



Department for

**Communities**

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**From: The Minister**

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Your ref:

Mr Doug Beattie MLA  
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Our ref: AQW 2259 17-22  
Date: 10 March 2020

Dear

**AQW 2259 17-22 - PLANNING PERMISSION FOR A WIND TURBINE AT KNOCK IVEAGH**

Following your recent question relating to Knock Iveagh I can confirm that the Chair of the Historic Monuments Council wrote to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure on 30 October 2017. A copy of the letter has been placed in the Assembly Library.

If you have any further queries these should be directed to Iain Greenway, Director, Historic Environment Division at [iain.greenway@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:iain.greenway@communities-ni.gov.uk) or direct telephone 028 90 819322.

Yours sincerely

**Deirdre Hargey MLA  
Minister for Communities**

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Prof. Gabriel Cooney BA MA PhD  
Chairman

Mr Peter May,  
Permanent Secretary, Department for Infrastructure

([Peter.May@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Peter.May@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk))

30 - 10 - 2017

Dear Mr May,

I am writing to you as Chair of the Historic Monuments Council in relation to the site of Knockiveagh cairn (Dow 041:022) and its landscape setting. Planning permission (Q2012/03003/F) was granted for the erection of a wind turbine about 100m north northwest of the cairn and retrospective planning application (LA08/2017/1224/F) is being sought for a 15m telecommunications tower which has been recently erected immediately to the southeast of the cairn. Some of the works associated with this tower may have affected the scheduled area of the monument.

Knockiveagh cairn was constructed over 5000 years ago in the Neolithic period and reused in the Early Bronze Age about 3000 years ago. It was a prominent site in the historic period as an inauguration site of early medieval kings and the later Magennis lords of County Down.

The historic monument at Knockiveagh is of regional importance for Northern Ireland as demonstrated by its scheduling under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995. Policy BH 1 of PPS 6 Planning, Archaeology and Built Heritage applies. The setting of the monument is distinctive and has been specifically noted in the Supplementary Planning Guidance to accompany PPS 18 Renewable Energy (p. 215)...*Knockiveagh is the most distinctive of the collection of hills that make up this LCA (Landscape Character Area 77 Iveagh Slopes) and forms a prominent ridge particularly when viewed from the south as a result of its elevation above surrounding areas and its rocky outcrops.*

The Historic Monuments Council is a statutory council appointed to advise the Department for Communities on the exercise of its powers under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995. It is consulted by the Department in relation to policy, the Scheduling of Monuments, Monuments in State Care and the identification of Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAIs). Membership of the Council is diverse, representing a wide range of public interests complemented by a number of senior archaeologists (including the Chair) with

professional and heritage management expertise. It is relevant in this particular case to state that I am a specialist in the Neolithic period in Ireland.

Following on from communication from concerned members of the local community in early September about the construction of the telecommunications mast and associated work at Knockiveagh I raised the issue on behalf of the Historic Monuments Council with the Historic Environment Division, Department for Communities. The Historic Monuments Council has been informally briefed by the Historic Environment Division as its investigations develop. I provided a statement of the importance of the monument, with a particular focus on its significance as a prehistoric burial cairn and noted the national importance of this site for understanding the Neolithic period in Ireland.

A formal update of the case was provided by the Historic Environment Division to a meeting of the Historic Monuments Council on 24 October. It is the understanding of the Historic Monuments Council that under Section 150 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council has served a temporary stop notice to ensure complete cessation of activity at and around the site.

The Historic Monuments Council understands that there are three issues to be examined.

1. The potential impact of the works associated with the telecommunications tower on the scheduled area
2. The retrospective application for planning permission for the telecommunications tower
3. The wind turbine for which planning permission has been granted.

It is the understanding of the Historic Monuments Council that under the statutory power and obligations of the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order the Historic Environment Division is actively pursuing its investigation of whether some of the works associated with the construction of the telecommunications tower may have affected the scheduled area of the monument.

In relation to the retrospective application for planning permission for the telecommunications tower the Historic Monuments Council fully supports and recommends to Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council the advice of the Historic Environment Division (9 October 2017). The retrospective proposal is contrary to Policy BH1 of PPS6 (and Para 6.8 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement) and should be refused planning permission. Appropriate planning enforcement action should be considered to remove unauthorised development work from the site and the site should be reinstated to a condition as close as possible to that prior to the commencement of development.

In relation to the wind turbine for which planning permission has been granted (by the Department of the Environment) it is clear that the consideration of this development in the planning process was seriously flawed and inadequate on a number of grounds. There was no consideration of the historic environment or specifically the scheduled monument and its setting in the Environmental Due Diligence Report submitted with the planning application. The then regulatory authority for the historic environment; Built Heritage Directorate, NIEA, Department of the Environment was not consulted on the application. It should also be noted that PPS 18 Annex 3 specifically mentions Knockiveagh...*Particular care should be*

*taken to avoid adverse impacts on areas with memorable long distance views to the Mourne and Sperrins e.g. Knockiveagh Summit.* This explicit statement of policy does not appear to have been considered in the planning process.

Against this background the Historic Monuments Council would recommend that the planning authority, Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, in consultation with the Department for Infrastructure, should revoke the planning permission for the wind turbine using its powers under Section 68 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) Act 2011. It may also be relevant for the Department to consider its powers under Section 72 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gabriel Cooney'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Professor Gabriel Cooney, chair