

Geography Sample Answer

2021 Long Question 9C

In this answer, I am going to discuss the conflict between protecting the environment and helping the economy. The two case studies I have studied are the Corrib Gas Conflict and the M3 and Hill of Tara.

The Corrib Gas Conflict occurred between multinational company (MNC) Shell and the locals of North West Mayo. In 1996, Enterprise Oil discovered a gas field 70 km off the coast of Mayo. The conflict occurred over the processing of the gas. The locals wanted it to be processed offshore for environmental, health and safety reasons. Shell wanted it to be processed on land for economic reasons. In 2001, planning permission was first granted by Mayo County Council for the gas to start being piped. However, the public appealed the decision to An Bord Pleanála for health and safety reasons and it did not go ahead. In 2003, planning permission was fully granted. The locals of Ballinaboy were horrified. They were concerned about health and safety with the gas pipe running through some of the farmers' fields. They were concerned about the environmental impact that this would have on the area. The value of the natural gas was worth 2 billion euro. Locals felt that they were being exploited as the project would not reduce gas prices for the Irish people. There were some economic benefits to the project with 700 construction jobs being created and 100 permanent jobs being created. There were a huge number of protests over the project. Environmentalists all over the country rallied around the community of Ballinaboy. Protests got violent with hunger strikes and people being

sent to jail. In the end, Shell won out and the first bit of gas was piped across in December 2015.

The M3 motorway was finished in 2010. It was built to reduce traffic congestion between Naas and Dublin. The distance between the M3 and the Hill of Tara is less than 2km. The Hill of Tara sits in an environmentally sensitive historical area with ancient monuments. Before construction began, the Environmental Protection Agency carried out a survey to investigate the impact the motorway would have on the valley. The survey revealed that the motorway would have a huge impact on the valley. Supporters of the project and the national road authority argued that we have to live in the present and think about the current needs of the country. Historians and environmentalists argue that we need to protect the environment. The national road authority won out in the end with the road opening in 2010.