



An
Bord
Pleanála

Board Order ABP-318882-24

Planning and Development Acts, 2000 to 2022

Planning Authority: Louth County Council

Application by Louth County Council for approval under section 177AE 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 17th day of January 2024.

Proposed Development: Coastal protection works involving the following:

- site preparation including construction of proposed temporary access ramps and haul roads,
- excavation of 1 metre deep trench at two locations over a total length of approximately 75 metres,
- placement of a layer of geotextile membrane within the trench,
- placement of rock armour within and above the excavations to form coastal defence barriers,
- patch repairs (over an area of approximately 100 square metres) to existing coastal defences using existing and imported stone, and
- removal of temporary haul road and access ramps.

All located at Bellurgan Point, Dundalk, County Louth.

Decision

APPROVE the above proposed development based on the reasons and considerations under and subject to the conditions set out below.

Reasons and Considerations

In coming to its decision, the Board had regard to the following:

- (a) the European Union Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC),
- (b) the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended,
- (c) the Government of Ireland Climate Action Plan, 2024,
- (d) the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031,
- (e) 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 a European Site,
- (f) the conservation objectives, qualifying interests and special conservation interests for the Dundalk Bay Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000455) and the Dundalk Bay Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004026),
- (g) the policies and objectives of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027,
- (h) the nature and extent of the proposed works as set out in the application for approval,
- (i) the information submitted in relation to the potential impacts on habitats, flora and fauna, including the Natura Impact Statement, and
- (j) the report and recommendation of the person appointed by the Board to make a report and recommendation on the matter.

Appropriate Assessment: Stage 1:

The Board agreed with and adopted the screening assessment and conclusion carried out in the Inspector's report that the Dundalk Bay Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000455) and the Dundalk Bay Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004026), are the only European Sites in respect of which the proposed development has the potential to have a significant effect.

Appropriate Assessment: Stage 2:

The Board considered the Natura Impact Statement and associated documentation submitted with the application for approval, the mitigation measures contained therein, the submissions and observations on file, and the Inspector's assessment. The Board completed an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposed development for the affected European Sites, namely the Dundalk Bay Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000455) and the Dundalk Bay Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004026) in view of the Sites' 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, in particular, the following:

- i. the likely direct and indirect impacts arising from the proposed development both 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 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 integrity of the aforementioned European Sites, having regard to the Sites' conservation objectives.

In overall conclusion, the Board was satisfied that the proposed development, by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites, in view of the Sites' conservation objectives.

Proper Planning and Sustainable Development/Likely effects on the environment:

It is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not have significant negative effects on the environment or the community in the vicinity, would not give rise to a risk of pollution, would not be detrimental to the visual or landscape amenities of the area, would not seriously injure the amenities of property in the vicinity or give rise to a traffic hazard, would not adversely impact on the cultural, archaeological and built heritage of the area and would not interfere with the existing land uses in the area. 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.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The mitigation measures contained in the submitted Natura Impact Statement shall be implemented. Prior to the commencement of development, details of a time schedule for implementation of mitigation measures and associated monitoring shall be prepared by the local authority and placed on file and retained as part of the public record.

Reason: To protect the integrity of European Sites.

3. Prior to the commencement of development, the local authority, or any agent acting on its behalf, shall prepare in consultation with the relevant statutory agencies, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), incorporating all mitigation measures indicated in the Natura Impact Statement and demonstration of proposals to adhere to best practice and protocols.

Reason: In the interest of protecting the European Sites.

4. No site preparation, excavation of construction works should take place between October to March (inclusive). Noise inducing activities should temporarily cease if Harbour seal is observed hauling out along the shoreline.

Reason: In the interests of protecting wintering bird species and the European Sites, and harbour seal.

5. The local authority, and any agent acting on its behalf, shall ensure that all plant and machinery used during the works should be thoroughly cleaned and washed before delivery to the site to prevent the spread of hazardous invasive species and pathogens.

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

6. A suitably qualified ecologist shall be retained by the local authority to oversee the site set-up and construction of the proposed development and implementation of mitigation measures relating to ecology. The ecologist shall be present during site construction works. Upon completion of works, an ecological report of the site works shall be prepared by the appointed ecologist to be kept on file as part of the public record.

Reason: In the interests of nature conservation and the protection of biodiversity.

7. The local authority and any agent acting on its behalf shall facilitate the preservation, recording, protection or removal of archaeological materials or features that may exist within the site. A suitably qualified archaeologist shall be appointed by the local authority to oversee the site set-up and construction of the proposed development and the archaeologist shall be present on-site during construction works.

Reason: In order to conserve the archaeological heritage of the site and to secure the preservation and protection of any remains that may exist within the site.



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

Dated this 29th day of October 2024