

Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2022

Planning Authority: Westmeath County Council

Planning Register Reference Number: 23/60178

APPEAL by Neoen Renewables Ireland Limited care of Galettech Energy Services of Clondargan, Stradone, County Cavan against the decision made on the 9th day of August, 2023 by Westmeath County Council to refuse permission.

Proposed Development A ten-year planning permission for a solar energy development with a total site area of 87 hectares comprising (i) photovoltaic solar panels on steel mounting frames; (ii) electrical inverters; (iii) electrical power stations; (iv) underground electrical and communications cabling; (v) containerised battery energy storage facility; (vi) the upgrade of one number existing site entrance and development of one number new site entrance; (vii) on-site access tracks; (viii) a temporary construction compound; (ix) security fencing and security gates; (x) pole-mounted security cameras and (xi) all associated and ancillary site development, landscaping and reinstatement works. The operational lifetime of the proposed development is 35 years. This planning application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report and an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report. All at Gartlandstown, Crookedwood, County Westmeath.



Decision

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

Reasons and Considerations

1. The information submitted with the application and the appeal is not sufficient to enable the Board to determine that the proposed development would not have a significant negative impact on water quality in the area, which in turn may cause potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and, as such, would be inconsistent with CPOs 10.89, 12.4 and 12.25 of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. On the basis of the information submitted with the application and the appeal, including the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, and in applying the precautionary principle, the Board is not satisfied that the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would not be likely to have a significant effect on Lough Derravaragh Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004043), in view of the Site's Conservation Objectives. In such circumstances, the proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.



Mick Long

Member of An Bord Pleanála.

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

Dated this *2nd* day of *July* 2024.