity for the level of traffic generated. Furthermore, the proposal in conjunction with the separate grid connection application will lead to additional disturbance and road closures and the cumulative impact of such works and disturbance to the local community is of concern.

In the event that the Commission decide to grant permission for this development then appropriate conditions should be attached to incorporate the following:

#### Road Opening Licenses

- Road Opening licences will be required for the overall Grid Connection and any other works proposed along the public road.
- Road Opening License fees will automatically be calculated by Map Road Licensing.
- A Bond to cover any reinstatement works shall be required
- A Clerk of works will be required to supervise the works from Clare County Council, the applicant shall bear these costs
- The applicant is to provide a community relations officer.

#### Road Reinstatement

- All Junctions with Opening and Changes in Direction of routes at Junctions with require Full Junction reinstatement in compliance with Standard Drawing SD4 of the Guidelines for Managing Opening in Public Roads, Second Edition (Rev 1) April 2017
- Launch And received pits from Directional drilling will require reinstatement in compliance with Standard Drawing SD4 of the Guidelines for Managing Opening in Public Roads, Second Edition (Rev 1) April 2017
- Any cabling laid on Local roads shall receive Double Surface dressing on 100mm paved Cl.806 full road reinstatement. Surface dressing to be carried out by an approved contractor, works to be completed within the surface dressing season in compliance with Standard Drawing SD5 of the Guidelines for Managing Opening in Public Roads, Second Edition (Rev 1) April 2017 and in compliance with the IAT Guidelines for Surface Dressing.
- Any cabling shall also comply with the Department Guidance "Interim Guidance to Road Authorities regarding the proposed placement of Medium or High Voltage electricity assets, including ducts, cables, and associated infrastructure under public roads", 2026.

#### Road Closures

- Road closures are to be advertised in advance of works with key dates provided taking account of diversion routes.
- Road closures and diversion routes are to be agreed with the Kilrush Municipal District Office.

#### Bridges/Culverts/Pipelines

- Pre-condition survey to be carried out on all Bridges/Culverts and pipelines along the route to the site.
- Damage to any structure will require immediate notification to the Kilrush Municipal District Office - full replacement will be required to damaged structures and pipelines

- Post works surveys of each Bridge/Culvert structures will be required.

Wind Turbine/Blade Delivery:

- Proposed routes to be agreed with the Kilrush Municipal Districts in County Clare
- Land take/land dedications are the responsibility of the applicant.
- Road Opening License will be required if the road network is to be temporarily altered.
- Transport times and dates to be agreed with Local Gardai and Local Authority

Bond:

- It is recommended that a planning condition is attached to include for a bond to cover damage to national, regional and local roads within the county that will be affected by this development.

**5.5 Natural Heritage**

The Hen Harrier Enhancement Plan included in Appendix 7-8 with the application is noted. This states that the wind farm lies within a non-designated regionally important area for hen harrier in West Clare (Ruddock et al., 2016), designated for hen harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). It is noted however, that as part the submission from the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage in relation to ACP Case reference: PL03.311044 (Pl. Ref: 20658) on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 the Department acknowledged that the population of Hen Harrier within the project area is of international importance and that there has been a short-term decline in the density of this bird species of 50% since 2010. It was further noted that there are historical records of breeding Hen Harrier in and near the site in 2015 and 2020. The decline in nesting Hen Harrier at this location is clearly a concern to the Department and the significance of the number of wind farms at this location is an inseparable part of this concern.

As is noted within the Enhancement Plan (2.1.2) *“There is a high likelihood of the Proposed Lands being encountered by hen harrier as breeding hen harrier occur locally. As extrapolated from the results of the most recent National Hen Harrier Survey (Ruddock et al., 2024), hen harrier were confirmed to have bred in the 10km grid squares which overlap with the Proposed Lands in 2022 (i.e. R17) in 2022. The remaining Proposed Lands are within the 10km grid square R07, which was not surveyed during the national survey. Previous to this, hen harrier were confirmed to have bred in the 10km grid squares R17 as per the Bird Atlas 2007-11. There is, therefore, longstanding breeding activity locally”.*

The selected enhancement areas are located significantly closer to the identified breeding territories than the foraging habitat that will be potentially lost at the proposed windfarm area, i.e. between 800m and 5.8km separation distance between the territories and the windfarm site. This represents significant disturbance as there are three proposed areas for permanent felling of forestry, two of which are located c.800m from the 2024 nest location. The third felling area is located within 1km of the hen harrier territory occupied in both 2023 and 2024. The selected farmland enhancement areas are located from immediately adjacent to breeding habitat up to 1.6km from an identified breeding territory. This cumulatively represents significant disturbance to the species with significant felling required directly adjacent to the breeding areas.

Most hunting by males and females is carried out within 2km and 1km, respectively, from nests (Arroyo et al., 2014) therefore felling to accommodate the enhancement could lead to a failure to thrive or successfully fledge young while the enhancement works are being undertaken.

The submission from the Department with respect to P 20/658 provided more up to date information from the 2023/2024 breeding season with respect to Hen Harriers. The results clearly demonstrate the significant usage across the site and within the surrounding landscape of the proposed development. This builds and adds to the information provided in the original application documentation which highlights the international importance of the North & West Clare region for this Annex I species under the EU Birds Directive.

The Planning Authority considers that there is a lack of certainty in terms of utilising enhancement works to benefit the hen harrier population, given also the quantum of operational, permitted and proposed turbines within 20km of the site and the cumulative impact of same. This is validated by the monitoring information for the North & West Clare region which has had a *short-term decline of 50% in the density of Hen Harriers in this area since 2010 with 12-16 pairs recorded in 2010 and 3-9 pairs recorded in 2015*. Recent compliance monitoring associated with windfarms in immediate proximity to the Cahermurphy Windfarm recorded breeding outside of the windfarm boundary which may be due to displacement of the species from its known breeding sites due to disturbance.

The cumulative and in-combination effects of existing windfarm developments, when considered alongside the proposed Cahermurphy Windfarm, give rise to serious concerns for the internationally important Hen Harrier population. In this regard, the application does not adequately or conclusively demonstrate that windfarm development in the area, either individually or cumulatively with the proposed scheme, is not contributing to a decline in breeding success within the locality.

## **5.6 Peat Management**

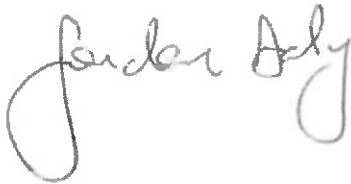
From examination of the EIAR it is noted that there is a total of 79,450<sup>3</sup> of peat and 101,950m<sup>3</sup> of spoil to be managed on this site, some of which is proposed to be moved and deposited in the borrow pits. It is considered that the amount of peat and spoil material to be managed on this site is significant. In addition having regard to the upland nature of the site, the predominance of blanket bog soils, the extensive network of drainage channels, the proposed clear-felling of forestry, and the requirement for multiple watercourse crossings and road upgrades, the proposed development raises serious environmental concerns in particular in respect of peat management.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

The above report sets out the views of the Planning Authority in accordance with Section 37E (4) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. It is respectfully requested that the Commission take the above issues into consideration in the assessment of this application.

In summary the Planning Authority notes that the proposal is broadly supported by the designations in the existing Wind Energy Strategy and the Development Plan noting however that there has not been any updated national Section 28 guidelines. In this instance there is a serious concern in respect of the visual impact of this development having regard to the height and number of turbines, and the spatial extent of the development. In addition there are serious concerns in respect of the impact of the development on the carrying capacity of the road network in the area by reason of the extent of vehicle movements proposed. Impacts on residential amenity are highlighted noting CDP 11.47 which seeks to strike an appropriate balance between facilitating renewable and protecting residential amenity. The impact of the development on the Hen Harrier and peat management on site is also of concern.

In the event that the Commission decide to grant of permission it is recommended that appropriate conditions are attached for a windfarm development of this scale including residential amenity (noise/shadow flicker levels), construction management and oversight, road network (as set out in Section 5.4 of this report), peat management, protection of water quality, bond conditions, and relevant community gain conditions.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gordon Daly".

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Gordon Daly  
Chief Executive  
01<sup>st</sup> May 2026

**Minutes of the May Monthly Meeting of Clare County Council held in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare and via MS Teams on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.**

**Present:**

Councillors P. Daly, P. Murphy, A. Baker Bashua, T. Guilfoyle, C. Colleran Molloy, T. O'Callaghan, P. Hayes, A. O'Callaghan, P. Burke, T. O'Brien, C. Ryan, D. Griffin, R. Hartigan, J. Crowe, P. O'Gorman, M. Begley, T. Mulcahy, J. Ryan, B. Slattery, J. Garrihy, S. Talty, J. Killeen, D. Gould, R. McInerney, G. Keating, M. Shannon.

- Mr. Gordon Daly, Chief Executive.
- Mr. John Corry, Meetings Administrator.
- Ms. Aoife Coote, Assistant Staff Officer, Corporate Services & Governance.
- Ms. Ann Reynolds, Director of People & Culture, Corporate Services & Governance, ICT & Digital Services.
- Ms. Noeleen Fitzgerald, Director of Finance, Investment & Enterprise.
- Mr. Jason Murphy, Director of Planning, Economic, Rural & Community Development.
- Dr. Carmel Kirby, Director of Transportation, Climate Action, Recreation, Environmental & Emergency Services.
- Mr. Alan Farrell, Director of Housing Delivery, Infrastructure Provision & Land Activation.
- Ms. Siobhan McNulty, Director of Tourism, Festivals, Libraries & Cultural Services.

**Present via MS Teams:**

- Cllrs. M. Howard, I. Lynch

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. P. Murphy presided.

**Votes of sympathy**

Votes of sympathy were extended to the following:

- The Kinnane Family, on the death of Michael Kinnance, RIP.
- The Mullins Family, on the death of Tony Mullins, RIP.

Cllr. T. Guilfoyle proposed the meeting be adjourned for 15 minutes as a mark of respect on the passing of colleague Tony Mullins. This was seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy and agreed by the members present.

**Item 1: Minutes of Council Meetings.**

- a. Ar moladh Cllr. J. Garrihy  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. O’Gorman agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the April Meeting of Clare County Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026 be adopted and signed.”

**Item 2: Matters Arising.**

Cllr. P. Hayes requested an update on the rollout of CCTV to address illegal dumping.

A. Reynolds, Director of Service, advised that Data Protection impact assessments and business cases are currently being developed for two pilot sites by the Environment Department, following completion a meeting of the oversight committee will be convened to consider the business cases.

C. Kirby, Director of Service, further advised that sites in Tulla and Kilrush are presently under consideration. Public Consultation will go live in the coming days to gather feedback on the proposed use of CCTV at these pilot sites. GDPR compliance is being addressed with the preparation of a draft Data Protection Impact Statement.

**Item 3. Comhfhreagras/Correspondence.**

**The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda:**

1. Correspondence dated 10<sup>th</sup> April 2026 from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in relation to the Ennis Inner Relief Road.
2. Correspondence dated 24<sup>th</sup> April 2026 from the Office of the Minister of State, John Cummins in relation to judicial reviews.
3. Correspondence dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 2026 from the Office of the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration in relation to the Garda Divisional Structure in Clare.
4. Correspondence dated 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026 from Cathal Crowe T.D. in relation to funding for road maintenance in Clare.
5. Correspondence dated 28<sup>th</sup> April 2026 from Cathal Crowe T.D. in relation to funding for road maintenance in Clare.

6. Acknowledgement dated 27<sup>th</sup> April 2026 from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in relation to Derelict Sites Levy.
7. Acknowledgement dated 17<sup>th</sup> April 2026 from the Office of the Minister for Health in relation to the national cardiovascular policy and strategy.
8. Acknowledgement dated 17<sup>th</sup> April 2026 from the Office of the Minister for Transport in relation to the Limerick Northern Distributer Road.
9. Acknowledgement dated 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026 from An Garda Siochana in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour.
10. Resolution dated 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026 from Carlow County Council in relation to ESB Networks.
11. Resolution dated 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026 from Monaghan County Council in relation to a Business Grant.
12. Resolution dated 24<sup>th</sup> April 2026 from South Dublin County Council in relation to Bessborough Mother and Baby Institutions.
13. Resolution dated 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026 from Roscommon County Council in relation to a Commission for the Validation of Planning Objections.

Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy referred to the correspondence dated 10<sup>th</sup> April 2026 from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in relation to the Ennis Inner Relief Road. She welcomed the reply and the traction that was received from the motion, she advised that the Council are progressing plans to submit applications for funding.

**Item 4: Minutes of the Municipal District Meetings**

a. Ar moladh Cllr. P. Daly  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Howard agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Meeting held on the 10 March, 2026 be noted.”

b. Ar moladh Cllr. A. Baker Bashua  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Howard agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Special Meeting held on the 24 March, 2026 be noted.”

c. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Slattery  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Keating agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Meeting held on the 20

January, 2026 be noted.”

**Item 5: Minutes of the Strategic Policy Committee Meetings**

- (a) Ar moladh Cllr. M. Shannon  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Daly agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee meeting held on the 5 December, 2025 be noted.”

**Item 6: Minutes of Corporate Policy Group meeting**

The members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 7 April, 2026 as presented.

**Item 7: Monthly Management Report.**

The Monthly Management report attached to the agenda included key activities in the principal service areas and was noted by the members.

Cllr. T. O’Brien referred to the Killaloe Bridge, Bypass and R494 Upgrade, noting that it is a significant and welcome piece of infrastructure. However, he highlighted that considerable damage was caused during the construction process and that local residents are frustrated with the current condition of the pedestrian bridge and local roads. He appealed to management to address the issues outlined.

Cllr. B. Slattery referred to the integration update and noted that a significant proportion of Ukrainian beneficiaries are located in North Clare. He sought reassurance, in light of reports regarding the withdrawal of State-provided accommodation, that such accommodation would not be replaced with IPAS provision.

Cllr. J. Garrihy referred to the Capital Infrastructure Delivery update and queried whether there was an update on the Doolin Pier project. He also commended the team on the work being undertaken.

Cllr. P. O’Gorman referred to Councillor O’Brien’s earlier comments and noted that raw materials for the Killaloe Bridge, Bypass and R494 Upgrade were sourced from a quarry in Shannon. As a result, he stated that the surrounding roads now require repair.

Cllr. M. Begley supported the comments made by Councillors O’Gorman and O’Brien.

Cllr. P. Hayes requested an update on the Safe Routes to School Programme, noting that progress to date has been slow and does not reflect the needs of local communities.

Cllr. Hayes also sought an update from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) regarding the Tulla Road Junction and when works are expected to commence.

Cllr. M. Shannon referred to the roads network in West Clare and highlighted the poor condition of many roads. He stated that the roads budget needs to be increased and called for a renewed focus on physical infrastructure over the next 12 months.

Cllr. Shannon congratulated Cllr. C. Collieran Molloy on the Europe Day Transition year EU Summit that was held on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May, he noted it was a fantastic event. This was seconded by Cathaoirleach, Cllr. P. Murphy.

Cllr. P. Burke referred to the installation of new bollards in Mountshannon, funded through his General Municipal Allocation (GMA). He noted that the cost was higher than anticipated and had a significant impact on his allocation, illustrating the substantial increase in material costs.

Cllr. R. Hartigan referred to the Active Travel update in relation to the Ardnacrusha to Athlunkard Bridge and queried when is it expected that the National Transport Authority (NTA) will revert on the approval?

A. Farrell, Director of Service, advised that the contract for the works is substantially complete and that minor snags are being finalised. He acknowledged that the condition of the roads has been raised on a number of occasions and confirmed that the local Municipal District is working on the matter with support from the PMO. He noted it would have to be clearly demonstrated that the works in relation to the contract impacted negatively on the condition of the roads and that any funding for these works is separate and that the matter has been raised with the Department and advised that he will liaise with Carmel Kirby and her team to progress the issue.

C. Kirby, Director of Service, acknowledged the points raised in relation to the Safe Routes to School programme and confirmed that engagement with the NTA will continue with a view to securing additional funding. Dr. Kirby advised that she will revert on the queries concerning Junction 13 and the Ardnacrusha to Athlunkard Bridge. She also noted that further detail will be provided at the forthcoming investment plan workshop.

**Item 8: Chief Executives Report in accordance with the requirements of Section 37E (4) and (5) of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended) in relation to the Cahermurphy Windfarm Application.**

The Chief Executive report dated 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2026 was circulated with the agenda. The report was prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 37E (4) and 37E (5) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, following on from the submission of a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) to An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP), known as the Cahermurphy Windfarm.

The development consists of 8 no. wind turbines with an energy output between 50.4MW to 57.6 MW, with a 35-year operational lifespan. A 10-year permission is sought and the application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS). A separate, concurrent application for underground electrical cabling (110kV), which will connect the wind farm to the existing Moneypoint 110kV electrical substation, has also been lodged with the Commission ([VA03.324156](#)).

The specific components of the subject development are as follows:

- Construction of 8 no. wind turbines with a blade tip height range from 180m to 185m inclusive, a hub height range from 98.5m to 110.5m inclusive and a rotor diameter range from 149m to 163m inclusive with associated foundations, hard-standing and assembly areas;

- Construction of 1 no. permanent 110 kV electrical substation including 2 no. control buildings, lightning protection, welfare facilities, car parking, and all associated electrical plant and apparatus, security fencing, external lighting, underground cabling, wastewater holding tank and all associated infrastructure, apparatus and landscaping;
- Underground electrical cabling (33kV) and communications cabling connecting the wind turbines to the proposed on-site 110kV electrical substation and associated ancillary works;
- Erection of 1 no. Meteorological Mast of 100m metres above existing ground level for the measuring of meteorological conditions, including a lightning rod which will extend above the mast;
- Construction of new permanent access roads and upgrade of existing roads to provide access within the site and to connect the wind turbines and associated infrastructure;
- Upgrade of 1 no. new existing agricultural/forestry access to the site, off the L6254 local road, to serve as the sole entrance to the wind farm during its operational phase and to facilitate the delivery of the construction materials and turbine components to site during the construction and operational phases (including the installation of security fencing and gates);
- Development of 2 borrow pits;
- Construction of 2 no. temporary construction compounds and associated ancillary infrastructure including temporary site offices, staff facilities and car-parking areas, all to be removed at end of construction phase;
- Temporary works at 6 no. locations along the N68 national road, R484 regional road and L-2074, L-2082 and L 2048 local roads associated with the facilitation of turbine component and abnormal load delivery to site. These works will primarily include the trimming of vegetation and strengthening of road verges;
- Permanent and temporary site drainage;
- Operational Stage Site Signage;
- Ancillary forestry felling over an area of 21.87ha to facilitate construction and operation of the proposed development;
- Biodiversity enhancement measures including the permanent removal of commercial forestry (deforestation) over an area of 56.3ha and restoration of farmland habitat to good quality hen harrier foraging habitat through diversifying the range and extent of habitats over an area of 67.4ha
- All related site works and ancillary development including landscaping considered necessary to facilitate the proposed development.

The report concludes that the proposal is broadly supported by the designations in the existing Wind Energy Strategy and the Development Plan noting however that there has not been any updated national Section 28 guidelines. In this instance there is a serious concern in respect of the visual impact of this development having regard to the height and number of turbines, and the spatial extent of the development. In addition, there are serious concerns in respect of the impact of the development on the carrying capacity of the road network in the area by reason of the extent of vehicle movements proposed. Impacts on residential amenity are highlighted noting CDP 11.47 which seeks to strike an appropriate balance between facilitating renewable and protecting residential amenity. The impact of the development on the Hen Harrier and

peat management on site is also of concern.

The Elected Members noted that communities across West Clare recognise the importance of renewable energy and the need for Ireland to transition towards cleaner and more sustainable energy sources. However, they expressed growing concern that rural communities are bearing a disproportionate burden in accommodating large-scale wind energy developments, without sufficient consideration of cumulative impacts or the long-term sustainability of those communities.

Members highlighted that there are currently 119 existing or permitted turbines in the West Clare area, with a further 42 turbines awaiting decisions and an additional 15 turbines presently proposed.

They further noted that the concerns being raised locally are reflected in the report prepared by Clare County Council's Planning Authority. While the report indicates that the proposal is broadly supported by the existing Wind Energy Strategy designations and the current Development Plan, it also clearly expresses concern that national guidelines have not been updated.

The following specific concerns were raised by Members:

- The visual impact of the development, particularly in relation to the height, number of turbines, and the overall spatial extent of the proposal.
- The carrying capacity of the road network, having regard to the scale of proposed vehicle movements, along with concerns relating to residential amenity, particularly in the context of Policy CDP 11.47, which seeks to balance renewable energy development with the protection of residents' quality of life.
- Potential impacts on the Hen Harrier population and issues relating to peat management on site.

The Elected Members acknowledged the importance of renewable energy but emphasised that this must be balanced with protecting the viability of rural communities, avoiding the sterilisation of land for future development, and safeguarding landscapes, biodiversity, infrastructure, and residential amenity.

#### **Item 9: Annual Financial Statement 2025**

The Annual Financial Statement for 2025 together with a report was circulated in advance of the agenda.

N. Fitzgerald, Director of Service, Finance, Investment and Enterprise addressed the members and gave a brief presentation which noted the following:

- Expenditure of €277.8million, finished 2025 in line with budget. This comprises of revenue expenditure of operating activities of €205.1m and capital project expenditure of €94.6m.
- Government Debtors at a more manageable level to 2024 but receiving grants of c.€100m takes additional resources to manage this level.
- 90% collection rate of commercial rates in 2025 – outperforming at this level.

- Net variances to budget – rates revaluation, rates collections, loan finance and capital match funding, Road Transportation and Mobility, Housing Voids (offset by positive collections), Energy & Public Lighting, Payroll, Pension/Gratuities/Superannuation. Other income such as road opening IPAS, prior year recovery, Fund capital expenditure, funding of balances on the capital account.
- Capital expenditure or committed in 2026 (Page 8 & 9 in AFS)
  - €1.3m to fund 2025 remediation of Council Housing Vacant stock expenditure incurred where it is not grant funded.
  - €0.25m towards Climate Action plans and initiatives. This will provide match funding provision for future Pathfinder Projects.
  - €0.25m for match funding for recent announcements on Rural Water, Waste Water and Developer Provider Infrastructure rehabilitation.
  - €1.8m to provide additional funding for the 2026 SMDW and fleet replacement
  - A provision of €0.7m was made towards the upgrade of the track at Lees Road.
  - €0.34m for County Burial Ground provision.
  - €0.3m to fund expenditure on Ennistymon Public Realm enhancements
  - €0.2m was set aside for the provision of the Ennis Streetscape Enhancement Scheme
  - €0.14m for potential costs associated with the Aviation conference and European volunteer capital.
  - A provision has been made of €0.25m for Community room provision in the Clare Care Community Facility in Shannon
  - Sites Master Planning– a provision of €0.2m to fund expenditure incurred to date.
  - €0.37 provided for various upgrades required in Glór.
  - €0.1m was set aside to support festivals and events during 2026 and €0.2k for the support of two golf events in 2026.
  - €0.9m was provided for Housing Activation in line with the Council's priorities.

The Elected Members noted that it had been an exceptional year for the Council, reflecting strong financial management by the executive team. However, they emphasised that, as public representatives, it is important to thoroughly interrogate the financial figures. Members expressed a desire for greater involvement in the process and requested additional workshops, noting that the Annual Financial Statement (AFS) process is complex.

Queries were raised in relation to the c.€21 million overspend, public lighting and commercial rates collection which were addressed by N. Fitzgerald.

J. Corry, Meetings Administrator then read out the resolutions to be approved:

1. In accordance with Section 108 of the Local Government Act 2001 and the Local Government (Accounting) Regulations 2014, the Annual Financial Statement of Clare County Council for the financial year ended 31 December 2025 be hereby adopted by the Council.
2. In accordance with Section 104 of the Local Government Act 2001, Council

approval is required for additional expenditure incurred by Divisions, as detailed in Note 16 (page 38) of the Annual Financial Statements, and for the approval of transfers as outlined in Note 14 (page 37), with further explanatory detail included on pages 8 and 9.

Ar moladh Cllr. T. O'Brien  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Daly agus glacadh leis

1. That in accordance with S. 66 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by S. 43 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014 Council approval is required for the payment to Clare Care Shannon.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Crowe  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. D. Griffin agus glacadh leis

J. Corry, Meetings Administrator advised that in order to continue with consideration of reports, a suspension of Standing Orders was required, as the time for dealing with reports had exceeded the time allocated as per Standing Orders. This was agreed by the members present having been proposed by Cllr. T. O'Brien, seconded by Cllr. P. Hayes.

#### **Item 10: LCDC Annual Report 2025**

Report dated 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2026 from Leonore O'Neill, Chief Officer, Clare LCDC was circulated with the agenda along with a copy of the Annual Report. The report states that the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is a statutory committee of Clare County Council and includes representatives from local state agencies, the community voluntary sector as well as other local development and interest groups. The LCDC has prepared and oversees the implementation of the community elements of the Local Economic and Community Plan 2024- 2030 (LECP) which is a 6-year strategy for the County. The committee is also responsible for the Healthy Clare Action Plan and oversight of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) for Clare.

The report notes that the annual report has been prepared in the context of Chapter 2 Section 128B (1) (i) of the Local Government Act 2001, as inserted by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, which states that one of the functions of a Local Community Development Committee is: "to prepare, adopt and submit to the local authority a report in relation to the performance of its functions during the year immediately preceding the year in which the report is submitted".

The LCDC Annual Report 2025 was adopted by the members present having been proposed by Cllr. j. Killeen, seconded by Cllr. S. Talty and agreed by the members present.

**Item 11: Climate Action Plan Progress Report 2026**

Climate Action Plan Progress Report 2026 was circulated with the agenda. The report gives an update on the progress and implementation of the Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029.

The report outlines progress on the following:

1. Clare Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029
2. Annual Progress Report 2025
3. Policy and Legislation
4. Sustainable Development Goals
5. Strategic Goals
6. Emissions and Energy Targets
7. ISO50001 Energy Management
8. Monitoring and Reporting
9. Climate Action in Practice highlighting:
  - Governance
  - Built Environment
  - Transportation
  - Communities & Partnership
  - Natural Environment
  - Decarbonisation Zone

The Climate Action Plan Progress Report 2026 was noted by the members present.

Anne O’Sullivan, Senior Engineer, Climate Action, Environment and Water Services gave a presentation to the elected members on the progress and implementation of the Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029.

**Item 12: Annual Energy Review**

Chris Dixon O’ Mara, Energy Officer, Climate Action, Environment and Water Services gave a presentation to the elected members on the Energy Performance Review.

The presentation covered the following:

- Overview of Energy Management – ISO 50001 Accreditation.
- Energy Consumption and Costs – Annual Energy Consumption 2019 – 2025 and consumption by Energy type.
- Target and Legislation – Climate and Energy targets
- Energy Projects in Transportation and Public Lighting

The Energy Performance Review was noted by the members present.

The elected members thanked Ms. O’Sullivan and Mr. Dixon O’Mara for their presentations, and they raised queries in relation to public lighting, arterial drainage, the Crusheen and Ballycar rail corridor, rollout of EV chargers and role of tidy towns.

Ms. O’Sullivan and Mr. Dixon O’Mara replied to queries raised by the elected members.

### **Item 13: Civic Reception**

Report dated 5<sup>th</sup> May 2025 from John Corry, Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services & Governance was circulated with the agenda. The report states that at the May meeting of the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) the members considered a nomination for a Civic Reception from Cathaoirleach Paul Murphy to honour Clare Civil Defence. The nomination was made to the CPG in accordance with Standing Order Number 72.

The report notes that the proposal for the award of a Civic Reception is to acknowledge Clare Civil Defence and for over 70 years they have provided vital voluntary support to emergency services and the wider community. Their contribution spans emergency response, public event safety, search and rescue, and severe weather operations. In light of the national recognition of the organisation’s 75th anniversary in 2025, he proposed that a Civic Reception would be an appropriate acknowledgement of the outstanding service, professionalism, and commitment of Civil Defence volunteers in County Clare.

Having considered the nomination, the Corporate Policy Group recommended to Council the Award of a Civic Reception to Clare Civil Defence in recognition of their outstanding voluntary support to emergency services and the wider community in Co. Clare.

This was approved by the members present having been proposed by Cllr. T. O’Brien, seconded by Cllr. M. Shannon and agreed by the members present.

### **Item 14: Footpath Maintenance**

Ar moladh Cllr. D. Griffin

“That Clare County Council confirms the kilometres of footpaths under Council

responsibility across the county, breaks them down by Municipal District and outlines in the response the resources spent to upgrade, improve, clean and maintain these footpaths per Municipal District in 2025 and the projected spend per Municipal District in 2026.” (Q)

**C. Kirby, Director of Service, Transportation, Climate Action, Recreation, Environmental and Emergency Services replied as follows:**

“Under Section 10(5)(a) of the 1993 Roads Act each Local Authority as a road authority is required to maintain a roads register which provides a unique reference number and details the length and category of each road across the county. However, there is no such statutory requirement to maintain a footpath register and as such the level of detail required by the Notice of Motion i.e kilometres of footpath per Municipal District is not currently available or easily ascertainable.

The upgrading and improvement of footpaths in each Municipal District is typically a reactive maintenance approach and the funding allocated is detailed in Table 1. The funding for footpath remediation is from the Council’s own resources as detailed in the Schedule of Municipal District Works (SMDW). This funding can be further supplemented by both the Development Contribution scheme, for specific projects, and Active Travel measures.

Footpaths are predominantly a feature of urban settlement areas of which there are a total of 83 across the county consisting of key towns, small towns, large villages and small villages.

<b>Footpath Programme SMDW</b>	<b>2025 Expenditure</b>	<b>2026 Budget</b>
Ennistymon Footpath Programme (WCMD)	113096.32	97000
Kilrush Footpath Programme (WCMD)	103724.03	123000
Killaloe MD Footpath Programme	88704.8	111000
Shannon MD Footpath Programme	55302.62	35000
Ennis MD Footpath Programme	34000	34000

**Table 1.**

The resources required for the ongoing cleaning and maintenance of footpaths ie street cleaning is detailed in Table 2. The variation in service delivery, resourcing and expenditure for footpath/street cleaning is due to the varying demands, number of settlements and geographic extent of each Municipal District.”

<b>Municipal District</b>	<b>Expenditure (€) 2025</b>	<b>Budget (€) 2026</b>	<b>Staffing Resources</b>	<b>Vehicles Assigned</b>
Ennis MD	966,440	1,069,000	10 full-time staff plus weekend cover	4 vehicles
Shannon MD	258,737	258,000	3 full-time staff	2 sweepers, 1 bin truck
Killaloe MD	136,104	132,000	1 full-time staff member	1 hired sweeper

<b>Municipal District</b>	<b>Expenditure (€) 2025</b>	<b>Budget (€) 2026</b>	<b>Staffing Resources</b>	<b>Vehicles Assigned</b>
Ennistymon (WCMD)	345,655	305,000	5-6 staff members	1 sweeper, 1 pick-up
Kilrush (WCMD)	312,907	299,000	5-6 staff members	2 sweepers, 2 pick-ups

**Table 2**

Cllr. D. Griffin thanked the Director for the reply and highlighted the need for a more robust and clearly defined policy on footpath maintenance. He noted the significant variance in the figures provided and emphasised that a more data-driven approach would be beneficial. Cllr. Griffin also referred to the disparities across the Municipal Districts and stated that the information provided would be useful in advance of upcoming budget discussions.

**Item 15: Tenant in Situ Social Housing Acquisition Programme**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. T. Guilfoyle agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to urgently review and address the under-utilisation of funding allocated under the Tenant in Situ Social Housing Acquisition Programme. Notwithstanding the significant allocation of €375 million by Government in 2025 for this scheme; as of 1 December 2025, only two local authorities had fully drawn down their allocations; and many local authorities have failed to utilise the full extent of ring-fenced funding available for second-hand home acquisitions. For County Clare the amount allocated by Government was €4m and the actual spend to date as of December 1, 2025 was €1,454,089.00.” (M)

Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy stated that where the local authority acquires a house, there is often no funding available to carry out necessary upgrades. She noted that if the Government is committed to increasing housing supply, this issue needs to be addressed.

It was agreed to take item 18 next.

**Item 18: Tenant Purchase of Local Authority Homes**

Ar moladh Cllr. T. Guilfoyle  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council review its policy regarding the tenant purchase of newer local authority homes. Many tenants are paying significant rent and could be better supported through home ownership. Allowing suitable tenants to purchase their homes would provide long-term security for families while generating additional revenue for the Council to reinvest in the delivery of new social and

affordable housing across County Clare.

The review should assess whether current restrictions on newer homes remain proportionate in the context of the ongoing housing crisis.” (M)

**A. Farrell, Director of Service, Housing Delivery, Infrastructure Provision & Land Activation replied as follows:**

“Clare County Council welcome the motion from Cllr Lynch in relation to Tenant Purchase Scheme. The existing Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme allows for tenants to purchase their homes at discounted prices from market value at a discount based on household income and since the introduction the new scheme in 2016 eighty-six households in Clare have availed of the opportunity to purchase their homes.

Legislation prohibits the sales of certain properties under the scheme including apartments, houses specifically designed for occupation by elderly persons, houses specifically designed in a group setting for occupation by members of the Travelling community, houses in a private development transferred to the local authority under Part V Planning regulations. In addition, at least one tenant in the household must be availing of social housing supports for ten years or more.

Clare County Council decided in 2023 to restrict sales to properties built or acquired pre 2016 in order to maintain new stock for a number of years before being sold. We are currently reviewing this restriction and reviewing other opportunities around the scheme. It is intended that the executive will bring proposals forward to the SPC in coming months for consideration.”

**Item 16: Alternative Accommodation in Tourist Areas**

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Shannon

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. I. Lynch, R. McInerney, D. Gould, G. Keating agus glacadh leis

“Following yet another road traffic incident at Darragh and further to a recent resident group meeting with the Minister, we call on Clare County Council to exercise its reserved function powers under the relevant Road Traffic legislation to introduce a reduced speed limit of 60km/h at Darragh, in the interests of improving road safety for residents, pedestrians, cyclists, school traffic and all road users.” (M)

**C. Kirby, Director of Service, Transportation, Climate Action, Recreation, Environmental and Emergency Services replied as follows:**

“The making and adoption of bye laws, including speed limits, is a reserved function of the Members under section 199 of the Local Government Act 2001. However, in relation to speed limit bye laws on the national road network, consideration must also be given to the Road Traffic Act 2004 as amended. Section 9 (7) of this Act states that a County Council or City Council shall not make bye-laws under this section relating to a national road or a motorway without the prior written consent of the National Roads Authority (Transport Infrastructure Ireland TII).

Clare County Council are working with TII, the Members and the local community to deliver a safety scheme at this location. The Council have submitted a Safety Scheme Feasibility and Options Report to TII in December 2025 for their review.”

The Elected Members raised concerns regarding the number of serious accidents occurring at this junction. They noted that a public meeting was held last October, at which a committee was established to address the significant public safety issues associated with the junction in Darragh.

Members highlighted the strong level of community support for improvements and emphasised the need for urgency in implementing measures to prevent further accidents and enhance safety.

They also noted that lorries parking along the roadside are adversely impacting visibility and should be addressed as part of the overall safety response.

It was proposed by Cllr. M. Shannon, seconded by Cllr. J. Garrihy and agreed by the members present that the time be extended to 6.30p.m. in order to complete the business of the meeting.

#### **Item 17: EV Charging Facilities**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Ryan  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. T. Guilfoyle agus glacadh leis

“To ask Clare County Council to ask the relevant Minister to advise how best to allow people that live in flats and terraced houses or houses without driveways how they can safely charge their EV cars.

A great deal of people are now choosing to use EV cars but many people in high rise flats or those that have no driveways have no way to charge their cars. The placing of cables across public pathways is a trip hazard. Is there a possibility of setting up communal chargers in areas where people cannot safely charge their cars on their own property?” (M)

The elected members noted that residents of terraced or landlocked properties, as well as those living in high-rise apartments, have indicated an interest in purchasing electric vehicles but currently lack access to suitable charging infrastructure. Members referenced the Climate Action Plan and emphasised that, for its objectives to be achieved, it is essential that the Government progresses the necessary supporting initiatives.

Members agreed that the provision of EV charging facilities across local authority housing stock would represent a positive and practical step forward. They also noted that while local community groups have expressed an interest in facilitating such developments, concerns have been raised regarding the potential impact on their insurance premiums.

C. Kirby, Director of Service, advised that the Private Wires Bill is currently being drafted by the Government and is expected to address the issues raised by members, including enabling provisions for domestic charging infrastructure.

#### **Item 19: Vacant Homes Scheme**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Ryan  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Killeen agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, James Browne, to expand to the current Vacant Homes Scheme by extending the timescale for completion of works from the current 13 months to 18 months.

Also, to further expand the scope of the grant by relaxing the eligibility criteria to include prospective purchasers who, due to the current housing crisis, are required to reside in the historically vacant property once acquired.” (M)

The elected members referred to the Vacant Homes Scheme and noted that the motion seeks to improve accessibility and uptake of the scheme. Members observed that many of these properties are relatively habitable; however, challenges in securing tradespeople have impacted the timely completion of works. Members proposed that the current 13-month timeline for completion should be extended to 18 months to better reflect these challenges. They further noted that the renovation of older properties is significantly more labour-intensive than the construction of new homes, and this should be considered in the administration of the scheme. The elected members highlighted the ongoing shortage of skilled labour, which is contributing to delays in project delivery.

**Item 20: Housing Roadshow**

Ar moladh Cllr. R. McInerney  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Garrihy agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council build on its previous consideration of outreach housing information clinics by establishing a coordinated series of multi-agency housing support roadshows across the county, to be delivered from September 2026, aimed at assisting individuals, couples and families in navigating the wide range of housing supports now available.

These roadshows should bring together relevant national and local stakeholders including the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, Revenue Commissioners, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and approved housing bodies, alongside Clare County Council’s Housing Directorate.

The clinics should provide clear, accessible, and practical guidance on schemes including but not limited to: the Help to Buy (HTB) Scheme, First Home Scheme, Local Authority Home Loan, Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, Croí Cónaithe (Vacant Property) Scheme, Above the Shop Living Scheme, SEAI energy upgrade grants, and other relevant supports for home purchase, construction, refurbishment and retrofit.

The objective of these roadshows would be to ensure that members of the public are supported in understanding eligibility, application processes, and how multiple schemes can be combined to make home ownership or refurbishment viable.” (M)

**A. Farrell, Director of Service, Housing Delivery, Infrastructure Provision &**

### **Land Activation replied as follows:**

“Clare County Council welcome the suggestion from Cllr McInerney in relation to a outreach clinics. Over the past 18 months we have run a number of external workshops ourselves in relation to various housing issues including Affordable Housing, Croi Conaithe, Defective Concrete Blocks, Vacant Home Refurbishment Grants. These workshops were very focused on individual aspects that were relevant in particular areas at a given time.

It is proposed to engage with other key stakeholders and agencies in relation to future opportunities to organise regional clinics which can be organised to provide guidance to members of public on multiplicity of housing options and housing supports available. We will keep the elected members informed in relation to such planned events and look forward to your ongoing support around same”.

The elected members welcomed the positive response and acknowledged the significant value in expanding outreach in relation to housing supports. Members noted that many individuals are unsure where to begin when seeking housing assistance and often experience confusion and uncertainty regarding the overall process.

Members further highlighted that some of the available schemes can be complex, leading to a lack of clarity around eligibility criteria and how the various supports interact with one another.

### **Item 21: Road User Visibility**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Burke  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. O’Gorman agus glacadh leis

“Calling on Clare County Council to write to the Minister for Transport to introduce legislation making it mandatory for pedestrians and cyclists to wear Hi-Vis Jackets/Vests in the interest of public safety.” **(M)**

The elected members noted that, as daylight hours increase, pedestrians and cyclists may be less likely to wear high-visibility clothing. Members noted that this may give rise to safety risks, particularly at dusk, when individuals may set out in daylight but return in darkness, thereby increasing the risk to personal safety where appropriate visibility measures are not in place.

Members suggested that an awareness campaign could help address this issue, while also acknowledging the challenges associated with changing established behaviours. They further noted that schools could play an important role in raising awareness among children regarding the importance of road safety and the use of high-visibility clothing.

### **Item 22: Rural Planning Guidelines**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Killeen

Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Shannon agus glacadh leis

“We compliment the Planning Section on their work on the proposed variation to the County Development Plan and welcome the huge volume of submissions received.

We call on the Minister to release the Rural Planning Guidelines as soon as possible which we hope will ease up restrictions on one off rural houses.” (M)

The elected members noted that, with the variation to the County Development Plan currently underway, there has been a significant level of interest in Clare, as reflected in the volume of submissions received. Members commended the work of the planning team in managing this process.

Members further observed that certain areas within the county are experiencing rapid growth and emphasised the importance of putting strategic plans in place to effectively manage and support this development into the future.

The member noted that Ireland would benefit from a more transformative approach to planning, with members highlighting an overreliance on ad hoc developments, which can result in a mismatch of services. In this context, members advocated for a more coordinated, inter-agency approach to planning and service delivery.

#### **Conferences.**

#### **Reports on Seminars/Conferences attended.**

With regard to seminars/conferences attended, reports completed in accordance with Section 142 of the Local Government Act 2001 were made available at the meeting.

The meeting then concluded.

**Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Riarthóir Cruinnithe**

**Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Cathaoirleach**

**Date:**

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