



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Direction
CD-022302-26
ACP-324163-26

The submissions on this file and the Inspector's report were considered at a meeting held on 06/07/2026.

The Commission decided to APPROVE the proposed development generally in accordance with the Inspector's recommendation, as indicated in the draft Order hereunder. The Commission also made a determination in relation to costs as indicated hereunder.

Planning

Commissioner:


Tom Rabbette

Date: 06/07/2026

DRAFT WORDING FOR ORDER

Reasons and Considerations

The Commission made its decision consistent with:

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 Climate Action Plan 2024 and Climate Action Plan 2025 and the national long term climate action strategy, 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.

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

- (a) European legislation, including of particular relevance:
 - The relevant provisions of EU Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/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,
- (a) national planning and related policy, including:
 - National Development Plan 2021-2030, and review in 2025,
 - Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework, as revised April 2025,
 - National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030;
 - Water Action Plan 2024: A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland;
 - Government Policy Statement on the Strategic Importance of Transmission and Other Energy Infrastructure, July 2012,
- (b) regional level policy, including:
 - Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020 – 2032,
- (c) local planning policy, including:
 - Galway County Development Plan, 2022-2028,
- (d) 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,
- (e) the entirety of the documentation submitted by the applicant in support of the proposed development, including the Natura Impact Statement, the range of mitigation and monitoring measures proposed in the Natura Impact Statement,

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Ecological Impact Assessment, Archaeological and Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment, Construction Traffic Management Plan, Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan and Acoustic Impact Assessment,

- (f) 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
- (g) the examination, analysis and evaluation undertaken in relation to planning and sustainable development, appropriate assessment and, water framework directive assessment in the Inspector's Report and recommendation of the Inspector.

Appropriate Assessment: Stage 1:

The Commission 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.

The Commission agreed with the screening assessment and conclusion carried out in the Inspector's Report that the River Suck Callows Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004097), Middle Shannon Callows Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004096), River Little Brosna Callows Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004086), and River Shannon Callows Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000216) are the only European Sites in respect of which the proposed development has the potential to have a significant effect in view of the conservation objectives for the sites and that Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is, therefore, required.

Appropriate Assessment: Stage 2:

The Commission considered the Natura Impact Statement and associated documentation submitted with the application, the mitigation measures contained therein and the Inspector's Report.

The Commission completed an Appropriate Assessment of the implications of the proposed development for the River Suck Callows Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004097), Middle Shannon Callows Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004096), River Little Brosna Callows Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004086), and River Shannon Callows Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000216), in view of the conservation objectives of the sites.

The Commission considered that the information before it was adequate to allow the carrying out of an Appropriate Assessment. In completing the Appropriate Assessment, the Commission considered, in particular, the following:

- (i) the likely direct and indirect impacts arising from the proposed development either individually or in combination with other plans or projects,
- (ii) the mitigation measures which are included as part of the current proposal, and,
- (iii) the conservation objectives for the European Sites.

In completing the Appropriate Assessment, the Commission accepted and adopted the Appropriate Assessment carried out in the Inspector's Report in respect of the potential effects of the proposed development on the aforementioned European Sites, having regard to the conservation objectives of the sites.

In overall conclusion, the Commission was satisfied that the proposed development, either by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of the River Suck Callows Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004097), Middle Shannon Callows Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004096), River Little Brosna Callows Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004086), and River Shannon Callows Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000216), in view of the conservation objectives of the sites.

Proper Planning and Sustainable Development

It is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would be in accordance with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended), Climate Action Plan 2024 and Climate Action Plan 2025, National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2020, the National

Planning Framework (as revised), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy of the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032 and the provisions of the Galway County Development Plan, 2022-2028.

The proposed development would make a positive contribution to Ireland's national strategic policy on renewable energy and its move to a low energy carbon future, would not seriously injure the residential amenities of the area, would not adversely affect population and human health, natural heritage, biodiversity or, cultural heritage tourism, would not have an unduly adverse impact on the landscape, and would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety. 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 contained in the submitted Natura Impact Statement (NIS), shall be implemented.

Reason: To protect the integrity of European Sites.

4. The undertaker shall ensure that all construction methods and environmental mitigation measures set out in the planning documents submitted (inter alia

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Ecological Impact Assessment, Archaeological and Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment, Construction Traffic Management Plan, Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan and Acoustic Impact Assessment) are implemented in full in conjunction with the timelines therein, except as may be otherwise required in order to comply with the conditions of this Order.

Reason: To protect the environment.

- 5 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 development

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

- 6 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 development. 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.

7 During the operational phase of the substation, the noise level arising from the 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. [The T value shall be one hour]
- (ii) An Leq, 15 min value of 45 dB(A) at any other time. [The T value shall be 15 minutes]. 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 development, the undertaker shall agree with the planning authority a protocol for the monitoring of noise from electrical apparatus within the sites. 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.

8 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, of visual amenity.

- 9 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 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 prior to commencement of development.

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

- 10 The site shall be landscaped, as shown on the submitted Landscape and Ecology Management Plan. 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 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 development and assimilate it into the surrounding rural landscape, in the interest of visual amenity.

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 applicant is €81,880