

An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Commission Order
PL-500151-LS

Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

Planning Authority: Laois County Council

Planning Register Reference Number: 2560147

Appeal by Solus Developments Limited against the decision made on the 30th day of September 2025, by Laois County Council to grant, subject to conditions, a permission to EirGrid plc in accordance with plans and particulars lodged with the said Council:

Proposed Development: Works associated with the proposed uprate of the existing 110 kV Overhead Line (OHL) between the existing Cushaling 110 kV substation in the townland of Ballykilleen, County Offaly and the existing Portlaoise 110 kV substation in the townlands of Clonminam and Kylekiproe, County Laois. The Cushaling – Portlaoise 110 kV OHL is approximately 41.6 kilometres long and comprises 17 number steel lattice tower structures and 193 number wooden pole structures. The existing circuit is located across the functional areas of Offaly County Council (OCC), Kildare County Council (KCC) and Laois County Council (LCC). Approximately 10 kilometres of the existing OHL circuit is located within the functional area of OCC, approximately 9 kilometres is within the functional area of KCC and approximately 22.6 kilometres is located within the functional area of LCC. Separate planning applications are being lodged with each respective County Council. The proposed development across the functional area of County

Laois is located in the townlands of Inchacooly, Ullard (Controversyland), Clonanny, Kilmullen, Derrynafunshion, Ballycarroll (Jamestown Electoral Division), Closeland or Cloneen, Ballybrittas, Emo Park, Cappakeel, Morett, Killone, Garryduff (Kilmurry Electoral Division), Killenny (Kilmurry Electoral Division), Heathlodge, Raheenahoran, Ballydavis, Rathbrennan, Ballyclider, Ballymooney, Summerhill or Aghnaharna, Downs, Borris little, Kylekiproe, Clonminam, Bracklone, Tullaghan, Clonaddadoran and Kyletalesha.

The proposed development works across the functional area of County Laois will comprise: the replacement (“restringing”) of the existing overhead line circuit conductor with a new higher capacity conductor including installation of a new fibre communication connection, the replacement of eight number steel towers and their foundations; the replacement of steel members at one number tower; full tower painting required at three number locations; shear block remedial works (raise and cap) at six number tower locations; the replacement of wooden poles only at 15 number locations; the replacement of wooden poles and crossarm at five number locations; the replacement of crossarm only at 14 number locations; the replacement of existing danger notices at various locations, as required; the replacement of hardware and fittings, such as insulators, insulator hardware, earthwire hardware and anti-climbing guards at various locations, as required; the replacement of suspension clamps, vibration dampers and compression assemblies at all locations, as required; all associated temporary site development works to gain access to the existing structures including clearance of vegetation, disassembly and reassembly of gate posts/piers and removal and reinstatement of existing fencing; and other temporary associated and ancillary development works required for the purpose of the uprate of the existing circuit, including temporary items, such as: guard poles, construction compounds (located in the townlands of Bracklone, Tullaghan, Morett, Clonaddadoran and Kyletalesha), clearance or management of vegetation, the installation of silt traps, silt fences, stone tracks, ground protection mats and watercourse crossings.

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:

- (a) the nature, scale and extent of the proposed development,
- (b) the characteristics of the entirety of the site and of the surrounding area,
- (c) National, regional and local policy support, in particular:
 - (i) National Planning Framework, First Revision, 2025,
 - (ii) Government Policy Statement on the Security of Electricity Supply (2021),
 - (iii) Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern & Midland Region 2019-2031,
 - (iv) Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027,
 - (v) Portlaoise Local Area Plan 2024-2030,

- (d) the likelihood for consequences on 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 European Sites, and given:
- (e) that the Commission has performed its functions in a manner consistent with The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended),

it is considered that the proposed development, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, would not materially contravene the provisions of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027, would comply with the Portlaoise Local Area Plan 2024-2030, would not have an unacceptable impact on the landscape and the visual amenities of the area, would not have significant adverse impacts on the environment, and would not seriously injure the amenities of property in the vicinity. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Appropriate Assessment: Stage 1:

The Commission considered the documents submitted with the application, and all the other relevant submissions on file, and carried out an Appropriate Assessment screening exercise in relation to the potential effects of the proposed development on designated European sites. The Commission agreed with the screening assessment and conclusion carried out in the Inspector's Report that River Barrow and River Nore Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 002162) is the only European Site in respect of which the proposed development has the potential to have a significant effect in view of the Conservation Objectives for the site and that Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is, therefore, required.

Appropriate Assessment: Stage 2:

The Commission considered the Natura Impact Statement, and all the other relevant submissions on file, and carried out an Appropriate Assessment of the implications of the proposed development on River Barrow and River Nore Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 002162) in view of the site's Conservation Objectives. The Commission considered that the information before it was sufficient to undertake a complete assessment of all aspects of the proposed development in relation to the Conservation Objectives for the site using the best scientific knowledge in the field. In completing the assessment, the Commission considered, in particular, the following:

- (i) the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the European Site,
- (ii) the likely direct and indirect impacts arising from the proposed development, both individually or in combination with other plans or projects, and
- (iii) mitigation measures which are included as part of the current proposal.

In completing the Appropriate Assessment, the Commission 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. In overall conclusion, the Commission were satisfied that the proposed development would not adversely affect the integrity of the European Site in view of the site's Conservation Objectives and that there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to the absence of such effects.

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

Having regard to:

- (a) the nature and extent of the proposed development, which is below the threshold in respect of Class 1(a) of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended,
- (b) the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended,
- (c) the results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment submitted by the applicant including an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, Natura Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report,
- (d) the mitigation measures put forward in the accompanying Planning and Environmental Considerations Report and Construction Environmental Management Plan, and
- (e) the consideration of Cumulative Effects.

The Commission concluded that by reason of the nature, scale and location of the project, the development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and that an Environmental Impact Assessment and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report would not, therefore, be required.

Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application on the 24th day of March 2025, as amended by the further plans and particulars received by the planning authority on the 7th day of August 2025, 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 development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The mitigation measures contained in the submitted Natura Impact Statement (NIS) shall be fully implemented.

Reason: To protect the integrity of European Sites.

3. The developer shall engage a suitably qualified archaeologist to monitor all site clearance works, topsoil stripping, groundworks, dredging and/or the implementation of agreed preservation in-situ measures associated with the development. Prior to the commencement of such works, the archaeologist shall consult with and forward to the Local Authority archaeologist or the National Monuments Service as appropriate a method statement for written agreement. The use of appropriate tools and/or machinery to ensure the preservation and recording of any surviving archaeological remains shall be necessary. Should archaeological remains be identified during the course of archaeological monitoring, all works shall cease in the area of archaeological interest pending a decision of the planning authority, in consultation with the

National Monuments Service, regarding appropriate mitigation. The developer shall facilitate the archaeologist in recording any remains identified. Any further archaeological mitigation requirements specified by the planning authority, following consultation with the National Monuments Service, shall be complied with by the developer. Following the completion of all archaeological work on site and any necessary post-excavation specialist analysis, the planning authority and the National Monuments Service shall be furnished with a final archaeological report describing the results of the monitoring and any subsequent required archaeological investigative work/excavation required. All resulting and associated archaeological costs shall be borne by the developer.

Reason: To ensure the continued preservation either in situ or by record, of places, caves, sites, features or other objects of archaeological interest.

4. A final Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to the commencement of development. The CEMP shall include but not be limited to construction phase controls for dust, noise, vibration, external lighting, waste management, protection of soils, groundwaters, and surface waters, site housekeeping, emergency response planning, site environmental policy, and project roles and responsibilities.

Reason: In the interest of environmental protection.

5. A final Construction Traffic Management Plan shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to the commencement of development.

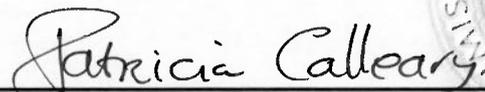
Reason: In the interest of traffic safety.

6. Site development and building works shall be carried out only between the hours of 0700 to 1900 Mondays to Friday inclusive, between 0800 to 1400 hours on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and public holidays. Deviation from these times will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written approval has been received from the planning authority.

Reason: In order to safeguard the [residential] amenities of property in the vicinity.

7. The site development and construction works shall be carried out in such a manner as to ensure that the adjoining roads are kept clear of debris, soil and other material.

Reason: In the interest of traffic safety and convenience.



Patricia Calleary

**Planning Commissioner of An Coimisiún
Pleanála duly authorised to authenticate
the seal of the Commission.**

Dated this 25th day of February 2026