

Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: KK-C162-139

Submission: Wind Energy Development Strategy Submission

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Comhairliúchán:

Kilkenny City and County Draft Development Plan 2021-2027

Stádas: Submitted

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My issues with the Wind Energy Development Strategy

Caibidil: Volume One County » 11. Renewable Energy » 11.5 Wind Energy » 11.5.2 Wind Energy Development Strategy

I have a number of issues around the changes to the areas designated for Wind Farm development. This covers the whole county but I am unhappy with implications for the area around Castlebanny/Mullinakill/Glenpipe.

1. Consultation Period

The public consultation period will start and end during a level 5 lockdown. This is un-acceptable in a modern democracy that such an important change should be completed during what is the most challenging period in our recent history.

Many people in my area do not even know this change is being made and that Kilkenny County Council are agreeing in principal to a wind farm on our doorsteps. Lots of people don't have access to a PC/Broadband and in particular the older generation cannot travel 20km+ to Kilkenny to view the changes in person.

2. Redesignation

The redesignation of our area appears to be based solely on high windspeed. The use of the term "*characterised by high wind speeds, and no significant conflict with environmental designations or sensitivities*" has been applied unilaterally to our area.

It ignores a multitude of other factors and contradicts the strategy itself where on page 186 it says "*it is now considered that wind speed should not be the primary determinant of suitability for wind energy generation*". How can it be decided that there is no conflict with "sensitivities" without a proper process.

3. Population

In the 2016 Census, the population of the immediate ED's around our area is 1,112. A wind farm would not be allowed any where near a village with a population of this size, so how can it be allowed in the middle of an area like ours just because the population is dispersed in a rural area.

From 2002 - 2016 the population has increased by 28.7% which far outstrips the county/ national rates. Our own immediate ED of Jerpoint West has increased by 120%. This shows this overall area has reversed the slide in rural population decline. However, if the area is in the centre of a wind farm development, this decline will recommence. As our ED currently faces existing wind farms in Rahora and Ballymartin, we could potentially have wind farms on 3 if not 4 sides.

ED Name	Total Population 2002	Total Population 2006	Total Population 2011	Total Population 2016	Population increase 2002 -> 2016
Castlebanny	144	154	127	150	4.17%
Castlegannon	113	115	124	118	4.42%
Jerpoint West	122	186	259	269	120.49%
Kilbeacon	177	180	194	200	12.99%
Kiltorcan	141	151	159	175	24.11%
Pleberstown	167	171	178	200	19.76%
TOTAL	864	957	1041	1112	28.70%
Source :					
<i>Pobal</i>					

4. Setback Distances

The Wind Energy strategy only gives a cursory mention of setback distances of 500m. There should be a proper review of the setback distances and they should be aligned with is being proposed in other counties. Westmeath County Council Propose setback distances of the following: "If a turbine is 50m high, it must be set back 500 metres from a home; 100m high, it must be set back 1km, while anything over 150m high must be set back 2km". The Wind Turbine Regulation Bill 2020, in the Dail currently, proposes a setback of "10 times the height of turbine".

5. Water Quality

There is no public water supply in our area. All supplies are private wells and how can Kilkenny County Council guarantee that there will be no change in quality to our existing supply. If there is a reduction in quality there is no plan in place by Kilkenny County Council to remedy it.

Main opinion:

I'm unhappy with the reclassification of the Castlebanny/Mullinakill/Glenpipe area for the purposes of Wind Energy Development

Main requests:

That this area of south Kilkenny which already has 2 wind farms has made enough of a contribution to the county's renewable energy targets and the proposed change to its classification be reversed.

Documents Attached: Níl