

AN COIMISIÚN PLEANÁLA
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Van Rhyn Family – Observation to Ballincor Wind Farm -Co. Offaly

June 2026



30th June 2026

Shane & Sinead van Rhyn
C/O Kilcolman, Sharavogue
Birr, R42 T259

An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1
D01V902

To Whom It May Concern

Re: - RWE Ballincor wind Farm -Planning Application PAX92.324279

As the van Rhyn family, Shane, Sinead, and young sons, Dylan and Tyler, we are **strongly objecting to the Proposed Ballincor Wind Farm Development**, consisting of 11 industrial sized wind turbines of 180m height and its associated infrastructure works, as mentioned in RWE's **Planning Application PAX92.324279**.

1.0. Introduction

We would like to start off by saying that we are not against the development of wind farms, and the use of renewable energy instead of fossil fuels in Ireland, which we see as an essential part of trying to mitigate climate change in the world, for its inhabitants. We are though against developing wind turbines when it is not suitable for the location that it is being proposed for, and which we will be elaborating on further in the sections below.

To provide some context we are in the process of building a new 'forever home', off Rathbeg Lane (receptor 304 at (Latitude 53.040522, Longitude -7.9152639), on the eastern slopes of the hill above the Sharavogue Bog. The living areas are on the upper floor to take advantage of the amazing views. After a very lengthy search of almost 2 years across many counties in Ireland, and reviewing of many sites throughout those counties, we specifically decided to build our 'forever home' here due to the spectacular views and the rural, tranquil setting of the countryside that we found here, and fell in love with.



Fig.1 View of all 11 proposed Ballincor wind turbines taken from 30m height above the Van Rhyn home.

As such we are objecting to the development of this proposed wind farm for the following reasons:-

1.1. Visual Amenity and unacceptable 'Scale Shock' of the proposed turbines

The 8 turbines that were developed in the early 2000's, and located in Lacka/ Knocksigowna area, are +- 80m in height from base to blade tip, with mast heights of +-50m and blade diameters of 52m. Over the years the turbines have evolved and increased in scale to the industrial sized turbines now being proposed for Ballincor with a blade to tip height of +-180m, blade diameters of +-160m and mast heights of +- 105m. Over +-25 years of turbine evolution, the turbines have increased in size and scale by almost 230%.

This scale is enormous and overbearing on the natural landscape, and is an unacceptable scale shock, and if constructed, will adversely dominate the landscape with its low rolling hills and flat unscreened areas. See fig. 1 below.

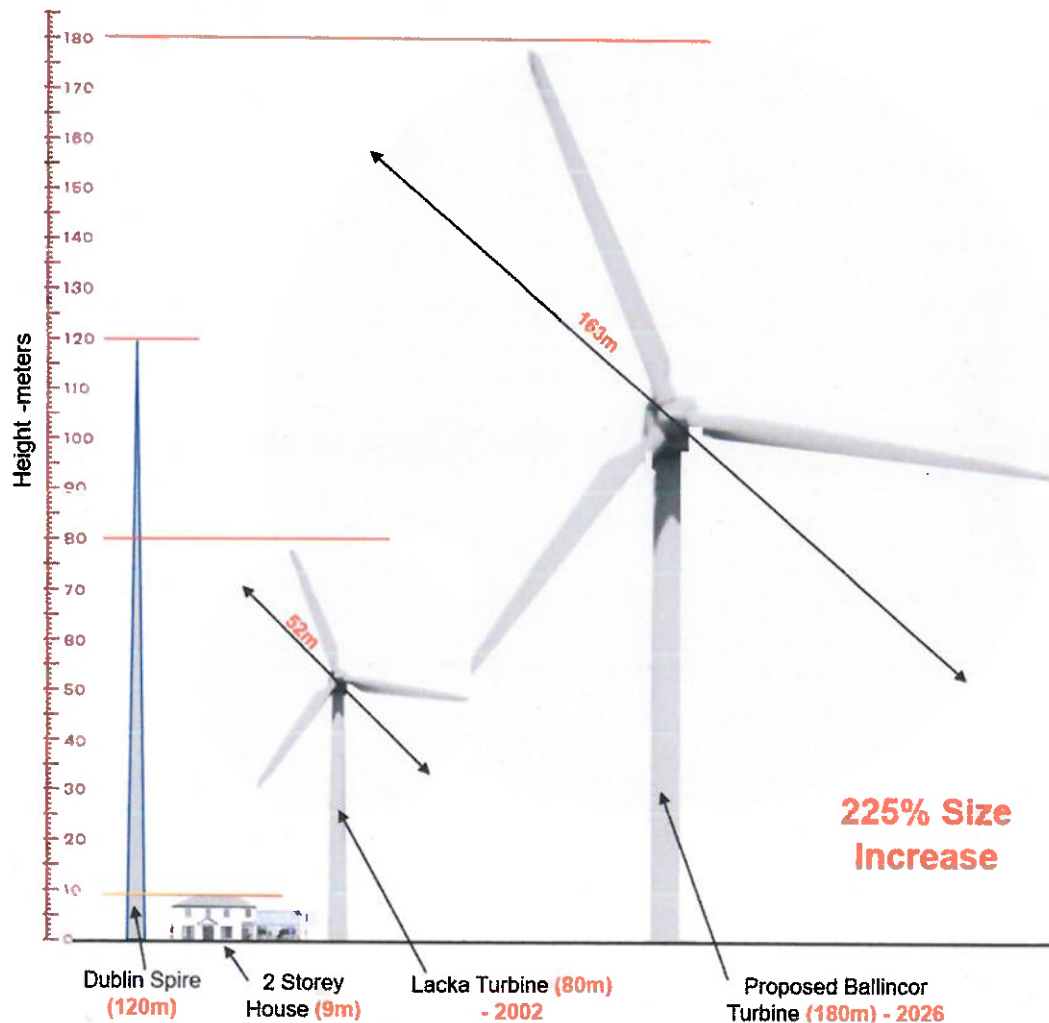


Fig. 1 'Scale Shock' of turbines as they have exponentially increased in size

Most of the houses in this rural community are a maximum of 2 storeys with heights of (+9m). In contrast the turbines are almost twenty times larger (20x). For context the proposed turbines are taller than the tallest buildings currently allowed in Ireland in an urban city setting, and 1.5x the height of the Dublin Spire which is 120m tall! The turbines are also taller than the local highest point namely Knocksigowna Hill at 134m height above sea level, and will stick out above the natural horizon if looked at from any direction.

At a distance of 1.67km from the closest turbine -T8 to our home, the turbines will completely overwhelm the domestic setting, and dominate the existing landscape. It is possible that the existing landscape can absorb the smaller 80m tall turbines, but not these 11 Industrial sized turbines, without totally destroying the rural, low-lying character of the existing peatland landscape.

1.2. "Flat Topography" of Raised Bogs

The Sharavogue raised bogs and peatlands are inherently flat, wide-open, landscapes with low-lying vegetation. See fig. 4

These turbines are proposed to be located just on the far edge of the raised Sharavogue Bog, with no natural vertical features like mountains or tall forests to provide a sense of proportion, or screening. The 180m tall turbine's structure sticking up out of a flat bog will be visible for miles and will completely distort the horizon line if constructed, as well as introduce 'unwarranted industrial verticality' into a sensitive, horizontal natural landscape.

1.3. Developers Photomontages don't provide a true representation of the wind turbines

Review of the RWE set of photomontages that they submitted, do not provide a realistic representation of the adverse and overbearing visual effect that these proposed wind turbines will have if constructed, and are providing a false sense to anyone viewing them that the turbines will not be adversely overbearing. It also appears that RWE focussed on View Point locations that were far away, and due to distance, the images exponentially reduce in size. Also, some photomontages were taken from View Point locations (e.g. 22B and 26), that seemed to purposefully obscure the turbines with trees, hills and other obstructions. Moving some View Points (e.g. 7, 17, 23B) slightly, would provide a completely different visual image. Some included photomontages that purposefully have been taken from locations e.g. forests/ treelines, that would result in the turbines being obscured, even if they were located only a few meters away. Others (e.g. 27) that were visible were taken on hot sunny days that resulted in hazy turbine images that fade into the blue-sky background. It is important to note that most of the days in Ireland are overcast and the turbines will be visible against the darker grey skyline. See photomontages 2a -2c below.

1.4. Direct view of the turbine blade sweep and overlap of turbines

Due to our elevated house location, your eyes are in line with the turbine hub and the blades and are naturally drawn to the blade sweep. This will be further exacerbated by the overlapping of some of the turbines when they are facing East or West e.g. (T3 and T4) and (T9 and T10). See fig. 3

Also due to the elevation of our site we have a full view of the existing natural landscape, and if the turbines are constructed, we will then have a full view of all 11 Turbines which are spread out along a roughly North-North-West, to South -South- East direction over a 5km distance, and an viewing arc of +-107 degrees from Turbine 1 to Turbine 11. See Fig. 2 a - c below. We will also be able to see the proposed 7 Carrig wind turbines +- 6.7km away & can also see the 8 smaller Knockshigowna /Larka turbines (which are less visually overbearing) and which +-4.2km away. See fig. 5 below.



Fig. 2a view of the proposed turbines 5-11 (right to left), on an overcast day from the 1st floor living room of the Van Rhyn home, from a 5m height, showing no natural screening and turbines rising above the natural horizon.



Fig. 2b view of the proposed turbines 4-11 (right to left), on an overcast day from the 1st floor living room of the Van Rhyn home, from a 5m height, showing no natural screening and turbines rising above the natural horizon.



Fig. 2c view of the proposed turbines 1-8 (right to left), on an overcast day from the 1st floor living room of the Van Rhyn home, from a 5m height, showing no natural screening and turbines rising above the natural horizon.



Fig. 3 Arc of 107 degrees views of all turbines 1-11 (right to left), on an overcast day from the 1st floor living room of the Van Rhyn home with distances to them.

The nearest turbine is (T8), and is located at the bottom of the valley at +46m above sea level. It is 1.67km away from our home which is at an elevation of 97m above sea level and overlooks the valley below. See Fig. 4 below and blowups - Appendix A – 1, 2a,2c and 2c . Our home was designed to face South-East, and make full use of the amazing existing views of the natural landscape, which we fell in love with, including its rolling hills and the raised Sharavogue Bog in the valley below, which is also a protected Strategic Area of Conservation. We have incurred substantial additional costs to develop retaining walls and larger windows etc. to enhance being able to view this very special, unique natural landscape. This is now potentially going to be destroyed by the development of these industrial scale turbines, which are totally out of context with the natural environment.

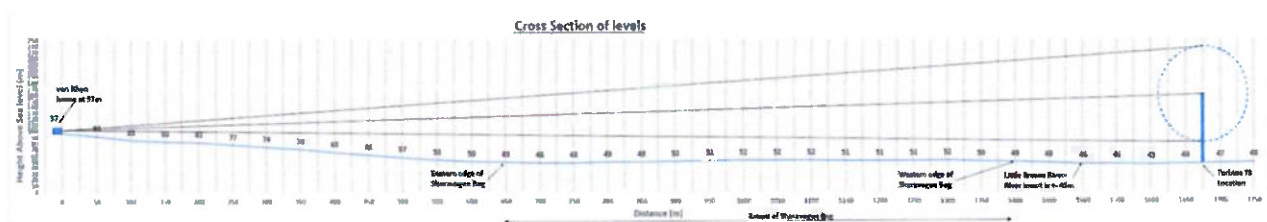


Fig. 4 (Appendix B) Cross -Section from van Rhyn house to Turbine 8 - 1.67km away, showing direct line of sight to the centre of turbine hub and blade diameter and sweep to scale.

Lack of RWE Consultation with Community

As mentioned, our family were not approached or consulted by RWE, even after they became aware that we were building a house that would be affected by their proposed wind farm development. This has also been the experience of most of the community, with a lot of feedback that only flyers were put through people's doors, and very little direct discussion on the matter. This is in stark contrast to what RWE are stating that they have fully engaged with the local community and kept them informed. A lot of the residents have emailed RWE too with queries, and had little or no feedback from them. We had to go to their clinic on the 4th February 2026 to try to get some information regarding it.

1.5. Negative Property Devaluation by installing turbines

Keiran O'Byrne from RWE- Stakeholder Engagement, met with my wife at the clinic in February 2026, and when questioned about the potential property devaluation if the wind turbines were installed close to housing, he admitted to the fact that house prices would likely be devalued (including ours), stating in an email to us dated 16th February 2026 at 10:33, that studies find that ***"even for homes close to a turbine, the study finds that the negative impact to property value diminishes and eventually disappears within a decade"***. (See attached email). In our opinion this 'recovery of prices is not guaranteed 'in a decade', in a rural community. **It is extremely concerning to us that our property value is going to decrease if this proposed development goes ahead**, as we are already dealing with exorbitant price increases during the construction of this home, and cannot afford to have a home that decreases in value months after completion, and no one would realistically enter into a construction of a 'forever home', if it was going to devalue soon after constructing it.

1.6. Medical Concerns

We are very concerned based on other communities' real -life experiences with turbines of this size being constructed close to them. Pat O'Brien, a farmer from West Cork's family is one of these people.

Their experience included low frequency noise that is not audible, but has adversely affected them, and their neighbours living close to the turbines. Pat's family and neighbours found it difficult to get quality sleep, which had health consequences as time went on.

We have 2 young kids that are on the spectrum and are diagnosed with ADHD and ADD. Currently they find it difficult to unwind in the evenings, and if constructed and this low frequency noise further affects the lack of quality sleep, they are getting this will potentially further negatively affect them.

Potential Shadow Flicker from turbines is another known trigger for Tinnitus, which members of our family suffer from too.

1.7. Potential for Community Decline

Additional feedback from Pat O'Brien has been that families close to the wind farm have moved away due to those medical issues that they experienced, with the result that a lot of houses became vacant over the last 20 years, and were not reoccupied by new families moving into the community, resulting in community decline in the area.

1.8. Becoming surrounded by wind farms

Over the last few years Offaly/ Tipperary has been inundated by new wind farm developments located mostly around existing bog areas, with new applications being made on a regular basis by wind energy companies. There could potentially soon be 3 wind farms within 6 km's from our home. See fig. 5 below. Due to the extensive bogs in Offaly and the precedent set by Bord Na Mona setting up wind farms as alternative commercial ventures in areas that have previously had peat fired power stations located on them; this has opened the door for Wind Energy companies to look to located wind turbines throughout Offaly in, or close to existing bogs. This is no exception here, and Offaly has had a disproportionate amount of them installed to date, compared with other counties in Ireland. It is our opinion that County Offaly has contributed disproportionately to the wind energy supply, and that any new wind farm developments should be located in other Counties and potentially out to sea where they would not be an eyesore to the general public.



Fig. 5 Location of potentially 3 wind farms within 6 km of our home in Rathbeg Lane- Sharavogue

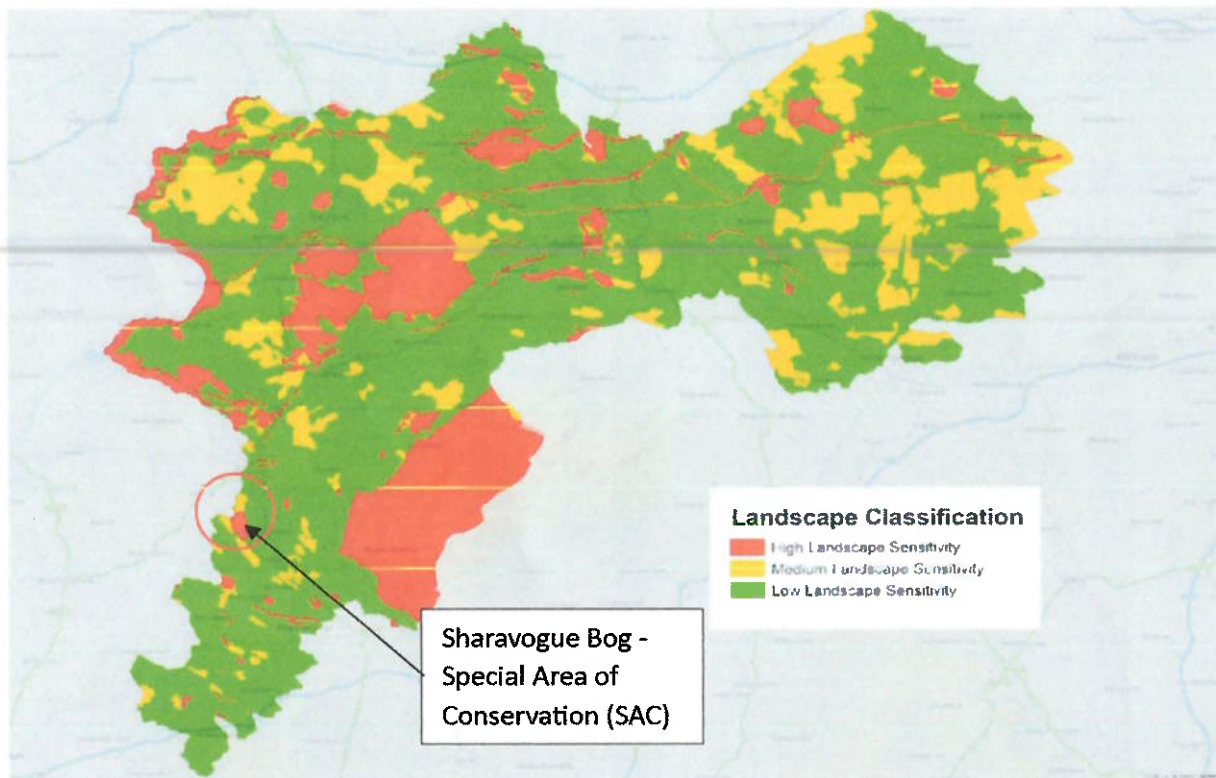
1.9. Ignoring Offaly County Council's clear assessment regarding Unsuitable Wind Farm Locations

The Sharavogue Bog location is deemed as 'Unsuitable' for wind farm developments, based on Offaly County Council's own extensive Sieve Mapping Analysis, carried out as part of its County Development Plan 2021-2027- Wind Energy Strategy. It is our belief that RWE were aware of this and decided to bypass applying to Offaly County Council for planning permission as it would have been refused on those grounds alone. Instead, they have gone straight to ACP. It is our strong view that this should not be allowed to be done and that the County Development Plan be considered as this is the check and balance for planning for this area. If it is ignored including the extensive work done to put it together, then Ireland should scrap all of its planning laws and planning institutions and revert back to a 'free for all' to develop whatever and where ever they choose.

Table 1- Summary of Step-by-Step Sieve Mapping Analysis by Offaly County Council

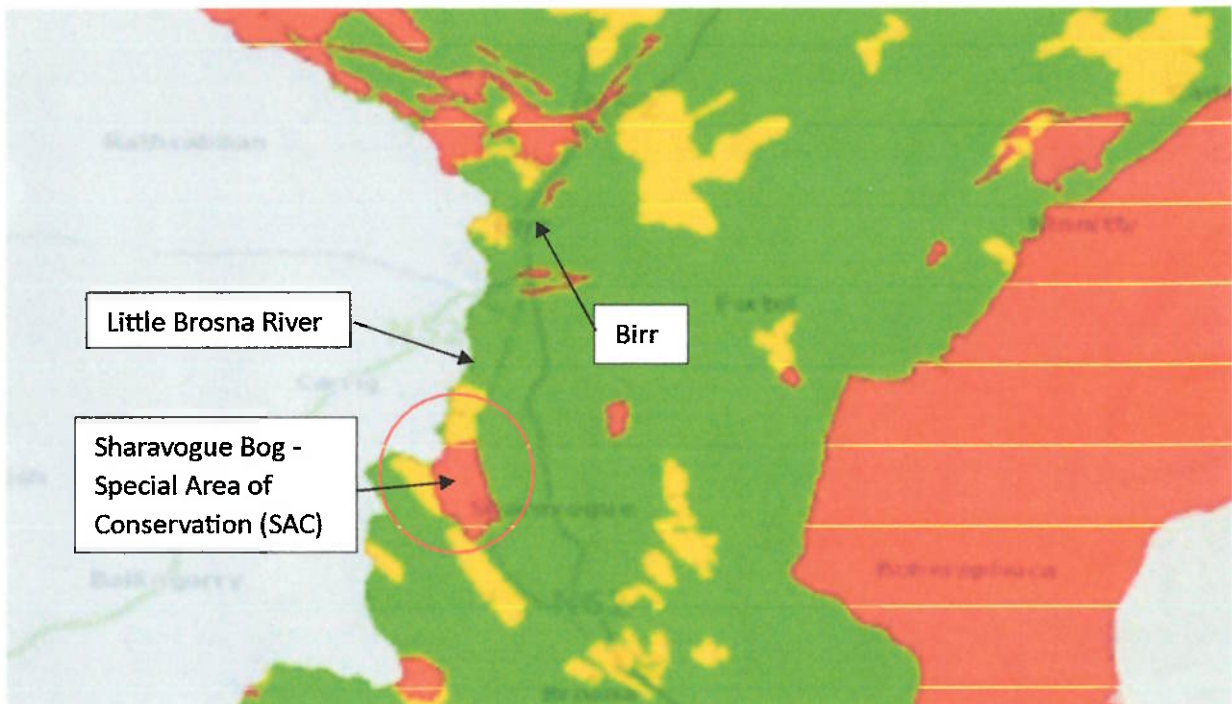
Steps		Criteria met?	Note
Step 1	Existing wind speeds and accessibility to electricity transmission and distribution grids	Yes	Wind speeds above 7.5m/s and networks within connection distance
Step 2	Evaluation of the landscape and its sensitivity for wind energy developments	No	It has not met the Landscape Character Assessment (2.1). Sharavogue bog has 'High Landscape Sensitivity' with adjacent areas have 'Medium Landscape Sensitivity'
Step 3 (with 3 sub-steps)	Overlay Wind Energy Mapping with Landscape Analysis with information regarding the built and natural heritage, archaeological and amenity designations in the Development Plan and existing settlements within the County.	No	It has not met the Designated Sites assessment (3.1) and has been flagged as a Special Area of Conservation and a proposed Natural Heritage Area.

Fig. 6 Summary of Sieve Mapping done by Offaly County Council as part of their 2021-2027 Development Plan -Wind Energy Strategy



Map No. 3: Landscape Sensitivity Areas in County Offaly

Map 1 – Extract from the Offaly -County Development Plan 2021-2027- Wind Energy Strategy



Map 2 – blowup- showing Sharavogue Bog (SAC) as an area of High Landscape Sensitivity and unsuitable for wind farm development -extract from Offaly -County Development Plan 2021-2027- Wind Energy Strategy.

1.10. RWE's own criterion for assessing viability of a Wind Turbine Site

If following RWE's own criterion for developing a wind farm as set out on their own website for the previously proposed, Castlegarden Windfarm 3.5km south of Dungarvan in County Kilkenny, they would not be developing the Ballincor wind farm in this location. The important point are

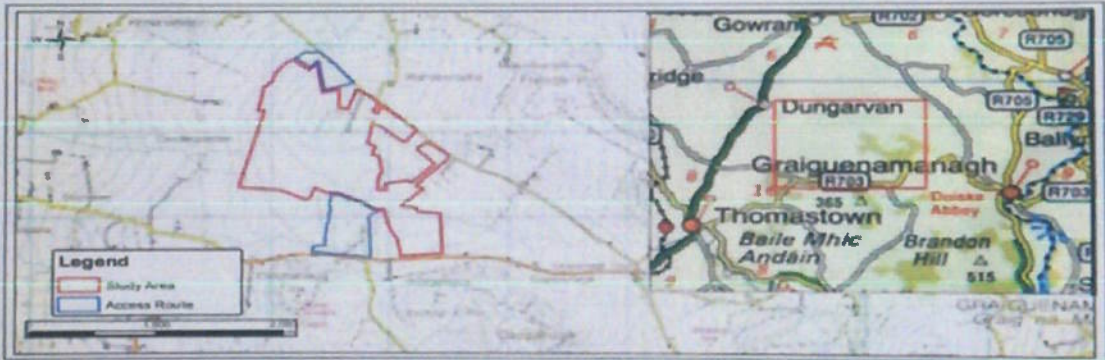
highlighted with a red border in the extract below. The website brochure address is:-

<https://ie.rwe.com/-/media/RWE/RWE-Ireland/downloads/castlegarden/castlegarden-brochure.pdf>

Extracts from RWE website -Proposed Castlegarden Windfarm -Kilkenny

How Developers Decide Where A Wind Farm Might Be Placed

- 1 Assess the areas of wind potential ranging from areas with extensive wind energy resources to lesser wind resources using SEAI's Wind Atlas for Ireland.
- 2 Review the County Development Plan to identify those areas which have been zoned strategically for wind development by the County Council / local planning authority in conjunction with the plan prepare an evaluation of the landscape and its sensitivity for wind energy developments.
- 3 Identify suitable lands in the area large enough to accommodate a wind farm, while maintaining an appropriate distance from houses in line with national guidance and best practice.
- 4 Any Natura 2000 Sites or national environmentally designated sites in the area are identified and avoided.
- 5 Integrate the areas identified in the above steps with information regarding accessibility to electricity transmission and distribution grids.
- 6 After these initial investigations, a potential area for development is identified and the next step is to identify 'constraints'. A constraint is a limiting factor on selection of a site such as nearby houses, cultural heritage, environmental or technical / physical factors (mountains / rivers / lakes / geology, etc.).
- 7 These are then mapped and the remaining parcels of land that could potentially accommodate a wind farm are identified.



MAP OF STUDY AREA

Why is Castlegarden Suitable?

Identifying a site suitable for a wind farm encompasses several considerations as outlined in more detail below in the section on "How Developers Decide Where a Wind Farm might be Placed".

In summary, the proposed Castlegarden Wind Farm is located in an area of appropriate wind speeds with suitable available land on which to develop a wind farm. The land is in an area designated as "Open for Consideration" for wind farm development in the currently adopted Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021 - 2027.

The proposed Castlegarden Wind Farm site does not contain areas designated as European Protected Natura 2000 sites, meaning that it is not a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or a Special Protection Area (SPA) and also does not contain any nationally designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHA).

The proposed site occupies a sufficient area of land to accommodate a wind farm while keeping an appropriate distance from dwellings in line with government guidelines.

In summary they would not develop a wind farm if:-

1. They would review the County Development Plan to identify those areas that are zoned for wind farm developments. **RWE clearly did not do this in this case.**
2. The area is designated as a Protected Natura 2000 site or is a Special Area of Conservation. **Both of these criteria apply & by that metric RWE should not be developing a wind farm here.**

3. The would develop only in areas Open for Consideration for wind farms if mentioned as such in the County Development Plan. **The Offaly County Council Development Plan 2021 -2027 -Wind Energy Strategy document clearly states that this area is Unsuitable for wind farm development due to High Landscape Sensitivity.** See Map 1 above.

2.0. Conclusion and request to Refuse Planning Permission

Due to:-

1. The proposed overbearing scale of the Ballincor wind turbine development proposed to be located on the boundary of the protected Sharavogue raised bog with SAC designation,
2. the overbearing scale and negative visual impact the 11 industrial sized 180m tall turbines would have within the stunning natural rural landscape, that cannot be screened off, and that are visible above the existing horizon,
3. the devaluing of existing property values (that RWE admitted would take place),
4. as well as the potential negative health effects,
5. and potential for community decline,
6. and Offaly County Councils' Sieve Mapping analysis carried out as part of their Wind Energy Strategy, and that showed the proposed location for the wind farm is classified as '**unsuitable**', due to High Landscape Sensitivity and it being a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
7. RWE's own criterion for assessing the suitability of a wind farm location has not been met on 3 of their own criteria.

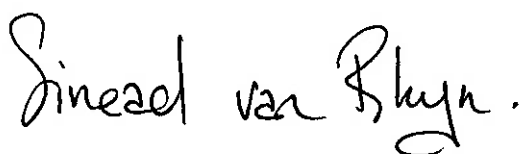
For the reasons we have set out above, we strongly feel that this location, is extremely unsuitable and unacceptable to us for developing an industrial scale wind farm and associated roads and Infrastructure, as is being proposed by RWE and we request that An Coimisiún Pleanála should **Refuse Planning Permission** for it.

1) Shane van Rhyn

 1/7/2026

Signature & Date

2) Sinead van Rhyn

 1/7/2026.

Signature & Date



Sinead O'Meara <sinead.omeara@gmail.com>

House price studies

1 message

OByrne, Kieran <kieran.o'byrne@rwe.com>

Mon, Feb 16, 2026 at 10:32 AM

To: "sinead.omeara@gmail.com" <sinead.omeara@gmail.com>, "shane.van.rhyn@gmail.com"

<shane.van.rhyn@gmail.com>

Cc: ballincor <ballincor@rwe.com>

-NOT ENCRYPTED-

Dear Sinead / Shane

Please find some studies regarding house prices that I have found recently. The reason I have taken these ones is that they have the most data that better represents statistically the effects of wind farms on house prices

The first is a study of **82,000** properties in the UK from 1995 to 2013 all with a 5km radius of seven wind farms in England and Wales

<https://www.renewableuk.com/news-and-resources/blog/do-wind-farms-affect-house-prices/> (I have extracted a couple of paragraphs out for your consideration)

- The study found that local house prices in areas with wind farms continued to perform as would have been expected in the absence of wind farms. Prices tracked the county average, with no evidence of a downturn which could be attributed to the presence or absence of the wind farm. Rather, prices continued to be affected by wider macroeconomic factors such as local employment opportunities, the state of the housing market overall, and the nationwide economic cycle of growth and recession.

Following this, in 2016 the Scottish Government commissioned research and policy centre ClimateXChange to [conduct a study looking impacts on house prices from wind farm developments across Scotland](#). Led by a team from Sheffield University, the project set out to test whether there was a significant difference in the average house price growth of properties in close proximity to a wind farm, as compared to properties that were not. The analysis considered the dates when individual turbines become operational, thereby taking into account the before and after effects of their construction.

- Encompassing data for the whole of mainland Scotland from 1990 to 2014, the study looked at the impact of both single turbines and whole wind farms. Crucially, the findings did not point to a consistent pattern of impact, with the data showing that being situated near a wind farm had no consistent negative effects on house price growth. Similarly to Cebr's earlier study, the lack of a consistent pattern highlighted the range of simultaneous factors that affect house prices, and the degree to which this varies across different locations.

Looking overseas, we see the same patterns emerge. A [2014 study by the University of Guelph in Canada](#) examined **more than 7,000 home and farm** sales in Ontario, near the site of the state's first and largest wind farms, where 133 turbines were erected between 2005 and 2008. The study examined sales data over an eight-year period, from 2002 to 2010, to capture property values before, during and after the wind farm's development. During that period, more than 1,000 homes and farms were resold, some multiple times, and the study found wind farms had no statistically significant effect on property values.

- What explains the concerns? Wind turbines provoke strong reactions because they are large and visually striking, but it's important to note that their visual impact is often overstated during planning debates. Once built, they quickly (and quietly!) become part of the local landscape, whilst new buyers are aware of them before purchasing. Millions of homes are located near roads, overhead power lines, or railways without suffering a loss in value, and wind turbines are no different, especially given they are sited responsibly and built with extensive community consultation.
- In many rural and semi-rural areas, the overall setting, transport links, schools, and amenities matter far more to house buyers than whether a turbine or wind farm is visible on the horizon. In fact, the growth of renewable energy is increasingly seen by many as a sign of regional investment and forward-thinking planning, rather than an intrusion by industry.

Another US study... <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214629625004128>

A study of **300 million home sales and 60,000 wind turbines**... <https://www.accuweather.com/en/climate/how-much-are-wind-turbines-dragging-down-home-values-a-new-study-has-surprising-answers/1632886> "Even for homes close to a turbine, the study finds the negative impact to property value "diminishes and eventually disappears" within a decade."

I hope that helps

Kind regards

Kieran

Kieran O'Byrne

Stakeholder Engagement - Ballincor Proposed Wind Farm

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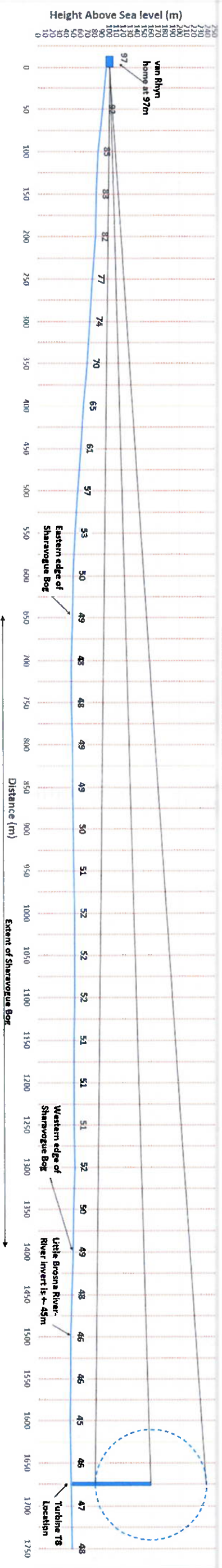




APPENDIX A -1



Cross Section of levels



Appendix B – Cross-Section from van Rhyn house to Turbine 8 - 1.67km away, showing direct line of sight to the centre of turbine hub and blade diameter and sweep to scale.

Other turbines are at similar heights above sea level of between +- 46 & 49m in height. The adverse visual impact is exacerbated as the line of sight is almost to the centre of the turbine hub focussing and drawing your eyes to the sweep of the turbine blades. The flat terrain of the bog of almost 650m width varies by only a few meters in height (46 -51m) across it, so no turbines a screened & are fully visible from the full 180m height of them, compounding the adverse negative impact of these overbearing industrial sized turbines, & destroying the natural landscape that will be forced into.