



Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2021

Planning Authority: Meath County Council

Planning Register Reference Number: LB201194

APPEAL by Solar Farmers Limited (part of the Energia Group) care of Neo Environmental Limited of Johnstown Business Centre, Johnstown House, Naas, County Kildare against the decision made on the 3rd day of September, 2021 by Meath County Council to refuse permission.

Proposed Development: A Solar PV Energy development with a total site area of 148.0 hectares, to include solar panels mounted on steel support structures, associated cabling and ducting, three number client substations, 39 number MV power stations, seven number battery storage containers, three number temporary construction compounds, access tracks, hardstanding area, boundary security fencing and security gates, CCTV, landscaping and ancillary works with one proposed entrance to the site via the R108 and two proposed entrances via the R132, all on lands including Rogerstown, Smithstown, Calliaghstown, Pilltown and Ballymad, Drogheda, County Meath. Further public notices were received by the planning authority on the 9th day of August, 2021 and by An Bord Pleanála on the 2nd day of November, 2021.

P.C.

Decision

REFUSE permission for the above proposed development in accordance with the reasons and considerations set out below.

Reasons and Considerations

1. It is considered that the Natura Impact Statement submitted at application stage is not based on best available scientific information. In the absence of adequate baseline information, including the limited extent and the nature of the field surveys undertaken, the conclusions presented in the Natura Impact Statement cannot be relied upon with scientific certainty and the information available to the Board is not adequate to allow for a complete assessment of any adverse effects of the development on the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites. Specifically, it is considered that significant effects on European sites the River Nanny Estuary and Shore Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004158) and the Boyne Estuary Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004080), the River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002299) and the Boyne Coast and Estuary Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 001957) in view of the Conservation Objectives of these sites arising from the project individually or in combination with other plans or projects, cannot be excluded.

P.C.

2. HER POL 52 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out policy to protect and enhance the quality, character, and distinctiveness of the landscapes of the county in accordance with the national policy and guidelines and the recommendations of the Landscape Character Assessment to ensure that new development meets high standards of siting and design. As set out in the applicable Landscape Character Assessment for County Meath (Appendix 5 of the development plan) and associated maps, the proposed development would be partly sited in Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) 08 Nanny Valley, a landscape of very high value, high landscape sensitivity, of regional landscape importance and with a recommendation to retain the current mix of land uses in this LCA. Based on the information submitted with the application and appeal, it is considered that, by reason of its nature, scale and location, the Board is not satisfied that the proposed development would be appropriately sited so as to protect and enhance the quality, character, and distinctiveness of this very high value landscape. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the development plan objectives and would not be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.



Patricia Calleary

Member of An Bord Pleanála

**duly authorised to authenticate
the seal of the Board.**

Dated this 24th day of August 2022.