



Outlook

ACP-324165-26 RESPONSE TO SECTION 4.3.2 NOEL BURKE

From noel burke <namburke@gmail.com>

Date Sun 9/6/2026 2:11 PM

To SIDS <sids@pleanala.ie>

 1 attachment (15 KB)

noels 4.3.2 submission.pdf;

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Dear members of the commission

Further to your letter of 14 August 2026 I attach my response to Section 4.3.2 nature conservation case reference ACP-324165-26. My objection of May 2026 stands in full.

I would be grateful for written acknowledgement of receipt.

Yours sincerely

Noel Burke

Maulikeeve, Bantry Co Cork P75EV12

Response to Section 4.3.2 (Nature Conservation)
of the applicant's Response to Observations

An Coimisiún Pleanála — Case reference: ACP-324165-26
Proposed Maughanaclea Renewable Energy Development, Co. Cork

From: Noel Burke

Address: Maulikeeve, Bantry, Co. Cork, P75 EV12

Dear Members of the Commission,

I write further to your letter of 14 August 2026, which invited observations on the applicant's Response to Observations received by the Commission on 14 July 2026, confined to Section 4.3.2, Nature Conservation. I will honour that confinement. I ask only that the Commission note that my objection of May 2026 stands whole and undiminished — the noise of this development in our valley's terrain among its grounds — and that nothing here replaces it.

I have lived under these hills since 1979, and I have walked the whole rim of the Bantry Bay uplands over forty years. When I wrote to you in May, I asked you to consider the airspace above this valley as a thing in itself — a corridor that birds, bats and insects move through freely now, into which fourteen turbines would introduce a continuous, kilometres-long obstacle. I cited the work of Fernández-Bellon and colleagues, done on Irish upland sites, showing that wind farms reduce bird densities in the surrounding country, with the effects on open-habitat birds operating at the scale of the landscape rather than the single turbine (Fernández-Bellon, D., Wilson, M.W., Irwin, S. & O'Halloran, J., 2019, *Conservation Biology* 33(2), 413-422, doi: 10.1111/cobi.13239).

I have read Section 4.3.2 looking for the applicant's answer to that point. There is none. The one Irish study that measured what actually happens to upland bird communities around wind farms of this kind is not referenced anywhere in the applicant's Nature Conservation response. The section proceeds bird by bird, table by table, concluding for each species in isolation that no significant effect will arise, and therefore that no cumulative effect will arise either. The Development Applications Unit of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, in its submission on this case (SID-CK-2026-011, 25 May 2026), described that very reasoning better than I can: it "misses the point of cumulative impact and in combination effects... A conclusion of no individual significance so no cumulative is a concern. Displacement effects are often not calculated for or mitigated for." The DAU

counts 28 wind farms within 25 kilometres of this site, 8 of them within 10 kilometres. The birds of this valley do not encounter those developments one at a time, in separate chapters. They encounter them all at once, as one steadily closing landscape. So do I.

And there is a stranger thing in the applicant's tables, which I put to the Commission plainly. In Section 4.3.2 the applicant now includes Dreenacreenig West — the consented three-turbine scheme on the southern ridge of our valley — in its cumulative bird assessments. It is named at pages 40 to 43, for kestrel, red grouse, snipe, buzzard and sparrowhawk; at page 42 the applicant itself observes that "Dreenacreenig West and Gortloughra are located within, or partially within, upland habitats (bog/wet grassland)." Yet the same development is absent from the cumulative assessments in the EIAR's landscape chapter, its noise chapter, and its project description. I asked in May that the valleys draining into Bantry Bay be treated as one landscape and not traded off piece by piece. The applicant's own paperwork now does something worse than divide the landscape: it divides the truth by chapter, admitting the neighbouring wind farm where it must and omitting it where it is inconvenient. With Maughanaclea's turbines on the northern ridge and Dreenacreenig West's on the southern, the birds that use the valley floor and both ridgelines would be pressed from two sides at once — a squeeze across the full width of the valley that no chapter of any document in this application has ever assessed.

What I ask of the Commission is this, and I will not dress it up as a request for further study, because it is not one. If the Commission were to send this applicant away to write the missing chapters, the chapters would come back concluding what such chapters always conclude, and the valley would be no better defended for it. The failures in Section 4.3.2 — the Irish evidence ignored, the neighbouring wind farm admitted in one chapter and denied in three — do not call for correction. They tell you what the whole application is: a case assembled to arrive at a permission, not an assessment of a living place. I have watched this valley for forty-seven years and I am telling you it cannot carry this development in any form, on any conditions, with any paperwork. The corridor of moving air above the Mealagh was here before any of us and belongs to none of us. I respectfully ask the Commission to refuse this application outright.

I would be grateful for written acknowledgement of receipt of this response.

Yours sincerely,

Noel Burke

Maulikeeve, Bantry, Co. Cork, P75 EV12