

**Views of the Elected Members
at the March Month Meeting of Offaly County Council
held on the 18th May 2026
Lemanaghan Wind Farm Chief Executive Report - Strategic Infrastructure
Development**

Views of the Elected Members

Cllr O'Brien:

Requests that the addendum submission which he addressed to all in attendance at the Council Meeting (May 20206) be attached to the Chief Executive's Report. He requested that the matters raised within this addendum submission be duly considered by An Coimisiun Pleanála in respect of the proposed wind farm development.

Acknowledges the objectives of the County Development Plan (CDP) and the Government's policy commitment to increasing sustainable and renewable energy, including wind energy, and confirms his ongoing support for these objectives over the coming years.

Notwithstanding, in noting the elected members support and commitments in respect of sustainable and renewable energy, Cllr. O'Brien expressed that the subject site is not suitable for wind energy development.

A number of concerns were raised including the following:

- Emphasised the historical and cultural significance of the area, particularly in relation to St. Manchan and the monastic site at Lemanaghan, which contains important archaeological and heritage features.
- Raised concern that the proposed turbines would significantly impact views and the visual integrity of the landscape and its historical sites, creating a sense of disconnection between the heritage assets and their surrounding environment.
- Highlighted that there is already a substantial level of wind energy development within Co. Offaly, with approximately 520 MW currently operational.
- Acknowledged residents' concerns regarding potential health impacts, including noise pollution and related issues.
- Raised concerns regarding the level of community engagement and perceived lack of adequate consultation with local residents.
- Pointed to potential negative impacts on local nature, habitats, and biodiversity.

Overall, it was the expressed view of Cllr. O'Brien that the proposed SID be refused.

(An Coimisiun Pleanála is requested to refer to addendum attached which contains the detailed submission made by Cllr. O'Brien at the May monthly meeting and which forms and integral part of the views of the elected members in respect of the subject SID application).

Cllr. Moran:

Cllr. Moran noted that certain turbines within the proposal have given rise to particular concern. Clarification was requested in respect of discrepancies relating to the removal of specific turbines as set out within the CE report.

Further clarification was sought regarding the technical specifications of the turbines, including their proposed power output, with particular concern raised in relation to potential noise levels and associated impacts.

Cllr. Moran referenced that the CE report identifies significant concerns in relation to landscape, cultural heritage, cumulative impacts, and the overall scale of the proposed development. He expressed that while the report recommends the removal of certain turbines and indicates the need for a substantial redesign, it was important to raise question on at what point such redesign would be considered so material as to constitute a fundamentally different proposal, rather than a modification of the existing scheme.

Cllr. Moran emphasised the importance of exercising caution in suggesting the removal of selected turbines, and considered that this may inadvertently give rise to an interpretation that the remaining elements of the development are acceptable in principle. Cllr. Moran stated that he believed that this was not the intended position of the CE report.

Overall, it was the expressed view of Cllr. Moran that the proposed SID be refused.

Cllr Ormond:

Cllr. Ormond made reference to the work of Cllr O'Brien and Cllr Moran on the attached addendum (previously referenced in the above paragraphs).

Noted the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines in respect of environmental noise and emphasised that all applications of this nature should demonstrate full compliance with the applicable environmental noise standards.

Reference was made to sections of the CE report which highlight concerns across a range of areas, including nature conservation, ecology, archaeology, and public rights of way. Cllr. Ormond stated that the elected members are of the view that, when these factors are considered in their totality, the only appropriate conclusion is that the proposed development should be refused.

Cllr. Ormond further sought guidance in relation to the availability and application of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED III) mapping, including clarification on its status and the implications of the referenced 12-month timeframe.

Concerns were also raised regarding the credibility and robustness of certain reports submitted in support of the application. In particular, reference was made to assertions regarding potential impacts on residential property values, Cllr. Ormond questioned whether such conclusions would withstand independent scrutiny. Additionally, the need for consistency with the policies

and objectives set out in the County Development Plan (CDP) was highlighted in regard to informing a decision on the proposed SID.

Overall, it was the expressed view of Cllr. Moran that the proposed SID should be refused.

Cllr. Egan:

Cllr. Egan noted the proximity of the proposed wind farm development to his home, locality and residences.

Reference was made to the cultural and community significance of St. Manchan's Day, with Cllr Egan emphasising the importance of recognising the human and community dimension alongside the technical assessments and reports associated with the proposed SID development .

Cllr. Egan further highlighted the historical importance of St. Manchan's, including its connections to Clonmacnoise, and the broader significance of the Lemanaghan area, noting the presence of important artefacts and archaeological monuments.

Previous concerns made by local communities at the time of the making of the current County Development Plan were highlighted.

Cllr. Egan emphasised the need to apply a reasonable and balanced approach in considering renewable energy development and expressed the view that Lemanaghan is not an appropriate location for a wind farm.

Overall, it was the expressed view of Cllr. Egan that the proposed SID should be refused.

Cathaoirleach Offaly County Council (Cllr Leahy):

Emphasised the importance of adherence to World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines.

Raised issue regarding the overall viability of the proposed project.

Sought clarification in respect of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED III).

Cllr. C. Murray

Raised concerns on noise, and made reference to existing noise complaints associated with other existing wind farm developments within the County.

Made reference to data from January and March 2026 indicating that the county generated more wind energy than any other county.

Cllr. Murray questioned whether additional wind energy development is necessary at this location, particularly where there is potential for lasting impacts on heritage, biodiversity, historic landscapes, and residential amenity at this location.

Reference was also made that members emphasised that any wind farm development must demonstrate full compliance with the World Health Organisation's 2018 Environmental Noise Guidelines.

Cllr. Maher:

Cllr. Maher expressed his support towards Cllr O'Brien's proposed addendum to the CE's Report.

Cllr. Maher emphasised that an appropriate balance must be achieved in the delivery of renewable energy, and highlighted the point that other counties also have a responsibility to contribute in this regard.

Cllr. Masterson:

Cllr. Masterson expressed appreciation to the Lemanaghan community group for their engagement and contribution to the process.

Reference was made to the area's significant monastic heritage, with Cllr. Masterson noting the unique opportunity that the site's heritage and surrounding area presents for sustainable tourism. It was emphasised that such historical assets are irreplaceable and, once impacted, cannot be restored.

Cllr. Masterson stated that the proposed development should not be permitted to proceed, highlighting the need to protect and preserve national heritage from potential harm.

Cllr. Quinn:

Cllr. Quinn expressed concern that the proposal has progressed to its current stage, noting that, in his view, it should not have advanced this far in the process. Reference was made to the County Development Plan (CDP) over successive periods, with particular emphasis that the subject lands should not be open for consideration and should not have been included within the Wind Energy Development Strategy.

Cllr. Quinn raised concerns regarding the extent to which the raised concerns by the elected members and local community would be adhered to in informing a decision on the proposed SID on the subject lands which are of significant heritage sensitivity, along with other concerns.

Cllr. Clendennen:

Cllr. Clendennen reiterated her support for the development of renewable energy; however, she expressed the view that County Offaly has already made a substantial contribution in this regard and has met its fair share of national targets.

Concerns were raised regarding the impact of the proposed development on the local community, including the financial burden associated with participation in the process and the strain arising from ongoing objections and protests.

Cllr. Clendennen further emphasised the need to consider the sensitive nature of the subject lands and area, highlighting potential adverse impacts in relation to noise, biodiversity, and the wider environmental context.

Cathaoirleach (Cllr. Leahy):

The Cathaoirleach made reference to Cllrs Egan's points raised in relation to historical data & artefacts associated with Lemanaghan. He also referred to Cllr Quinn's point, highlighting that it was not an overall majority position at the adoption of the current CDP that the subject lands be included as an 'area open for consideration' within the wind development strategy.

Cllr. Leahy requested that the above point should be clearly reflected, in order to demonstrate to An Coimisiún Pleanála that the proposal has not proceeded without contention and that it has not been a straightforward or universally supported process.

Cllr. Leahy in representing the elected members stated the following resolution:

"We, the members of the Planning Authority of Offaly County Council, by resolution, respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála duly considers all issues raised within the CE report, along with the expressed views of the elected members.

In light of the concerns raised, and given the need for a full comprehensive reappraisal of the site, the members, by resolution request that permission be REFUSED for the proposed Strategic Infrastructure Development (An Coimisiún Pleanála Case reference: PAX19.324161) for the proposed Lemanaghan wind farm development comprising 15 no. wind turbines, a permanent 220 kV substation and all associated infrastructure – RED III application".

Cllr. Leahy requested that the developer(s) give due consideration to the concerns raised by the elected members, noting that it is not common for the Members to adopt such a position in opposition to wind energy within County Offaly. Cllr. Leahy acknowledged that the area is particularly sensitive and is contentious (for a number of reasons), and that this context should not come as a surprise to the developer(s).

Cllr. Leahy further emphasised the importance of fostering a constructive relationship between the developers and the Members and urged that due respect be afforded to the views and concerns expressed by the elected representatives.

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