



An
Bord
Pleanála

Board Direction
PL04.248278

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a Board meeting held on 21st March 2018.

The Board decided to grant permission generally in accordance with the Inspector's recommendation, for the following reasons and considerations, and subject to the following conditions.

Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to regional and national policy objectives in relation to renewable energy including solar photovoltaics and to the:-

- provisions of the Cork County Development Plan 2014-2020,
- nature and scale of the proposed development,
- suitability of the aspect and topography of the site,
- the existing hedging and screening on the site,
- proximity of the site to a grid connection and
- pattern of development in the vicinity,

it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the visual amenities of the area or the residential amenities of property in the vicinity, would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, or the ecology of the area and would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application and as amended by further plans and particulars submitted on 10th February 2017, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. (a) The permission shall be for a period of 25 years from the date of the commissioning of the solar array. The solar array and related ancillary structures shall then be removed unless, prior to the end of the period, planning permission shall have been granted for their retention for a further period.

(b) Prior to commencement of development, a detailed restoration plan, including a timescale for its implementation, providing for the removal of the solar arrays, including all foundations, anchors, inverter/transformer stations, substation, CCTV cameras, fencing and site access to a specific timescale, shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority.

(c) On full or partial decommissioning of the solar farm, or if the solar farm ceases operation for a period of more than one year, the solar arrays, including foundations/anchors, and all associated equipment, shall be dismantled and removed permanently from the site. The site shall be restored in accordance with this plan and all decommissioned structures shall be removed within three months of decommissioning.

Reason: To enable the planning authority to review the operation of the solar farm over the stated time period, having regard to the circumstances then prevailing, and in the interest of orderly development.

3. This permission shall not be construed as any form of consent or agreement to a connection to the national grid or to the routing or nature of any such connection.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

4. (a) Existing field boundaries shall be retained, notwithstanding any exemptions available and new planting undertaken in accordance with the plans submitted to the PA on 11th March 2016

(b) All landscaping shall be planted to the written satisfaction of the planning authority prior to commencement of development. Any trees or hedgerow that are removed, die or become seriously damaged or diseased during the operative period of the solar farm as set out by this permission, shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees or hedging of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of biodiversity, the visual amenities of the area, and the residential amenities of property in the vicinity.

5. (a) No artificial lighting shall be installed or operated on site unless authorised by a prior grant of planning permission.

(b) CCTV cameras shall be fixed and angled to face into the site and shall not be directed towards adjoining property or the road.

(c) Cables within the site shall be located underground.

(d) The inverter/transformer stations shall be dark green in colour. The external walls of the proposed substation shall be finished in a neutral colour such as light grey or off-white and the roof shall be of black slate or tiles.

Reason: In the interest of clarity, of visual and residential amenity.

6. Before construction commences on site, details of the structures of the security fence showing provision for the movement of mammals shall be submitted for prior approval to the Planning Authority. This shall be facilitated through the provision of mammal access gates every 100m along the perimeter fence and in accordance with standard guidelines for provision of mammal access (NRA 2008).

Reason: To allow wildlife to continue to have access across the site.

7. The construction of the development shall be managed in accordance with a Construction Management Plan, which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. This plan shall provide details of intended construction practice for the development, including but not limited to, hours of working, noise and dust management measures, surface water management proposals, the management of construction traffic, a structural assessment and monitoring programme of the existing bridge at the junction of the L5790/L1517 and the off-site disposal of construction waste.

Reason: In the interests of public safety, residential amenity and protection of the environment.

8. A buffer zone of 20m shall be established within the development site from the outer extent of the enclosure CH017 as identified in the Geophysical Survey (Fig 3) in advance of the development by a suitably qualified archaeologist. The buffer zone shall be delimited using appropriate temporary boundary fencing and signage. Prior to the commencement of the development the archaeologist shall submit a site layout showing the location of the buffer zone supported by photographic evidence. No construction works, stockpiling of topsoil etc, or any development, or landscaping and/or planting should take place within the designated buffer zone. No trees, plants etc shall be removed from this buffer zone.

Subsequent to the completion of the development the buffer zone shall remain around the Archaeological Monument. Planting within this buffer zone shall be limited to shallow-rooted plants and/or grass.

Reason: To preserve items of archaeological importance

9. The developer shall facilitate the archaeological appraisal of the site and shall provide for the preservation, recording and protection of archaeological materials or features which may exist within the site. In this regard, the developer shall:

- (a) notify the planning authority in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of any site operation (including hydrological and geotechnical investigations) relating to the proposed development, and
- (b) employ a suitably-qualified archaeologist prior to the commencement of development. The archaeologist shall assess the site (including archaeological testing) and monitor all site development works.

The assessment shall address the following issues:

- (i) the nature and location of archaeological material on the site, and
- (ii) the impact of the proposed development on such archaeological material.

A report, containing the results of the assessment, shall be submitted to the planning authority and, arising from this assessment, the developer shall agree in writing with the planning authority details regarding any further archaeological requirements (including, if necessary, archaeological excavation) prior to commencement of construction works.

In default of agreement on any of these requirements, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

Reason: In order to conserve the archaeological heritage of the area and to secure the preservation (in-situ or by record) and protection of any archaeological remains that may exist within the site.

10. A new sod bank and hedgerow shall be constructed at western end of Field 1 as outlined in Figure 7 of the Archaeological Assessment.

Reason: To preserve the setting of an archaeological monument

11. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall lodge with the planning authority a bond of an insurance company, a cash deposit, or other security to secure the provision and satisfactory reinstatement of the local public road (L-5790), if damaged by the transport of material to the site in connection with the development, coupled with an agreement empowering the planning authority to apply such security or part thereof to the satisfactory completion of any part of the development. The form and amount of the security shall be as agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of agreement, shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory reinstatement of local roads.

12. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall lodge with the planning authority a cash deposit, a bond of an insurance company, or such other security as may be acceptable to the planning authority, to secure the satisfactory reinstatement of the site on cessation of the project coupled with an agreement empowering the planning authority to apply such security or part thereof to such reinstatement. The form and amount of the security shall be as agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of agreement, shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory reinstatement of the site.

13. The developer shall pay to the planning authority a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority that is provided or intended to be provided by or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The contribution shall be paid prior to commencement of development or in such phased payments as the planning authority may facilitate and shall be subject to any applicable indexation provisions of the Scheme at the time of payment. Details of the application of the terms of the Scheme shall be agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of such agreement, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála to determine the proper application of the terms of the Scheme.

Reason: It is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that a condition requiring a contribution in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Act be applied to the permission.

Board Member

Date: 23rd March 2018

Eugene Nixon