



An
Bord
Pleanála

Board Direction
PL26 248364

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a Board meeting held on 12th February 2018.

The Board decided to make a split decision, to

(1) grant permission, for the following reasons and considerations and subject to the following conditions for the solar array on the southern section of the site from the proposed central hedgerow to the southern site boundary

and

(2) refuse permission for the solar array on the northern section of the site from the proposed central hedgerow to the northern site boundary

generally in accordance with the Inspector's recommendation, for the following reasons and considerations.

Appropriate Assessment Screening

The Board completed an Appropriate Assessment Screening exercise in relation to the potential effects of the proposed development on European Sites, taking into account the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report submitted with the application and the Inspector's report and submissions on file. In completing the screening exercise, the Board adopted the report of the Inspector and concluded that, by itself or in combination with other development in the vicinity, the proposed development, would not be likely

to have a significant effect on any European Site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

Reasons and Considerations (1)

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, the suitability of the topography of the site, the proximity of a grid connection, the pattern of development in the vicinity, the planning history of the area, including the solar array permitted under Reg. Ref. 20161217, the provisions of the Wexford County Development Plan 2013 – 2019, and of regional and national policy objectives in relation to renewable energy, it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the residential amenities of property in the vicinity, would not have unacceptable impacts on the visual amenities of the area, would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience, and would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Conditions

As per Inspector's recommended conditions with the following amendments

Condition 2

1. The proposed development shall be amended as follows: -
 - a) The proposed solar array to the upper section of the site from the proposed central hedgerow to the northern site boundary shall be omitted from the scheme. The smaller field to the north of the access road is permitted.

Revised drawings showing compliance with these requirements shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Condition 6 a) New planting shall be undertaken in accordance with the plans submitted to the planning authority and to the Board on appeal.

Condition 11 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.

Include Additional Condition

Each fencing panel shall be erected such that for a minimum of 300 millimetres of its length, its bottom edge is no less than 150 millimetres from ground level.

Reason: To allow wildlife to continue to have access to and through the site

Condition 12 CMP 1

Reasons and Considerations (2)

It is Council policy under Objective L04 'To require all developments to be appropriate in scale and sited, designed and landscaped having regard to their setting in the landscape so as to ensure that any potential adverse visual impacts are minimised'. Having regard to the topography of this open, exposed section of the site from the proposed central hedgerow to the northern site boundary on the ridgeline of Banoge Hill and to its elevated nature, it is considered that this section of the proposed solar farm would form a prominent and obtrusive feature in the landscape, which would be highly visible in views from roads to south and south-east and which would adversely impact on the rural character of the area. The proposed development would seriously injure the visual amenities of the area and would conflict with this development plan objective which seeks to protect the landscape. The proposed development would, therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Board Member

Date: 14.02.2018

Terry Prendergast

Note: This file was considered by the Board in conjunction the nearby proposal for another solar farm in the locality (PL26.248210).