



An
Bord
Pleanála

Board Order ABP-304558-19

Planning and Development Acts, 2000 to 2020

Planning Authority: Waterford City and County Council

Application for approval under section 182A(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in accordance with plans and particulars, including a Natura impact statement, lodged with An Bord Pleanála on the 27th day of May, 2019 by Highfield Solar Limited care of Highfield Energy Services Limited, Design Studio 7, Old Castle View, Kilgobbin Road, Dublin.

Proposed Development: 10 year approval for proposed development of electricity transmission infrastructure consisting of an electrical substation and associated 110kV and MV infrastructure required to connect ground mounted solar PV generation to the electricity transmission system; lightening protection masts; perimeter security fencing; CCTV cameras; access tracks; 110kV end masts; underground cabling; temporary construction compound; drainage infrastructure and all associated ancillary site development works in the townland of Rathnaskilloge, Stradbally, County Waterford.

Decision

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.

DETERMINE under section 182B of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, the sum to be paid by the undertaker in respect of costs associated with the application, as set out in the Schedule of Costs below.

Matters Considered

In making its decision, the Board had regard to those matters to which, by virtue of the Planning and Development Acts and Regulations made thereunder, it was required to have regard. Such matters included any submissions and observations received by it in accordance with statutory provisions.

Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to:

- (a) the nature, scale and extent of the proposed development,
- (b) the decisions made in respect of an Appropriate Assessment,
- (c) the Government target of 70% of national electricity generation to be from renewable sources by 2030,
- (d) national and local policy support for developing renewable energy, in particular:
 - (i) the Government's Strategy for Renewable Energy,
 - (ii) the Climate Action Plan 2019,
 - (iii) the National Planning Framework 2018,
 - (iv) the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region, 2020, and
 - (v) Policy INF 26 of the Waterford County Development Plan 2011 – 2017, as extended,
- (e) the location of the proposed development,

- (f) the distance to dwellings or other sensitive receptors from the proposed development,
- (g) the planning history of the immediate area, including the proximity to the proposed solar farm (ABP-305817-19). This development will serve as the grid connection for that development,
- (h) the submissions made in connection with the planning application,
- (i) the documentation submitted with the application, including the Appropriate Assessment Screening Statement, the Natura impact statement and the Planning and Environmental Report, and
- (j) the Inspector's Report,

the Board considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development:

- would not have an unacceptable impact on the character of the landscape,
- would not seriously injure the visual and residential amenities of the area,
- would not have an unacceptable impact on biodiversity,
- would make a positive contribution to Ireland's requirements for renewable energy, and
- would be in accordance with the
 - Government's Strategy for Renewable Energy,
 - the National Planning Framework, Ireland 2040, and
 - Policy INF 26 of the Waterford County Development Plan 2011- 2017, as extended.

The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Appropriate Assessment Stage 1:

The Board considered the Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment, the Natura impact statement and all other relevant submissions and carried out an Appropriate Assessment screening exercise and an Appropriate Assessment in relation to the potential effects of the proposed development on designated European Sites. The Board noted that the proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary for the management of a European Site and considered the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, and the report of the Inspector.

The Board agreed with the screening assessment and conclusion carried out by the Inspector. The Board concluded that, having regard to the qualifying interests, for which the European Site was designated, namely the Mid-Waterford Coast Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004193), and that significant effects arising from the proposed development could not be ruled out and that the carrying out of an Appropriate Assessment was necessary.

Appropriate Assessment Stage 2:

The Board considered the Natura impact statement and all other relevant submissions and carried out an Appropriate Assessment of the implications of the proposed development for the Mid-Waterford Coast Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004193) in view of the site's Conservation Objectives. The Board considered that the information before it was adequate to allow the carrying out of an Appropriate Assessment.

In completing the Appropriate Assessment, the Board considered the likely direct and indirect impacts arising from the proposed development, both individually or in combination with other plans or projects, the mitigation measures, which are included as part of the current proposal, and the Conservation Objectives for the European Site. In completing the Appropriate Assessment, the Board 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 Site, having regard to the site's Conservation Objectives.

In overall conclusion, the Board was satisfied that the proposed development would not adversely affect the integrity of the Mid-Waterford Coast Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004193) or any other European Site in view of the sites' Conservation Objectives.

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 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 proposed development hereby permitted may be carried out shall be 10 years from the date of this Order.

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

3. The mitigation measures contained in the Natura impact statement, which was submitted with the application, shall be implemented in full.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and to ensure the protection of European Sites.

4. The Biodiversity Management Plan shall be implemented in full and ecological monitoring progress reports in years 3, 6 and 9 post-construction shall be submitted to the planning authority for written agreement.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and to protect the ecology of the area.

5. All of the environmental, construction and ecological mitigation measures set out in the Planning and Environmental Report, and other particulars submitted with the planning application, shall be implemented by the undertaker in conjunction with the timelines set out therein, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the conditions of this Order.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and the protection of the environment during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development.

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) 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 and monitor all site development works.

The assessment shall address the following issues:

- (a) the nature and location of archaeological material on the site, and
- (b) 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 undertaker 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.

7. (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 the road. The location of CCTV cameras within the compound shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of work on site.

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

8. Details of the materials, colours and textures of all the external finishes to the buildings shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

9. Water supply and drainage arrangements, including the attenuation and disposal of surface water, shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority for such works and services.

Reason: In the interest of public health.

10. The construction of the proposed 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 proposed development, including:
 - (a) the location of the site and materials compound(s), including area(s) identified for the storage of construction refuse,
 - (b) the location of areas for construction site offices and staff facilities,
 - (c) details of site security fencing and hoardings,

- (d) details of on-site car parking facilities for site workers during the course of construction,
- (e) details of the timing and routing of construction traffic to and from the construction site and associated directional signage, to include proposals to facilitate the delivery of abnormal loads to the site,
- (f) measures to obviate queuing of construction traffic on the adjoining road network,
- (g) measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of clay, rubble or other debris on the public road network,
- (h) details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels,
- (i) containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained; such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater,
- (j) off-site disposal of construction/demolition waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil,
- (k) details of on-site re-fuelling arrangements, including use of drip trays,
- (l) details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil,
- (m) Means to ensure that surface water run-off is controlled such that no deleterious levels of silt or other pollutants enter local surface water drains or watercourses, and
- (n) confirmation of the size of HGVs accessing the site.

A record of daily checks that the works are being undertaken in accordance with the Construction Management Plan shall be kept for inspection by the planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of environmental protection, amenities, public health and safety.

11. (a) During the operational phase of the proposed development, the noise level arising from the proposed development, as measured at the nearest noise sensitive location, shall not exceed:
- (i) An LAeqT 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 LAeqT 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.
- (b) All sound measurements shall be carried out in accordance with ISO Recommendation R 1996 “Assessment of Noise with respect to Community Response” as amended by ISO Recommendations R 1996 1, 2 or 3 “Description and Measurement of Environmental Noise” as applicable.

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

12. 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. Prior to commencement of development, a road condition survey shall be taken 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.

13. All other access arrangements to the site shall comply with the detailed standards of the planning authority for such works.

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

14. Prior to commencement of development, the undertaker 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 undertaker or, in default of agreement, shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory reinstatement of the site.

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 **€78,355**.

A breakdown of the Board's costs is set out in the attached Appendix 1.

Maria Fitzgerald
Member of An Bord Pleanála
duly authorised to authenticate
the seal of the Board.

Dated this day of 2021