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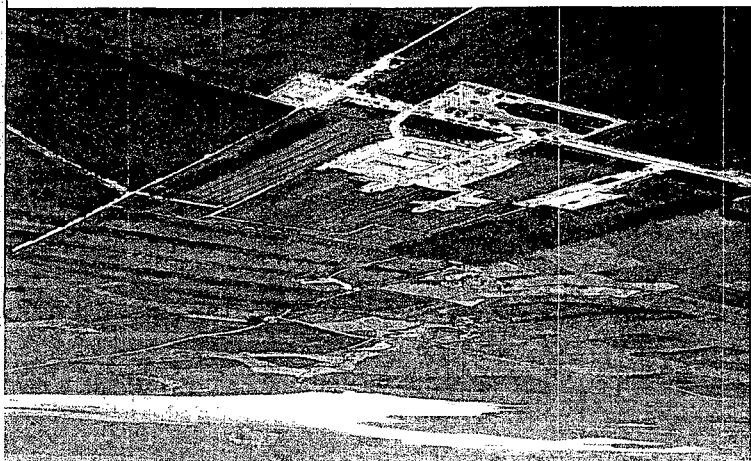
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"From a strategic planning perspective this is the wrong site; from the perspective of government policy which seeks to foster regional development, this is the wrong site; from the perspective of minimising environmental impact, this is the wrong site; and from the perspective of sustainable development, this is the wrong site."

Aerial view of the site of the proposed Gas Processing Plant in Ballinaboy looking south west, with Carrowmore Lake in the background (photo: Jan Pesch)



DEVELOPER DID NOT ADDRESS QUESTIONS

Mr Moore noted the MLVC's approval of the plan of development emphasised "a perception to some degree that the granting of planning permission for the processing terminal at the Ballinaboy site is a fait accompli". Mr Moore also noted that the MLVC report compared the treatment of gas at source versus onshore:

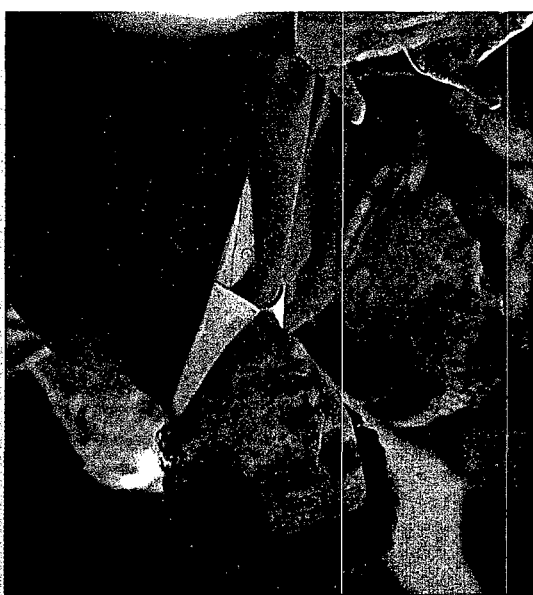
"It did not compare the treatment of gas onshore with a shallow water option, i.e. offshore but not at source. The utilisation of the findings of the MLVC are not appropriate in this instance when considering what was asked of the applicant by way of further information. Furthermore, the applicant appears to be seeking to use the findings of the MLVC to undermine the deliberations of the Board on the suitability of the Ballinaboy site from a planning perspective."

Mr Moore had investigated the shallow-water option that the MLVC had failed to consider and he had requested the developer to provide further information on the tie-backs in the re-opened hearings. David Bennett of Cranherne, an oil and

Independent TD, Jerry Cowley at a community meeting in Glenamoy, October 2005

gas development solutions company owned by US company, Halliburton, submitted on behalf of the developer that the Broadhaven Bay option was the limit of current technology and, therefore, the only acceptable option. Mr Moore noted that the response provided by Cranherne did not address the questions he had raised. "It was expressly requested that a more complete comparison be made between the proposed development and a shallow water fixed steel jacket option," Mr Moore wrote. "The applicant's response completely avoided this option."

Mr Moore's analysis of the Cranherne submission showed that the developments submitted as evidence of comparable existing subsea tie-backs were all tied back to offshore platforms. Several of these fields, including the Gemini field, Mica field





An Bórd Pleanála hearings, February 2002 in Ballina
(Photo: Shay Fennelly)

THE BORD PLEANÁLA HEARINGS

In July 2002, Bord Pleanála requested further information from the Corrib developer. Hearings re-commenced in November 2002 and finished on 10 December. In April 2003, An Bord Pleanála published its decision to refuse planning permission.

SENIOR PLANNING INSPECTOR VIGOROUSLY OPPOSES PLAN

In his report, Senior Planning Inspector Kevin Moore was adamant that the development was taking place on the wrong site:

"From a strategic planning perspective, this is the wrong site; from the perspective of Government policy which seeks to foster balanced regional development, this is the wrong site; from the perspective of minimising environmental impact, this is the wrong site; and consequently, from the perspective of sustainable development, this is the wrong site."

At a time when the Board is now required, in accordance with the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 2000, to have regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of an area in which a development is proposed to be constructed, it is my submission that the proposed development of a large gas processing terminal at this rural, scenic, and unserved area on a bogland hill some 8 kilometres inland from the Mayo coastland landfall location, with all its site development works difficulties, public safety concerns, adverse visual, ecological, and traffic impacts, and a range of other significant environmental impacts, defies any rational understanding of the term "sustainability". It is an irony that this large industrial proposal is linked with a natural gas resource, the exploitation of which adheres to the concept of sustainability."

Mr Moore noted that several separate agencies had responsibility for the development for seabed, landfall, overland pipes and terminal:

"If there is to be any merit in permitting the splitting of this overall project into its various component parts and permitting separate independent assessments by various agencies, then the Board should not be constrained by any decisions that may or may not have been made by other agencies to date, in my opinion."

MR MOORE SCATHING ABOUT MLVC REPORT

Mr Moore was scathing about the MLVC report:

"How the MLVC came to its conclusions would appear to be beyond the realms of a rational approach to the planning of this major infrastructural development and exhibits nothing short of prematurity, in my view, when the decision of the Board on the critical issue of where best to locate a terminal had not been made in April, 2002. Their determinations should not be utilised as a stick for driving the Board in the direction of a grant of planning permission in this way. Their deliberations are not the determinants on whether this development should be granted planning permission or not. In effect, if this was to be the case, the Board's function has been undermined in determining the proper planning and sustainable development of this area."



Shell To Sea campaigner and teacher
Maura Harrington at a community meeting
in Glenamoy, October 2005