

Údarás na Gaeltachta has wind turbine plans for six sites

Ardara, Kilcar, Fintown, Cloghan, Termon and Glencolmcille considered

BY CRONAN SCANLON

THE Donegal News has learned that Údarás na Gaeltachta is considering erecting huge stand-alone wind turbines at six sites it owns around the county.

The development comes just one week after Lir Energy Ltd was refused planning permission for a 400 foot high structure at the Gweedore Business Park. The Gaeltacht development authority entered into an agreement with the Galway-based company, allowing it to apply for planning permission on their property. A spokesperson for neither Údarás nor Lir could be contacted at the time of going to press. However, this paper has been given a document by a confidential source which states a number of other sites are being examined to assess their suitability for turbines. The Údarás-owned properties are located in Ardara, Kilcar, Fintown, Cloghan, Termon and Glencolmcille.

"The Donegal Auto-Production project is the building of a wind turbine on a number of brown field industrial sites to help power the com-



panies at these locations," the document stated.

"Údarás na Gaeltachta has proposed a number of sites that we (Lir) are analysing in regards to suitability for the construction at these locations of a single wind turbine at each location.

The turbines are designed to generate power for the tenants at each location. As the sites already have con-

nections to the National Grid as well as 'large power import capabilities' and access roads, any surplus wind power can be exported to the grid and little or no cost, it added.

"The road system will require minimal modification and, therefore, will reduce issues for local residents. All of these things mean no capital outlay is required from the State," it added. The document concluded "we are at a preliminary state" of examination at the sites.

Back in November, Údarás told this paper that a wind turbine on the Gaoth Dobhair Business Park would offer a "substantial saving" on electricity costs to businesses there. However, the plan was met with huge opposition.

Council planners said the 1.5MW turbine, with tip height of 123 metres (403 ft) and a blade diameter of 77 m (252 ft), was too big and too close to nearby homes and offices. They also agreed with an objection from the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) who stated the proposed turbine would interfere with the flight path of Donegal Airport.