



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Direction
CD-022368-26
ACP-324102-26

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a meeting held on 04/08/2026.

The Commission decided to APPROVE the proposed development under section 182A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, for the following reasons and considerations and subject to the conditions set out below, and

determined under section 182B of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, the sum to be refunded to the applicant, as set out in the Schedule of Costs below.

**Planning
Commissioner:**

Mick Long

Date: 04/08/2026

DRAFT WORDING FOR ORDER

Reasons and Considerations

The Commission made its decision consistent with:

- (a) Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended by Section 17 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, and the requirement to, in so far as

practicable, perform its functions in a manner consistent with the Climate Action Plan 2024 and Climate Action Plan 2025 and the national long term climate action strategy, the national adaptation framework and approved sectoral adaptation plans set out in those plans and in furtherance of the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State.

- (b) Directive 2000/60/EC, the Water Framework Directive and the requirement to exercise its functions in a manner which is consistent with the provisions of the Directive and which achieves or promotes compliance with the requirements of the Directive.

The Commission also had regard to the following in coming to its decisions:

- (a) European legislation, including of particular relevance:

- Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU (EIA Directive) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment,
- Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) and Directive 79/409/EEC as amended by 2009/147/EC (Birds Directives) which set the requirements for Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora throughout the European Union, and,
- Directive 2023/2413/EU (Red III Directive) as regards the promotion of energy from renewable sources.

- (b) National planning and related policy, including:

- the National Development Plan 2021-2030, and review in 2025,
- Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework, as revised April 2025,
- the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030,
- the Water Action Plan 2024: A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland, and
- Government Policy Statement on the Strategic Importance of Transmission and Other Energy Infrastructure, July 2012.

- (c) Regional level policy, including:

- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region 2020 – 2032.
- (d) Local planning policy, including:
- Cork County Development Plan, 2022-2028.
- (e) the nature, scale, extent and design of the proposed development as set out in the planning application and the characteristics and pattern of development and the character of the landscape of the area and immediate area and in the vicinity,
- (f) the entirety of the documentation submitted by the undertaker in support of the proposed development, including the Ecological Impact Assessment Report, the range of mitigation and monitoring measures proposed and in particular to the response to submissions made in June 2026,
- (g) the submissions made to An Coimisiún Pleanála in connection with the planning application,
- (h) the likely consequences for the environment and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which it is proposed to carry out the proposed development and the likely significant effects of the proposed development on European Sites, and
- (i) the examination, analysis and evaluation undertaken in relation to planning and sustainable development, environmental impact assessment, appropriate assessment and, Water Framework Directive assessment in the Inspector's report and recommendation of the Inspector.

Appropriate Assessment:

In conducting a screening exercise for appropriate assessment, the Commission considered the nature, scale and context of the proposed alterations, the documentation on file including the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report submitted with the application and the assessment of the Inspector in relation to the potential for effects on European Sites. In undertaking the screening exercise, the Commission accepted the analysis and conclusions of the Inspector.

The Commission concluded that, both by itself, and in combination with other development in the vicinity, the proposed alterations would not be likely to have

significant effects on three number European Sites in view of their conservation objectives, namely The Gearagh Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000108), The Gearagh Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004109) and Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004162).

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening:

The Commission considered the potential environmental impacts that might arise due to the proposed development, both by itself and in combination with other development in the vicinity. Having regard to the characteristics of the receiving environment, and the characteristics of the proposed development, the Commission is satisfied that the proposed alterations would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment. The Commission concurred with the analysis and conclusions of the Inspector in this matter. The Commission, therefore, concluded that the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is not required, either by means of any mandatory requirement or following sub-threshold analysis.

Having regard to:

- The scale of the proposed development which can be constructed in accordance with the permitted construction works, methodologies and related activities,
- The location of the proposed development within the footprint of a permitted solar farm development site and the absence of change to the permitted development layout,
- The pattern of development in the surrounding area,
- The criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended),
- The location of the development outside of any sensitive location specified in Article 109(4)(a) of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), and
- The Guidance set out in the 'Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding sub-threshold development' issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2003),

it is considered that, following the Environmental Impact Assessment Screening determination, the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and that the preparation and submission of an environmental impact assessment report would not, therefore, be required.

Proper Planning and Sustainable Development

The Commission considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would be in accordance with European, national, and

regional renewable energy policies and with the provisions of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028, would not seriously injure the visual or residential amenities of the area or otherwise of property in the vicinity or have an unacceptable impact on the character of the landscape or on cultural or archaeological heritage, would not have a significant adverse impact on ecology, would be acceptable in terms of traffic impacts and safety and would make a positive contribution to Ireland's renewable energy and security of energy supply requirements. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

CONDITIONS

1. The proposed development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, 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 undertaker shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to the commencement of development and the proposed development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The period during which the development hereby permitted may be carried out shall be ten years from the date of this Order.

Reason: Having regard to the nature and extent of the proposed development, the Commission considered it appropriate to specify a period of validity of this permission in excess of five years.

3. The mitigation measures set out in the Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) shall be implemented.

Reason: To protect the environment.

4. The construction of the proposed development shall be managed in accordance with a final Construction and Environmental Management Plan, which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of the proposed development

Reason: In the interest of environmental protection and residential amenity.

5. The undertaker 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 undertaker shall:

- (a) employ a suitably-qualified archaeologist prior to the commencement of the proposed development and the archaeologist shall assess and monitor all preparatory works and all site development works,
- (b) investigate areas of archaeological potential by means of geophysical survey and, depending on the findings, carry out test excavations if deemed necessary following consultation with the National Monuments Services,
- (c) notify the planning authority in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of any site operation relating to the proposed development, and
- (d) submit a report to the planning authority, containing the results of the archaeological investigations and assessment. In default of agreement on any of these requirements, the matter shall be referred to An Coimisiún 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.

6. During the operational phase of the substation, the noise level arising from the proposed development, as measured at the nearest noise sensitive location shall not exceed:
- i) An LeqT, value of 55 dB(A) during the period 0800 to 2200 hours from Monday to Saturday inclusive, and
 - ii) An Leq, 15 min value of 45 dB(A) at any other time. The noise at such time shall not contain a tonal component.

At no time shall the noise generated on site result in an increase in noise level of more than 10 dB(A) above background levels at the boundary of the site. All sound measurement shall be carried out in accordance with ISO Recommendation 1996:2007: Acoustics - Description and Measurement of Environmental Noise.

Prior to the commencement of the proposed development, the undertaker shall agree with the planning authority a protocol for the monitoring of noise from electrical apparatus within the site. This protocol shall include provision for the shielding or removal of any such apparatus in the event of the exceedance of agreed noise limits as perceived at identified receptors.

Reason: To protect the amenities of property in the vicinity of the site.

7. The undertaker shall comply with the following requirements:
- (a) No additional 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 roads.
 - (c) All fencing, gates and exposed metalwork shall be dark green in colour. The roofs of the buildings within the substation compound shall be dark grey or black and the external walls shall be finished in neutral colours such as grey or off white unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and visual amenity.

8. All road surfaces, culverts, watercourses, verges, and public lands shall be protected during construction and, in the case of any damage occurring, shall be reinstated to the satisfaction of the planning authority at the undertaker's

expense. Prior to commencement of the proposed development, a road condition survey shall be carried out to provide a basis for reinstatement works. Details in this regard shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority and, if needed, Inland Fisheries Ireland prior to commencement of the proposed development.

Reason: In order to ensure a satisfactory standard of development.

9. The site shall be landscaped, using only indigenous deciduous trees and hedging species and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of the proposed development. Any plants, trees or hedging which die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, within a period of five years from the completion of the proposed development, shall be replaced within the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

Reason: In order to screen the proposed development and assimilate it into the surrounding rural landscape, in the interest of visual amenity.

10. A detailed construction traffic management plan shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of the proposed development. The plan shall include details of arrangements for routes for construction traffic, parking during the construction phase, the location of the compound for storage of plant and machinery and the location for storage of deliveries to the site. The undertaker shall consult with all relevant Public-Private Partnership Companies, Motorway Maintenance and Renewals Contract Contractors prior to its submission.

Reason: In the interest of sustainable transport and safety.

11. 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, coupled with an agreement empowering the planning authority to apply such security or part thereof to such reinstatement. This shall cover all reinstatement works associated with the public roads that are impacted by the underground cabling works or that may

be damaged by the transport of materials to the site. 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 Coimisiún Pleanála for determination.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory restoration of the site in the interest of visual and residential amenity.

12. 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 Coimisiún 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.

Schedule of Costs

In accordance with the provisions of section 182B of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the amount due to be reimbursed to the undertaker is **€78,644.**