



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

**Board Order**  
**ABP-315485-23**

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**Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2022**

**Planning Authority: Longford County Council**

**Planning Register Reference Number: 22/75**

**Appeal** by Liam Kelly of Ballyleague, Lanesborough, County Longford against the decision made on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2022 by Longford County Council to grant subject to conditions a permission to the Electricity Supply Board of ESB Head Office, 27 Fitzwilliam Street Lower, Dublin in accordance with plans and particulars lodged with the said Council.

**Proposed Development:** 10-year planning permission for development consisting of the demolition of the existing Lough Ree Power Station (as approved under Longford County Council planning register reference number 01/115/An Bord Pleanála reference number PL 14.125540 and all subsequent permissions and the development and operation of electricity grid services, namely a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and a Synchronous Condenser (Sync Con). The proposed development comprises two distinct phases of activity – the initial demolition and site reinstatement (Phase 1) followed by construction and operation of the new BESS and Sync Con (Phase 2). Phase 1 comprises the demolition of existing site structures (with a total footprint of circa 11,195 square metres and a total gross floor area of circa 20,000 square metres) including the former Lough Ree Power Station (boiler house, turbine house, bag filter house and associated 80-metre-high

stack); the intermediate peat storage building and associated fuel management system and ancillary buildings, including electrical building, tippler building and associated control room and office, the screening building, lorry unloading building, water treatment plant building, offices building, laboratory building, workshop and maintenance buildings, oil pumphouse, electrics rooms, railway/locomotive service building, cooling water pump house and sewage/foul water treatment facility. All buildings and structures (including storage tanks and vessels) will be demolished to ground level with below ground voids filled. Existing hard standing surfaces (e.g. building ground floor concrete slabs, tarmacadam surfaces, concrete footpaths and road kerbs) will remain in situ and the site will be reinstated and secured with boundary gates and fences etc. Associated with the demolition activity there will be on-site crushing of material using mobile machinery for the purposes of disposal and/or material re-use. Phase 2 comprises the proposed development of the BESS, Sync Con and all associated development. The BESS will comprise a circa 75-megawatt capacity battery storage facility located within a circa 1.2 hectare fenced and gated compound and will, subject to detailed design, commercial and technical considerations, include:

- (a) up to 19 number battery storage units incorporating a concrete base, battery modules, associated plant and equipment, including transformers and inverters. The battery modules will be circa 19 metres by circa five metres by circa three metres high, and the adjoining inverters circa 10 metres by circa five metres by circa 3.8 metres high sitting on a 500 millimetre concrete plinth;
- (b) a circa 240 square metre single-storey control building;
- (c) ancillary electrical plant including a circa 200 square metres banded transformer and a circa 24 square metres VAR support unit;
- (d) a circa 18 metres high lightning monopole and a circa 18 metres high SCADA communications mast;
- (e) on-site services, including electrical connections between items of plant and equipment, a diesel generator, car parking, lay-down areas, spare parts storage container, CCTV and lighting;
- (f) a 2.6 metres high chainlink or palisade fence and access gate linking with the existing on-site station roads.

The BESS compound will be served by the pre-existing circuit breaker

building located immediately south of the compound. The Sync Con will comprise a 200 MVA (electrical rating) synchronous condenser located within a circa 0.8 hectare fenced and gated compound and will include: (a) a Sync Con building (circa 962 square metres, circa 14 metres high) to house equipment, including the synchronous condenser, flywheel, lube oil skid, air compressor and pumps; (b) supporting items of plant located within the outdoor compound including: outdoor cooling equipment (circa 190 square metres), modular containers housing electrical and control equipment (circa 270 square metres), and items of electrical plant (including a banded transformer circa 15 metres by circa 10 metres by circa eight metres high, circa 150 square metres), two auxiliary transformers (each circa 4.2 metres by circa 5.3 metres by circa four metres high, circa 22.5 square metres) and an external circuit breaker (circa nine metres high, circa 66 square metres), a firefighting water tank (circa seven metres diameter, circa eight metres high) and associated plant and equipment, including a pumping skid (circa six metres by circa three metres by circa three metres high, circa 18 square metres); an above-ground oil separator and collection pit and a dedicated back up diesel generator (circa three metres by circa 6.5 metres by circa 2.5 metres high, circa 19.5 square metres); (c) two circa 18 metres high lightning monopoles; (d) connections to existing and proposed site services networks including electrical and water supply networks and an underground surface water attenuation tank connecting to existing surface water drains; (e) on-site services, including electrical connections between items of plant and equipment, car parking, lay down areas, spare parts storage containers (two number containers, circa six metres by circa 11.5 metres, circa 72 square metres each), CCTV and lighting; (f) all other ancillary and miscellaneous site works including site access, internal roads and development of areas of hard standing including a maintenance laydown area and a circa 2.6 metres high chainlink or palisade fence and access gate linking with the existing on-site station roads. Associated with the development of both the BESS and Sync Con, site development works will be completed. Both developments will be served by grid connections (comprising underground electrical cables at

various voltages connecting the proposed units to the electricity transmission network via existing electrical substations on site), boundary fences and gates, and landscaping. Existing access roads will continue to be used to serve the new development and will not be altered. Site services – such as the existing peat settlement pond, drainage networks, electrical cables, and a 20kV rural supply circuit breaker building (circa 18 square metres), will continue to be used to serve the new development. For clarity, permission is sought for the continued use of these elements. The proposed development will not alter or affect existing ESBN Network grid infrastructure on the site (including substations, overhead lines and associated support structures). Permission is sought for temporary works serving all phases of development, including works compounds, accessways and site services, all on a 13.1 hectare site known as ‘Lough Ree Power (LRP) Station’ located in Lanesborough (Lanesboro), in the townlands of Aghamore and Lanesborough, County Longford.

## **Decision**

**GRANT permission for the above proposed development in accordance with the said plans and particulars based on the reasons and considerations under and subject to the conditions set out below.**

## Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the:

- (a) National Planning Framework 2018-2040,
- (b) National Development Plan 2021-2030,
- (c) Ireland's National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021-2030,
- (d) Climate Action Plan 2023,
- (e) Strategy for Renewable Energy 2012-2020 issued by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources,
- (f) Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030 issued by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.
- (g) Renewable Energy Policy and Development Framework 2016 issued by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources,
- (h) Regional Spatial and Economy Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midlands Region 2019-2031, and the
- (i) Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027,

it is considered that the proposed development, comprising the demolition of the existing Lough Ree Power station and the development and operation of electricity grid services, comprising a battery energy storage system (BESS) and a Synchronous Condenser (Sync Con), would not unduly impact on the natural environment or the amenities of the area, would align with national policy to transition to carbon neutral energy, would comply with the zoning objectives for the site and would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## **Appropriate Assessment: Stage 1**

The Board completed an appropriate assessment screening exercise in relation to the potential effects of the proposed development on designated European Sites taking into account the Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment, and the report and screening assessment as completed by the Inspector which concluded that the Lough Ree Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000440) and the Lough Ree Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004064) are the European Sites for which the proposed development has the potential to have significant effects. The Board concluded that appropriate assessment is required for these two European Sites.

## **Appropriate Assessment: Stage 2**

The Board considered the Natura Impact Statement and associated documentation submitted, the mitigation measures contained therein and the submissions on file and carried out an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposed development for the Lough Ree Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000440) and the Lough Ree Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004064) in view of the conservation objectives for the sites. The Board considered that the information before it was adequate to allow the carrying out of an appropriate assessment and to allow it to reach complete, precise and definitive conclusions for appropriate assessment. In completing the assessment, the Board considered, in particular, the likely direct and indirect impacts arising from the proposed development, both individually and in combination with other plans and projects, and the mitigation measures which are included as part of the current proposal. In completing the appropriate assessment, the Board accepted and adopted the appropriate assessment carried out by the Inspector of the potential effects of the proposed development on the aforementioned European Sites, having regard to the sites' conservation objectives. In overall conclusion, the Board was satisfied that the proposed development would not adversely affect the

integrity of the Lough Ree Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000440) and the Lough Ree Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004064) in view of the conservation objectives of those sites and that there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to the absence of such effects.

## **Environmental Impact Assessment**

The Board completed an environmental impact assessment of the proposed development, taking into account:

- (a) the nature, scale and extent of the proposed development,
- (b) the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and associated documentation submitted in support of the application and appeal,
- (c) the submissions and responses from the applicant, the third party and from the prescribed bodies in the course of the application and appeal, and
- (d) the Inspector's report.

The Board agreed with the summary of the results of the consultations and information gathered in the course of the Environmental Impact Assessment and the examination of the information contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and associated documentation submitted by the applicant and submissions made in the course of the application, as set out in the Inspector's report. The Board was satisfied that the Inspector's report sets out how these various environmental issues were addressed in the examination and recommendation and are incorporated into the Board's decision.

## **Reasoned Conclusions on the Significant Effects:**

The Board considered that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, supported by the documentation submitted by the applicant, provided information which is reasonable and sufficient to allow the Board to reach a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the proposed development on the environment, taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment. The Board was satisfied that the information contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report is up to date and complies with the provisions of EU Directive 2014/52/EU, amending Directive 2011/92/EU.

The Board considered that the main significant effects of the proposed development on the environment are:

- Impact on waters and water dependent habitats and species from polluted water, which will be mitigated by the measures set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Natura Impact Statement in relation to bunding, surface water containment, treatment and discharge, and firewater containment, treatment and discharge.
- Impact on waters and water dependent habitats and species from invasive species which will be mitigated by the measures set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Natura Impact Statement on biosecurity.
- Impact on the borehole well of the public water supply which will be mitigated by measures to be agreed with Uisce Éireann prior to commencement of development.
- Impact from noise during demolition and construction which will be mitigated by the measures set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and the Construction Environmental Management Plan.



- Impact from dust during demolition and construction which will be mitigated by the measures set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and the Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- Fire risk which will be mitigated by the design of the Battery Energy Storage System units and the siting and layout of the development.

The Board completed an environmental impact assessment in relation to the proposed development. The Board concluded that, subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures referred to above, including proposed monitoring as appropriate and subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development, by itself and in combination with other development in the vicinity would be acceptable. In doing so, the Board adopted the report and conclusions set out in the Inspector's Report.

## Conditions

1. The proposed development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as amended by the further plans and particulars received by the planning authority on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2022, 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 developer 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out within 10 years of the date of this Order.

**Reason:** In the interest of clarity.

3. The Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and Synchronous Condenser (Sync Con) facilities hereby permitted shall be removed from the site before the end of the period of 25 years from their commissioning, unless the period has been extended by a further permission. The site shall be restored within 12 months of decommissioning.

**Reason:** In the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and to facilitate a review of the facilities at that time.

4. The developer shall be responsible for any damage to the public road.

**Reason:** In the interest of clarity.

5. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall enter into a water connection agreement with Uisce Éireann (formerly Irish Water). The proposed development shall not commence until Uisce Éireann and the planning authority are satisfied that arrangements are in place for the provision of an alternate public water supply in the event that the existing public water supply well is impacted by the proposed development.

**Reason:** In the interest of public health.

6. (a) Once the battery supplier has been selected, and prior to their installation, the full safety details of the battery storage units shall be agreed with the Fire Authority.
- (b) A comprehensive and detailed emergency response plan shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the Fire Authority prior to battery installation.
- (c) Vehicular access for the Fire Brigade shall be provided in accordance with Table 5.2 of Technical Guidance Document B of the Building Regulations 2000, as amended.
- (d) Details of water provision for fire-fighting shall be agreed with the Fire Authority prior to battery installation.

**Reason:** In the interest of public safety.

7. Site development and building works shall be carried out only between the hours of 0800 and 1900 from Monday to Friday, inclusive, between the hours of 0800 and 1400 on Saturdays, and not at all on Sundays or public holidays. Deviation from these times shall only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written approval has been received from the planning authority.

**Reason:** In the interest of residential amenity.

8. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall prepare a Resource Waste Management Plan (RWMP) as set out in the EPA's Best Practice Guidelines for the Preparation of Resource and Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects (2021), including demonstration of proposals to adhere to best practice and protocols. The RWMP shall include specific proposals as to how the RWMP will be measured and monitored for effectiveness; these details shall be placed on file and retained as part of the public record. The RWMP shall be submitted to the planning authority for written agreement prior to commencement of development. All records (including for waste and all resources) pursuant to the agreed RWMP shall be made available for inspection at the site office at all times.

**Reason:** In the interest of sustainable waste management.

9. All of the measures proposed in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and the Natura Impact Statement to mitigate environmental impacts shall be implemented in full.

**Reason:** In the interest of protecting the environment and the amenities of the area.

10. 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 the 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 the Board 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.



Una Crosse

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

Dated this 13<sup>th</sup> day of October 2023.