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The Secretary
An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

**Re: Objection to the Proposed Tirawley Wind Farm Strategic Infrastructure
Development Objection Submission to An Coimisiún Pleanála**

Re: Planning permission for the construction of Tirawley Windfarm consisting of 16 no. wind turbines, a permanent 110kV substation, 110kV underground cable and grid connection, and ancillary development in the townlands of Ballymurphy, Ballynaleck, Barnhill Lower & Upper, Barroe, Billoos, Carn, Carrickanass, Carrowmore, Castlelacken Demesne, and other townlands in County Mayo.

Case Number: PAX16.324258

**Objection to the Proposed Tirawley Wind Farm Development (Planning Reference
PAX16.324258)**

Submitted by the Lacken Sensory Garden Committee

Dear Sir/Madam,

Introduction

The Lacken Sensory Garden Committee respectfully submits this observation objecting to the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm development, including the associated Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), onsite substation and all associated infrastructure. Having carefully reviewed

the planning application and the accompanying Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), we believe that the proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on an important community facility which has not been properly identified or assessed within the applicant's documentation.

The Lacken Sensory Garden is much more than a landscaped green space. It is a community-led project developed through years of voluntary effort to provide a peaceful, inclusive and educational environment for people of all ages and abilities. It has become a valuable resource for the entire parish, offering opportunities for outdoor learning, biodiversity education, sensory engagement and quiet recreation. The garden is particularly important for children, including those with additional needs and sensory sensitivities, who benefit greatly from access to a calm and natural outdoor environment.

The Committee is deeply concerned that this community amenity has been almost entirely overlooked during the preparation of the planning application. Despite the applicant stating within the Non-Technical Summary that community groups were engaged and that environmental assessments were undertaken to identify sensitive receptors, the Sensory Garden has not been recognised or assessed as a community facility requiring protection. This omission is particularly surprising given that the garden is clearly visible within Photomontage Viewpoint VP13 alongside St. Patrick and St. Cummin Church and the Fáilte Rooms, demonstrating that the applicant was fully aware of its existence.

Failure to Properly Assess the Sensory Garden

One of the principal purposes of an Environmental Impact Assessment is to identify sensitive receptors and evaluate how they may be affected by a proposed development. In this instance, that process has not been properly carried out.

The Sensory Garden has not been assessed from the perspective of noise, shadow flicker, visual amenity or the impact of long-term industrial development on the users of the facility. This represents a significant omission because the garden is specifically designed to provide a peaceful environment where children and families can enjoy nature, learn about biodiversity and experience the benefits of a quiet outdoor setting.

The applicant has instead concentrated on residential properties while overlooking an important community amenity that is regularly occupied by children and families. The Committee believes this has resulted in an incomplete assessment of the likely environmental effects of the development.

This concern is reinforced by the fact that nearby community buildings have also not been accurately described. St. Patrick and St. Cummin Church and the Fáilte Rooms have been assessed as residential properties when they are, in fact, important community facilities. Together with the Sensory Garden, these locations form one of the principal community hubs within the parish. Their incorrect classification raises legitimate concerns about whether the applicant has fully understood the nature of the local community or properly identified the facilities that warrant protection.

Children's Wellbeing, Noise and Tranquillity

The Sensory Garden was created to provide a calm and welcoming outdoor environment. Tranquillity is not simply an attractive feature of the garden; it is fundamental to its purpose.

Many children who visit the garden are particularly sensitive to environmental noise. For children with sensory processing difficulties or neurodevelopmental conditions, quiet surroundings are essential to enable them to enjoy and benefit from outdoor activities. The introduction of sixteen industrial wind turbines operating for up to thirty-five years, together with a Battery Energy Storage System and associated infrastructure, has the potential to fundamentally alter the character of this environment.

The Committee is especially concerned about the use of the polytunnel and outdoor learning areas. Lacken National School regularly uses the garden for biodiversity projects, growing fruit and vegetables, planting pollinator-friendly species and environmental education. These activities rely upon a peaceful setting where children can learn, observe nature and engage with their surroundings without unnecessary disturbance.

The absence of any specific assessment of this facility means the Board cannot be satisfied that the likely effects of turbine noise, construction activity and the loss of tranquillity have been properly evaluated.

Community Engagement

The Non-Technical Summary states that the applicant engaged directly with local residents and community groups during the development of the project. However, the Lacken Sensory Garden Committee was never contacted or consulted regarding this development. At no stage were we invited to discuss how the garden is used, the needs of its users or the potential effects of the proposed development.

Had meaningful engagement taken place, the applicant would have become aware of the importance of the garden as a community asset and the need to include it within the

Environmental Impact Assessment. The failure to consult with the Committee has resulted in a significant gap within the planning application and has deprived the Board of information that is directly relevant to its assessment.

Conclusion

The group wishes to adopt and support the detailed submission made by the Lacken Ballycastle Community Landscape Protection Group in relation to the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm development (PAX16.324258). In particular, we endorse the concerns raised regarding cumulative wind farm development across North Mayo, impacts on the Céide Fields cultural landscape, effects on tourism and recreation, biodiversity impacts, inadequacies in community consultation, and the assessment of the Battery Energy Storage System. While we do not repeat those detailed arguments in full, we request that they be considered as forming part of this submission.

The Lacken Sensory Garden represents years of voluntary effort, community investment and commitment to creating an inclusive outdoor space where children and families can experience nature, learn about biodiversity and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the local environment.

The proposed Tirawley Wind Farm threatens to fundamentally change the character of this valuable community facility, yet the applicant has failed to properly identify, assess or evaluate its significance. The omission of the Sensory Garden from the Environmental Impact Assessment, together with the failure to meaningfully engage with the Committee during the preparation of the application, represents a serious deficiency in the information placed before An Coimisiún Pleanála.

For these reasons, the Lacken Sensory Garden Committee respectfully requests that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse planning permission for the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm development, including the associated Battery Energy Storage System, substation and all related infrastructure.

Yours faithfully,

Louise Fogarty

Sensory Garden Committee Member