S. 37

File With _____

SECTION 131 FORM

Appeal NO:_ABP -321867-25 **Defer Re O/H** ☐

Having considered the contents of the submission ~~dated~~/(received) 11/03/2025.

from

P.A. I recommend that section 131 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000

~~be~~/not be invoked at this stage for the following reason(s): no new material planning issues

E.O.: Karen Byrne **Date:** 7/04/2025.

For further consideration by SEO/SAO

Section 131 not to be invoked at this stage. ☐

Section 131 to be invoked – allow 2/4 weeks for reply. ☐

S.E.O.: _____ **Date:** _____

S.A.O: _____ **Date:** _____

M _____

Please prepare BP _____ **- Section 131 notice enclosing a copy of the attached submission**

to: _____ **Task No:** _____

Allow 2/3/4weeks – BP _____

EO: _____ **Date:** _____

AA: _____ **Date:** _____

S. 37

File With _____

CORRESPONDENCE FORM

Appeal No: ABP 321867-25 (Remitted case)

M _____ -email

Please treat correspondence received on 11/3/25 **as follows:**

1. **Update database with new agent for Applicant/Appellant** _____	
2. **Acknowledge with BP** 23	1. **RETURN TO SENDER with BP** _____
3. Keep copy of Board's Letter ☐	2. Keep Envelope: ☐
	3. Keep Copy of Board's letter ☐

Amendments/Comments

PA Response to S13

4. **Attach to file**	**RETURN TO EO** ☑
(a) R/S ☐ (d) Screening ☐	Karen Byrne
(b) GIS Processing ☐ (e) Inspectorate ☐	
(c) Processing ☐	

	Plans Date Stamped ☐
	Date Stamped Filled in ☐
EO: Lisa	**AA:**
Date: 12/3/25	**Date:** 12/03/25

K Byrne

Dáire Littleton Caden

From: Eileen Keenehan <ekeenehan@leitrimcoco.ie>
Sent: Dé Máirt 11 Márta 2025 15:58
To: Appeals2
Cc: Bernard Greene; Dympna Reilly
Subject: An Bord Pleanala Reference No ABP-321867-25 Planning File Reference No 20-120 refers - Planner's Submission - Applicant: Coillte CGA Croagh WindFarm
Attachments: Letter to ABPP with Planners comments on Appeal - 11.03.2025.pdf

Caution: This is an **External Email** and may have malicious content. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact the ICT Helpdesk.

(FAO: Karen Byrne)

A Chara,

I refer to your letter dated 19th February, 2025 received by the Planning Authority on 20th February, 2025 in regard to the above Appeal (the remitting of the Decision by the High Court on the above Appeal back to An Bord Pleanala, Reference ABP-321867-25 refers) and attach for your attention the Planning Authority's Response letter dated 11th March, 2025.

Please acknowledge receipt of the attached letter **by return.**

Kind regards,

Eileen Keenehan
Assistant Staff Officer
Planning Department

Áras an Chontae, Carrick on Shannon, County Leitrim, N41 PF67

Phone: +353 (0)71 9620005 Ext. 507
Email: ekeenehan@leitrimcoco.ie
Website: www.leitrim.ie

Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council

Join us for The Leitrim Gathering from May 23rd to 25th 2025
Visit: www.theleitrimgathering.com

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Is faoi rún agus chun úsáide an té a sheoltar an ríomhphost seo agus aon comhad atá nasctha leis. Má bhfuair tú an ríomhphost seo trí earráid, déan teagmháil leis an seoltóir a luaithe is féidir. Ní hionann na tuairimí luaite sa ríomhphoist seo agus tuairimí Comhairle Contae Liatroma. Déimhnítear leis an bhfo-nóta seo freisin go bhfuil an teachtaireacht ríomhphoist seo agus aon comhad atá nasctha leis scuabtha le bogearraí frithvíorais chun víorais ríomhaire a aimsiú agus is cosúil go bhfuil siad glan. Bí cinnte an ríomhphoist seo a mionscrúdú, mar ní ghlacann Comhairle Chontae Liatroma freagracht faoi aon damáiste a dhéanfaí le do chórais ríomhaireachtaí.

Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council

Áras an Chontae
Cora Droma Rúisc
Contae Liatroma
N41 PF67

Áras an Chontae
Carrick on Shannon
County Leitrim
N41 PF67

This matter is being dealt with by: Bernard Greene **071 9620005** **Ext.** 502

11th March, 2025 **P.20/120** **ABP-321867-25**

An Bord Pleanála,
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1,
D01 V902.

Appeal Re: **Croagh Windfarm**
Coillte CGA - Construction of 8 wind turbines, electrical substation, partial demolition and alteration of two agricultural buildings and all associated site development works in the townlands of Bargowla, Boleymaguire, Braudphark, Derreens, Derrybofin, Derrycullinan, Derrycullinan Beg, Drummanacappul, Garvagh, Garvagh Glebe, Glassalt, Lisfuiltaghan, Seltan, Sheena and Tinnybeg, County Leitrim.
An Environment Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement have been prepared.

A Chairde,

Introduction

The Planning Authority acknowledges receipt of your correspondence dated 19th February 2025 which we received the following day, 20th February 2025. The Planning Authority had no knowledge of a High Court challenge having been taken against the decision of the Board dated 13th October 2023 or what the basis of the High Court challenge was. As there is no judgment to examine in this instance, we remain in the dark as to the substantive basis for the legal challenge. Nonetheless, the Planning Authority is happy to assist and to outline primarily how the proposed windfarm development would be assessed against the policy framework contained in the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029.

Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029
In this regard, the policies and objectives addressed in the following, but not exclusive, sections of the Plan are considered to be of particular relevance:

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Section 2.2 – *Vision and Strategic Aims* sets out a range of strategic aims and complementary strategic objective for the sustainable development of the county, including "*development that addresses climate change in terms of adaptation and mitigation measures including increasing flood resilience, the promotion of sustainable transport options and the development of renewable energy technologies where possible to achieve a successful transition to a low carbon economy*".

Section 4 – *Economic Development* – sets out the policy framework for the economic development of the county across a number of sectors including tourism, rural-based enterprise and employment, infrastructural and renewable energy.

Section 5 – *Tourism* contains a number of policies and objectives targeting tourism development within the county including the development of amenity and recreational assets/facilities and harnessing the county's natural and heritage resources in a sustainable manner for tourism activities.

Section 9 – *Infrastructure and Energy* – sets out the policy framework aimed at supporting and further developing the physical infrastructure within the county across a number of services such as water supply, wastewater, surface water and flood alleviation infrastructure, telecommunications and energy supply, including infrastructure associated with renewable energy development.

Section 10 – *Rural Development* – addresses a number of rural-based economy sectors including agriculture, forestry, extractive industries, and renewable energy.

Section 11 – *Heritage & Biodiversity* – addresses the built, cultural and heritage assets of the county and sets out the policy framework for the protection and sustainable management of such assets. This section also references two separate plans, the Leitrim Heritage Plan 2020-2025 and the Leitrim Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2027. Please note that both of these plans remain effective with the former due to be reviewed later this year.

This section also addresses and provides policy content in relation to various land cover types within the county such as wetlands, woodlands/forestry areas and peatlands. Moreover, **Section 11.13 – *Landscape*** provides the policy framework for the conservation of landscape character areas, designated sensitive landscape and protected views and prospects. Related to this section, the assessment of the proposed development shall also have regard to the contents of the following appendices to the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029: **Appendix VII – County Leitrim Landscape Assessment; Appendix VIII – County Leitrim Landscape Designations and Appendix IX – County Leitrim Views and Prospects**, which inform the policy framework provided in Section 11.13 of the Plan.

Section 12 – Climate Action & Renewable Energy – addresses the various policy instruments associated with this development theme and sets out the various climate action measures, underpinned by a series of policies and objectives, aimed at mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. This includes policies and objectives relating to the renewable energy developments as informed by ***Leitrim County Renewable Energy Strategy*** and its companion document ***Landscape and Visual Capacity Study for Wind Farms and Wind Turbines*** which together form **Appendix X** of the Plan.

A number of overarching policies and objectives in relation to climate action mitigation and adaptation, including renewable energy development, are provided in Chapter 12 of the Plan, with the following policies and objectives considered to be of relevance in relation to the proposed development:

CA POL 1 To support the implementation of the European, national, regional and local objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation detailed in Section 12.2.2 and Section 12.2.3 of this Plan.

CA POL 2 To support the transition of the county towards a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 by providing for consolidated development forms which facilitate the reduction of energy demand and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and which supports sustainable travel patterns in line with the Core Strategy.

RE POL 1 To encourage and facilitate the production of energy from renewable sources, such as from wind, solar, bioenergy, hydroelectricity, and geothermal, subject to compliance with proper planning and environmental considerations.

RE POL 2 To promote and support developments and actions that assist in achieving the national targets for energy from renewable resources and reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy production.

RE POL 3 To ensure environmental assessments for new energy developments should address reasonable alternatives for location. Where existing infrastructural assets such as sub-stations, powerlines and roads already exist within proposed development areas, then such assets should be considered for sustainable use by the proposed development where the assets have capacity to absorb the new development.

RE OBJ 1 To seek to achieve a minimum of 200 MW of renewable electricity in the county by 2030, by facilitating renewable energy developments, including micro-generation renewable technologies incorporating solar, wind, hydro-electric and bioenergy.

Section 12.6.2 of the Plan directly relates to Wind Energy generation. This section emphasises that site *"suitability is an important factor in determining the suitability of wind farms, having regard to possible adverse impacts associated with, for example, residential amenities, landscape, including views and scenic routes, wildlife, habitats, designated sites, protected structures or bird migration paths, and compatibility with adjoining land uses. The Council is required to achieve a reasonable balance between responding to overall positive Government policy on renewable energy and enabling the wind energy resources of the county to be harnessed in a manner that is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development."*

Section 12.6.2 of the Plan refers to the *"challenges to the development of further onshore wind include the local wind speed resource, noise limits, specifications for shadow flicker and spatial requirements*

relating to setback distances and environmental constraints". The Plan also refers to the sieve mapping analysis to highlight areas of the county with the potential to accommodate wind energy development identified as '*Available Areas*' in Figures 6.3 and 6.3b of the *County Leitrim Renewable Energy Strategy*, subject to significant landscape/visual constraints amongst other environmental considerations. This analysis takes consideration of the following:

- wind speed and resource.
- environmental, ecological, heritage and amenity constraints by applying an exclusion zone around key biodiversity and physical attributes. Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) sites were excluded, however Natural Heritage Area (NHA) and proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) sites were not excluded. Watercourses and physical constraints were also excluded using buffer distances related to construction activities and safety.
- land take being > 5 km^2 to take into account the spatial requirements generally for commercially scaled wind farm developments.
- set-back distances from housing using the minimum separation distance of 500m from all sensitive receptors as identified in the 2006 Wind Energy Development Guidelines (WEDG) and the 2019 Draft WEDG and as a means of identifying sites of strategic scale for the purposes of determining, more practically, the renewable energy target for the county as required under item (2) of the Specific Planning Policy Requirement (SPPR) prescribed in the *Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change* (2017).
- availability of grid infrastructure.

Section 12.6.2 of the Plan also refers to the *Landscape and Visual Capacity Study for Wind Farms and Wind Turbines*, provided in Appendix X of the Plan, which supplements the RES and provides a robust Landscape and Visual Capacity Study to specifically evaluate the respective capacities of various landscapes in the county to potentially accommodate larger scale wind energy development proposals.

The capacity study concludes that there is very limited capacity to absorb future large scale proposed developments in the form of multiple wind turbines and wind farms. This is due to a number of factors relating to landscape quality and scenic quality as follows:

- Scenic quality and expansive nature of these landscapes;
- Remote, tranquil and wild quality where the absence of man-made influences is a key characteristic;
- Intervisibility and relationship with adjacent landscapes for which the uplands are important to setting and present as a distinctive skyline or mountain backdrop;
- Presence of complex, distinctive and rugged landform;
- Landscape scale, at locations where field patterns defined by hedgerows convey a sense of a small-scale landscape in which the presence or visibility of wind turbines would dominate; and
- Proximity of settlements for which upland moorland and mountain areas are an important setting, which would be adversely affected by future wind turbines or wind farms.

The capacity study concludes that although scope for future wind energy development would be limited, each planning application for proposed development of this kind would have to be judged individually on its own merits.

In the case of this subject application, the proposed wind farm site is located within Landscape Character Type 5 (Moorland Plateau) and Type 6 (Moorland Hills) with the area adjoining Drumkeerran located in Landscape Character Type 8 (Valley Farmland). The majority of the application site is located in Character Area (LCA) 11 – Corry Mountain which is described as *"an upland area which overlooks Lough Allen and lowlands from the west. The area features extensive tracts of peat bog, transitional woodland and scrub.....In the agricultural landscapes on the lower slopes hedgerow enclosure results in a more intimate landscape".* It is not considered that the element of the application site contained within Drumkeeran has any particular significance from a landscape assessment viewpoint noting that this is located in Character Area 9 – The Northern Glens and Central Lowlands.

With regard to landscape sensitivity and quality of LCA 11, the current Landscape Assessment states *"the landscape quality and condition is partially affected by the presence of wind turbines, in particular the upland areas where these and associated access tracks interrupt the otherwise remote and tranquil character of the mountain moorland plateaus."* Furthermore, the *"upland plateaus are sensitive landscapes due to their visual exposure and intervisibility with the lowlands", whilst "the lowland farmed landscapes may be less sensitive to change due to the extent of wooded vegetation cover".*

The *Landscape and Visual Capacity Study for Wind Farms and Wind Turbines* provides the following summary and recommendations in respect of LCA 11 – Corry Mountain:

> *"This landscape is considered to have some limited capacity to accommodate wind turbines. The rolling topography and simple landcover of blanket bog and heath are characteristics which indicate that some potential to accommodate wind turbines may exist subject to detailed design and assessment. Views across and from Lough Allen are an important consideration together with the setting of the town of Drumkeeran and recreational walking routes such as the Miner's Way. Some limited areas to the north west of Corry Mountain where commercial forestry is present may be considered subject to detailed design, having regard for landscape and visual constraints. In these areas, there is potential for adverse cumulative effects with the nearby wind farms and that associated with Carrane Hill in Sligo."*

The *Landscape and Visual Capacity Study for Wind Farms and Wind Turbines* further states that there is *"limited capacity to accommodate future development in the form of wind turbines and wind farms, it is acknowledged that areas of upland moorland where rolling landform and consistency of landcover could be deemed worthy of further assessment to ascertain capacity to accommodate a limited number of wind turbines. Such areas may also comprise altered landscapes due to man made influences such as commercial forestry".*

The capacity study concludes overall that the areas of search comprise landscapes of considerable scenic quality for which, the introduction of wind turbines and wind farms would, in many cases, result in likely significant effects. However, each future planning application for proposed

development of this kind would have to be judged individually on its own merits with reference to a landscape and visual impact assessment report (LVIA) undertaken in line with best practice guidance by an appropriately qualified landscape architect. The LVIA would also demonstrate that the design of the proposed development, in terms of number, hub height, tip height and siting of individual wind turbines has regard for the baseline landscape character and visual amenity of the study area in which the development would be located.

It is clear that the application site coincides primarily with areas of coniferous forestry and was within the area of search associated with LCA 11 (see Figure 1.7 Corry Mountain - Landscape and Visual Capacity Study for Wind Farms and Wind Turbines an extract of which has been provided overleaf).

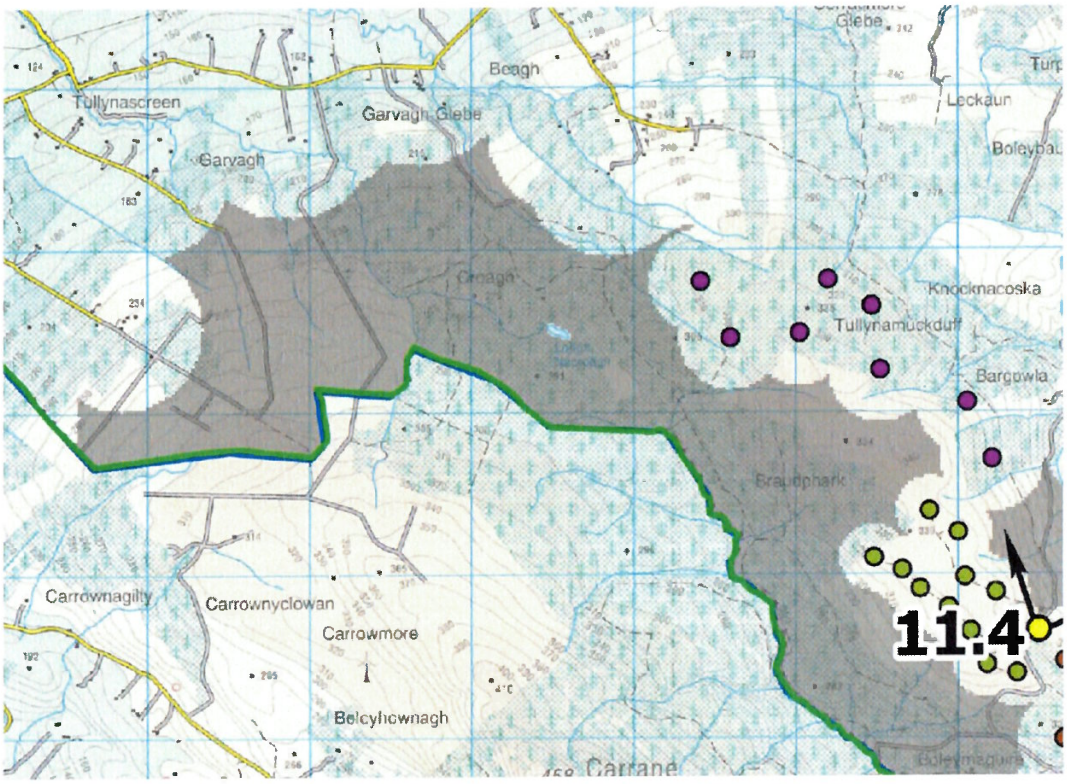
The County Development Plan 2023-2029 also reviewed the Protected Views and Prospects contained in the previous Plan. This resulted in a number being discontinued and a number of additional views and prospects being included. The are shown in Map No. 11 – Protected Views and Prospects, Volume III – Book of Maps. There are no protected views or prospects in the immediate vicinity of the site or towards the proposed wind farm development. View 22 is from the eastern shore of Lough Allen (R207). This view already contains the belt of windfarms along the Roscommon / Leitrim / Sligo boundary. It is not considered that the development would adversely impact upon or dominate such a view due to the separation distance. There is also a view (V18) of Creevelea Abbey, Dromahair from Friarstown which again would not be considered to be adversely impacted upon. Due to the separation distance involved or of V15 (View towards Carrigeencor Lough) which is considered a localised view. The view merited inclusion due to the scenic quality derived from the lake and distant mountain skyline associated with Corry Mountain and Carrane Hill in Co. Sligo. The scenic quality is enhanced by the tranquillity experienced at this location. It is not considered that the proposed wind farm development would significantly impact upon this view.

The following policies and objective from the Plan relate to wind energy development proposals:

WE POL 1 To acknowledge the importance of wind energy in Co. Leitrim as a renewable energy source which can play a vital role in achieving national targets in relation to reductions in fossil fuel dependency and therefore greenhouse gas emissions.

WE POL 2 To encourage the development of wind energy in suitable locations and in an environmentally sustainable manner to ensure the security of energy supply, in accordance with Government policy and the Leitrim County Renewable Energy Strategy.

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Leitrim County Council



WE POL 3 To ensure that the assessment of wind energy development proposals will have regard to the following:

- sensitivities of the county's landscapes.
- visual impact on protected views, prospects, designated landscapes, as well as local visual impacts.
- impacts on nature conservation designations, archaeological areas, county geological sites, historic structures, public rights of way and walking routes.
- local environmental impacts, including those on residential properties, such as noise and shadow flicker.
- visual and environmental impacts of associated development, such as access roads, plant and grid connections from the proposed wind farm to the electricity transmission network.
- scale, size and layout of the project and any cumulative effects due to other projects.
- the impact of the proposed development on protected bird and mammal species.

WE POL 4 To support the re-powering of existing wind energy development when they reach the end of their operational life.

WE POL 5 To encourage and support the development of small-scale wind energy development proposals and single turbines in urban, rural and industrial areas, provided they do not negatively impact upon environmental quality, landscape, wildlife and habitats or residential amenity or other relevant planning consideration.

WE POL 6 To have regard to the principles and planning guidance set out in Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government publications relating to '*Wind Energy Development*' and the DCCAE Code of Practice for Wind Energy Development in Ireland and any other relevant guidance which may be issued.

WE POL 7 To support the investigation of the potential for, and subsequent development of (where considered feasible), relatively small-scale wind energy developments within urban and industrial areas, and for small community-based proposals outside the key areas that are identified as being appropriate for wind energy development in the Renewable Energy Strategy. Such proposals are subject to the consideration of environmental assessments as part of the application consent process and of demonstration of compliance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

WE OBJ 1 To secure the maximum potential from the wind energy resources of Co. Leitrim commensurate with supporting development that is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Section 13 – Development Management Standards sets out the general Development Management principles and standards that will be applied by the Council to ensure that future development is in accordance with the policies and objectives set out elsewhere in the Plan. Development Management Standards specific to energy, telecommunications and services, including wind energy development, are set out in Section 13.20.

The Standards reiterate that when assessing planning applications for wind energy development, the Planning Authority shall have regard to national guidance and the policy framework provided in Section 12 of Volume I - Written Statement and Appendix X of the Plan.

In addition, the following considerations will be taken into account by the Planning Authority in relation to any planning application for wind energy development:

- Impact on the visual amenities of the area.
- Impact on the residential amenities of the area.
- Scale and layout of the project, any cumulative effects due to other projects and the extent to which the impacts are visible across the local landscape.
- Visual impact of the proposal with respect to protected views, scenic routes and designated scenic landscapes.

- Impact on nature conservation, water quality, ecology, including an assessment of impacts on collision risk species (birds and bats), soil, hydrology, groundwater, air quality, archaeology, built heritage and public rights of way.
- Impact on ground conditions and geology.
- Impact on peat stability and robust geotechnical assessment of potential for peat slippage.
- Consideration of falling distance plus an additional flashover distance from wind turbines to overhead transmission lines.
- Impact of development on the road network in the area.
- Impact on human health in relation to:
  - Noise disturbance (including consistency with the Word Health Organisations 2018 Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region).
  - Shadow flicker (for wind turbine developments, including detailed Shadow Flicker Study).

This list is not exhaustive, and the Planning Authority may consider other requirements in relation to traffic and transport assessments, road safety audits/road safety impact assessments, access onto public roads, haul route assessment etc. Section 13 sets out development management standards in relation to such items.

Section 13.20.4 of the Plan outlines the Development Management Standards relating to the undergrounding of cables. Proposals should demonstrate that environmental impacts including the following are minimised:

- Habitat loss as a result of removal of field boundaries and hedgerows (right of way preparation) followed by topsoil stripping (to ensure machinery does not destroy soil structure and drainage properties).
- Short to medium term impacts on the landscape where, for example, hedgerows are encountered.
- Impacts on underground archaeology.
- Impacts on soil structure and drainage.
- Impacts on surface waters as a result of sedimentation.

Other relevant policy context associated with the Leitrim CDP 2023-2029 in respect of the proposed development include the policy framework outlined in **Chapter 11 – Heritage & Biodiversity**. The following policies and objectives are relevant in the context of the proposed development:

NH POL 1 To protect and conserve Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

NH POL 2 To implement Article 6(3) and where necessary Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects with the potential to impact European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s). All assessments must be in compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, and the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended as relevant.

NH POL 3 To protect designated Natural Heritage Area (NHA) sites, including proposed Natural Heritage Area sites (pNHA) and seek to develop linkages between designated sites and other non-designated sites of ecological importance, where feasible and as resources permit.

NH POL 4 To consult with relevant prescribed bodies, such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service (DoHLGH), and take account of any licensing requirements when undertaking, approving and authorising development which is likely to affect plant, animal or bird species or habitats protected by law.

NH POL 5 To ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact on plant, animal or bird species or habitats protected by law, subject to satisfactory mitigation measures.

NH POL 6 To protect and where possible enhance wildlife habitats and landscape features which act as ecological corridors/networks and stepping stones, such as river corridors, hedgerows and road verges, and to minimise the loss of habitats and features of the wider countryside (such as ponds, wetlands and trees) which are not within designated sites.

NH POL 7 To treat the uplands of North Leitrim located above the 160 metre contour, as an ecologically-sensitive entity, where these uplands are not already designated as such.

NH POL 8 To protect ecological networks linking protected and designated important sites within the county, in accordance with Article 10 of the *Habitats Directive*.

NH POL 10 To ensure the protection, conservation and enhancement of the biodiversity of the county.

NH OBJ 1 To ensure that no project or programme giving rise to significant adverse, direct, indirect, secondary or cumulative impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site(s), having regard to their qualifying interests and conservation objectives, arising from their size, scale, area or land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects)[1].

NH OBJ 2 To protect and conserve those sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) during the lifetime of this Plan. The list of current SACs is contained in Table 11.1 of this Chapter.

[1] Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive which states that there must be: a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.

NH OBJ 3 To protect and conserve those sites designated as Special Protection Areas during the lifetime of this Plan. There is current one SPA in Co. Leitrim which is contained in Table 11.2 of this Chapter.

NH OBJ 4 To protect and conserve Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) that become designated and notified to the Local Authority during the lifetime of this Plan. The list of current NHAs and proposed NHAs are contained in Table 11.3 and 11.4 of this Chapter.

NH OBJ 5 To protect the character, appearance and quality of the habitats and semi-natural features in Co. Leitrim such as woodlands, hedgerows, peatlands, wetlands and artificial waterways of historic or ecological importance.

PEAT POL 1 To conserve peatlands and protect peatland landscapes within the county.

PEAT POL 2 To seek hydrological reports for significant developments within and close to peatlands, to assess potential impacts on the integrity of the peatland ecosystems.

Conclusion

In general, the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 endorses the national and regional policies in terms of renewable energy. The Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 contains a number of policies and objectives aimed at mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. This includes policies and objectives relating in support of suitable and sustainable renewable energy developments, including wind energy development, as informed by *Leitrim County Renewable Energy Strategy* and its companion document *Landscape and Visual Capacity Study for Wind Farms and Wind Turbines* which together form Appendix X of the Plan. Specifically, RE OBJ 1 seeks to achieve a minimum of 200 MW of renewable electricity in the county by 2030, by facilitating renewable energy developments including micro-generation renewable technologies incorporating solar, wind, hydro-electric and bioenergy.

In this regard, it is noted that the site of the proposed wind energy development is located within an identified potential 'Available Area' as per Figure 6.3 (b) in Appendix B of the *Leitrim County Renewable Energy Strategy*. Whilst such areas do not equate with an 'acceptable in principle' status for wind energy development, such areas take account of constraints for wind energy development such as certain distances from material assets, sensitive receptors, European Sites and from natural physical attributes and to highlight areas of the county with the potential to accommodate wind energy development subject to significant landscape/visual constraints amongst other environmental considerations.

Supplementing this spatial guidance contained in the *Leitrim County Renewable Energy Strategy*, is the *Landscape and Visual Capacity Study for Wind Farms and Wind Turbines*. As noted in the policy context section of this report, the capacity study concludes that although scope for future wind energy development would be limited, each planning application for proposed development of this kind would have to be judged individually on its own merits. In the case of this subject application, the proposed wind farm site is primarily located within Landscape Character Area 11 – Corry Mountain of which the *Landscape and Visual Capacity Study for Wind Farms and Wind Turbines* states

that there is *"limited capacity to accommodate future development in the form of wind turbines and wind farms, it is acknowledged that areas of upland moorland where rolling landform and consistency of landcover could be deemed worthy of further assessment to ascertain capacity to accommodate a limited number of wind turbines. Such areas may also comprise altered landscapes due to man made influences such as commercial forestry".*

Set within the aforementioned policy context and noting the location of the subject site within an area where there is identified potential for wind energy development and having regard to the presence of some limited capacity for such development in the general area of the subject site, it is considered that the principle of the proposed development is acceptable to the Planning Authority. However, the suitability is predicated on other planning and environmental considerations being satisfied by the Board some of which relate directly and indirectly to the policy framework of the Development Plan as outlined in the preceding pages.

This report has outlined the policy framework of the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 against which An Bord Pleanála must have regard in the reassessment of the submitted appeal. It is not considered that there has been any fundamental departure from that which existed in the previous County Development Plan 2015-2023 which would require a reconsideration of the principle of the proposed development from the perspective of the Local Authority. As there has been no additional documentation provided to the Planning Authority to consider, we have no further comment to make at this time.

Is Mise, Le Meas,

Dympna Reilly

Administrative Officer
Planning Department