



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL08.247653

Development	Solar PV Farm of up to 30,072 sqm. of solar panels, 1 No. substation, 2 No. inverter cabins, fencing and ancillary facilities to be connected to the National Grid
Location	Ballygrenane, Listowel, Co. Kerry
Planning Authority	Kerry County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	16/877.
Applicant(s)	Terra Solar Ltd.
Type of Application	Permission.
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Terra Solar Ltd
Observer(s)	(1) Batt & Gertie O'Keeffe (2) Ann O'Donoghue / Residents of Ballygrenane (3) John O'Sullivan (4) Juliet O'Keeffe
Date of Site Inspection	12 th March 2017
Inspector	Mary Crowley

Contents

1.0 Site Location and Description	3
2.0 Proposed Development	3
3.0 Planning Authority Decision	4
3.1. Decision	4
3.2. Planning Authority Reports	5
3.3. Prescribed Bodies	6
3.4. Third Party Observations	6
4.0 Planning History.....	7
5.0 Policy Context.....	7
5.1. Development Plan.....	8
5.2. Natural Heritage Designations	9
6.0 The Appeal	9
6.1. Grounds of Appeal	9
6.2. Applicant Response	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.3. Planning Authority Response.....	10
6.4. Observations	10
6.5. Further Responses.....	11
7.0 Assessment.....	11
8.0 Recommendation.....	18
9.0 Reasons and Considerations.....	18
10.0 Conditions	Error! Bookmark not defined.

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site is located in the townland of Ballygrenane approximately 2km south east of Listowel. The site is located on the west side of a local road approximately 21m southwest of the junction with the R555 and approximately the same distance southeast on another local road which also links into the R555 just to the south of the N69 crossing over the River Feale in Listowel. The surrounding countryside is characterised by gently rolling farmland under a variety of agricultural uses and dispersed one off housing.
- 1.2. The appeal site with a stated area of 12.1ha comprises a number of agricultural fields under grass. The topography of the proposed site is relatively flat and the site is located on the lower gentle slopes of Knockanasig Hill at c60m OD towards the Smearlagh River to the south east. The majority of the site is enclosed by earthen field boundaries that are demarcated by Whitethorn trees and scrub. The site is bounded on two sides by two third class roads with the remaining sides bounded by adjoining agricultural land.
- 1.3. A set of photographs of the site and its environs taken during the course of the site inspection is attached. I would also refer the Board to the photographs and photomontages available to view throughout the appeal file.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development comprises a ten-year planning application for a solar farm consisting of up to 18,795 solar PV modules on ground mounted steel frames, 1 no substation, 3 no inverter cabins, underground cable ducts, temporary site compound / hardstanding area and ancillary facilities, boundary security fence and landscaping, site entrance and access tracks, CCTV and all associated site works on a site extending to 12.1 h in the townland of Ballygrenane to the south of Listowel. The main elements of the proposed development can be summarised as follows:
 - Up to 18,795 solar PV modules
 - Underground cable ducts
 - 1 no substation

- 2 no inverter cabins (each containing up to 2 no inverter units)
- Temporary site compound / hardstanding area
- Boundary security fencing (mammal friendly) – up to 3.28m in height
- Site entrance and access track
- Site landscaping
- CCTV stands and equipment

2.2. It is anticipated that the array will have a maximum export capacity of circa 4MW but would have an installed generation capacity of up to 5MW to maximise the solar resource at certain times of year. The proposed solar farm will connect to the National Grid. Electricity proposed from the solar arrays is cabled underground to inverters where direct current (DC) is converted to alternating current (AC). The electrical output is exported through switchgear, protection devices and meters to the National Grid.

2.3. The application was accompanied by the following:

- Letter of consent from landowner
- Photomontages
- Planning & Environmental Report
- Appropriate Assessment Screening

2.4. The applicant submitted **unsolicited further information** on 24th October 2016 addressing a number of issues raised by the observers to the planning application. Topics covered include health and safety concerns, landscape and visual impact, traffic impacts, biodiversity, glint and glare, zoning / suitability of the site, privacy issues, community consultation, noise and decommissioning.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1. Kerry County Council refused permission for the following two reasons:

- 1) *The proposed development by reason of its siting and scale on an elevated open and exposed site would be unduly obtrusive by virtue of its visual*

impact on the landscape and would interfere with the character of the landscape, which is necessary to preserve, in accordance with Objective ZL-1 of the Kerry County Development Plan 2015 – 2021. The proposed development would therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2) *In the absence of pre-development archaeological testing of areas of potential ground disturbance on the site, the Planning Authority is not satisfied on the basis of submissions made in relation to the application that the proposed development would not endanger the archaeological heritage of the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.*

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

3.2.2. The Local Authority Planner stated that an industrial development of this scale on an open and highly visible plot would not integrate in to the surrounding rural area and would therefore contravene Objective ZL-1 of the Development Plan. On the basis of the report received from the Roads Department and the County Archaeologist seeking further information on the proposed development it is recommended that potential traffic safety and potential impacts on archaeology be sited as reasons for refusal based on the information currently submitted. Accordingly, the Case Planner recommend that permission be refused for 4 reasons relating to visual impact, traffic, archaeology and building line.

3.2.3. In a hand written addendum to the report two of the recommended reasons for refusal relating to traffic and the building line were removed. The notification of decision to refuse planning permission issued by Kerry County Council reflects this amended recommendation.

3.2.4. Other Technical Reports

3.2.5. **Building Control** (5th October 2016) had no state objection to the development.

3.2.6. The **County Archaeologist** (21st September 2016) recommends that pre-development archaeological testing of underground cable duct routes, entrance,

access track, temporary compound and any other areas of potential disturbance should be requested.

- 3.2.7. The **Listowel Roads Office – Roads Report** (19th October 2016) requested further information pertaining to the grid connection, sightlines, drainage, capacity of existing roads and the adjoining junction.
- 3.2.8. The **Biodiversity Officer** (17th October 2016) concluded that *no significant affects on the environment or Natura 2000 sites from the proposed development of the solar farm is considered likely.*
- 3.2.9. The **Environment Report** (28th October 2016) has no objection to the scheme subject to conditions as outlined in their report.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- 3.3.1. None recorded on the Planning file.

3.4. Third Party Observations

- 3.4.1. There are several observations recorded on the planning file from Anne O'Donoghue & Other Property Owners, John O'Sullivan, Residents of Ballygrenane, Anne O'Donoghue, Brian & Jennifer Scanlan, Gordon O'Keeffe, John & Noreen O'Connell, Juliet O'Keeffe, John Relihan, Martin Stack, Vivienne Canty, Kate Relihan, John Brassil & Anne Healy Brassil, Sean Keane, Jimmy Hickey, Batt & Gertie O'Keeffe, Denis & Betty Moriarty, Margaret Uljee and Sean P MacCarthy.
- 3.4.2. The issues raised relate to depreciation in adjoining residential property values, the Landscape Character Assessment 2012 carries incorrect statements regarding the landscape of north Kerry, cumulative impact must be considered, there is no Government Policy or Guidelines re EIA requirements for Solar Farms, queried why a solar farm should be granted planning permission if there is no permission for it to connect to the National Grid, traffic impact, landscape and screening, Renewable Energy Policy, ecology, flooding, water and drainage, noise, nuisance and disturbance, health and safety, visual impact, biodiversity, impact to adjoining organic farm, proximity to adjoining residential properties, inconsistencies in the planning application, potential disruptions to electrical devices, road safety, health

and wellbeing, degradation of road surface, health impact, loss of good quality agricultural land, outside the scope of the Development Plan 2016 – 2021, risk of contamination of waterways during construction and solar farm maintenance and retirement.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. There is no evidence of any previous planning application or subsequent appeal at this location.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. International Guidelines

5.1.1. There is a range of UK Guidance. The main guidance notes are **Planning Practice Guidance for Renewables and Low Carbon Energy (DCLG 2013)** and **Planning Guidance for the development of Largescale Ground mounted Solar PV systems (BRE 2013)**. Both refer to the desirability of preserving good agricultural lands and set out issues and mitigations. The BRE Guidance provides advisory information on planning application considerations including construction and operational works, landscape / visual impact, ecology, historic environment, glint and glare and duration of the planning permission. The document also provides guidance on the information which should be provided within a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. The document also provides guidance on EIA Screening procedures.

5.2. National Guidelines

5.2.1. **The Government White Paper entitled 'Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015 – 2030', published in December 2015.**

- The White Paper is a complete energy policy update, which sets out a framework to guide policy between now and 2030. The vision of the White Paper is to achieve a low carbon energy system that targets greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the energy sector that will be reduced by between 80%

and 95%, compared to 1990 levels, by 2050, and will fall to zero or below by 2100.

- Paragraph 137 of the White Paper states *‘solar photovoltaic (PV) technology is rapidly becoming cost competitive for electricity generation, not only compared with other renewables but also compared with conventional forms of generation. The deployment of solar in Ireland has the potential to increase energy security, contribute to our renewable energy targets, and support economic growth and jobs. Solar also brings a number of benefits like relatively quick construction and a range of deployment options, including solar thermal for heat and solar PV for electricity. It can be deployed in roof-mounted or ground-mounted installations. In this way, it can empower Irish citizens and communities to take control of the production and consumption of energy. Solar technology is one of the technologies being considered in the context of the new support scheme for renewable electricity generation which will be available in 2016’.*

5.2.2. **The National Spatial Strategy 2002 - 2020**

- This document states, *“in economic development the environment provides a resource base that supports a wide range of activities that include agriculture, forestry, fishing, aqua-culture, mineral use, energy use, industry, services and tourism. For these activities, the aim should be to ensure that the resources are used in sustainable ways that put as much emphasis as possible on their renewability”* (page 114).

5.3. **Development Plan**

5.3.1. The operative plan for the area is the **Kerry County Development Plan 2015-2021**. Chapter 3, Section 3.3 sets out Rural Development Policies. Section 3.3.2 deal with Amenity Areas and policies designed to protect the landscape of the county. The Plan identifies three types of rural landscape as follows:

- a) Rural General
- b) Rural Secondary Special Amenity and
- c) Rural Prime Special Amenity

- 5.3.2. The proposed site is located in an area zoned Rural General which is covered by Section 3.3.2.1 of the Plan. These areas constitute the least sensitive landscapes throughout the County and from a visual impact point of view have the ability to absorb a moderate amount of development without significantly altering their character.
- 5.3.3. Chapter 12 deals specifically with Zoning and Landscape. Policy relating to areas zoned Rural General in Section 12.3.1 Rural (c) states that *“it is important that development in these areas be integrated into their surroundings in order to minimise the effect on the landscape and to maximise the potential for development”*. Policy ZL-1 states that *“it is policy to protect the landscape of the County as a major economic asset and an invaluable amenity which contributes to people’s lives”*.

5.4. **Natural Heritage Designations**

- 5.4.1. The site is not located within a designated Natura 2000 site. The Smearlagh River which forms part of the Lower River Shannon SAC occurs approximately 0.8m south of the proposed appeal site.

6.0 **The Appeal**

6.1. **Grounds of Appeal**

- 6.1.1. The first party appeal against the decision of Kerry County Council to refuse permission was prepared and submitted by McCarthy, Keville & O’Sullivan and may be summarised as follows:

6.1.2. **Reason No 1**

- This first party appeal contends that Reason No. 1 for Refusal is entirely unjustified. The Development Plan identifies areas of ‘Primary Special Amenity’ and ‘Secondary Special Amenity’ as a mechanism of applying more stringent and protective landscape policies. Only one area of ‘Secondary Special Amenity’ occurs within the 5km radius study area for this development. This relates to the separate context of the River Feale over 2km to the north-west where the ZTV map (see Figure 2 on page 13 above) shows there will be no intervisibility with the proposed solar farm. The proposed site

is contained within the 'Rural General' landscape zoning where it is stated; "landscapes within this designation generally have a higher capacity to absorb development than the previous rural designations". It is not considered that Objective ZL-1 provides the justification for refusing this development proposal if it does it could be equally applied to just about any form of development in any landscape context in County Kerry

6.1.3. Reason No 2

- This first party appeal contends that Reason No. 2 for Refusal is entirely unwarranted considering that the Planning Authority ignored the proposed mitigation measures set out in Section 10 (Mitigation) of Appendix 5.1 (AIA) of the originally submitted Planning and Environmental Report, in addition to ignoring the recommendations of their own archaeologist set out in his internal report which recommended that pre-development test excavations be undertaken as an item of FI. Furthermore, the fact that there are no archaeological monuments in the wider hinterland of the site visible either to or from the site, substantiates that there are no justifiable grounds for refusal of the planning application due to the absence of pre-development archaeological testing.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

- 6.2.1. There is no response from Kerry County Council recorded on the appeal file.

6.3. Observations

- 6.3.1. There are four observations recorded on the appeal file from (1) Batt & Gertie O'Keefe, (2) Residents of Ballygrenane, Juliet O'Keefe and John O'Sullivan. Many of the issues raised are similar to those raised in the observation to the Planning Authority. The issues raised relate to cumulative impact with wind farms in north Kerry, classification in the Landscape Character assessment queried, visual impact, Ballygrenane translates as "Baile an Ghrianan" which means home of the sun would be ruined by the inclusion of the development on the landscape, policy and zoning, local community interaction, health and safety and depreciation of property values.

6.4. Further Responses

- 6.4.1. The **Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs** states that it is not in a position to make comment on this appeal.

7.0 Assessment

- 7.1. Kerry County Council refused planning permission for this development for one reason relating to visual impact and archaeology. Having regard to the information presented by the parties to the appeal and in the course of the planning application and to my site inspection of the appeal site, I consider the key planning issues relating to the assessment of the appeal can be addressed under the following general headings:

- Principle / Policy Considerations
- Visual & Residential Impact
- Archaeology
- Depreciation of Residential Property Values
- Glint & Glare
- Traffic Impact
- Flooding
- Screening for Appropriate Assessment
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Development Contributions

7.2. Principle / Policy Considerations

- 7.2.1. The proposed development is supported by national, regional and local policies in terms of renewable energy. In particular, I note that Objective EP-1 in the Development Plan states that it is an objective of Kerry County Council to place *an emphasis on increasing energy supplies derived from renewable resources*. Further Objective EP-3 states that it is an objective of Kerry County council to *facilitate sustainable energy infrastructure provision, so as to provide for the further physical and economic development of the County*.

7.2.2. The National Spatial Strategy, Draft National Policy Framework (A Roadmap for the delivery of the National Planning Framework 2016), Regional Planning Guidelines and the County Development Plan are considered to be supportive of the development of renewable energy technology particularly in the context of reducing the carbon emission of the country and meeting renewable energy production targets. Therefore, I consider that the proposal is acceptable in principle and would contribute to the diversity of sources of energy supply and hence the security of supply. I would note that the acceptability of the proposal is contingent on issues including impacts on inter alia visual and residential impact.

7.3. **Visual & Residential Impact**

7.3.1. Kerry County Council in their first reason for refusal stated that the scheme would be unduly obtrusive by virtue of its visual impact on the landscape and would interfere with the character of the landscape, which is necessary to preserve, in accordance with Objective ZL-1 of the Kerry County Development Plan 2015 – 2021.

7.3.2. The proposed development is located on lands designated “Rural General” in the Kerry County Development Plan 2015 – 2021. Rural General in the Development Plan is described as lands having a higher capacity to absorb development than the other rural designation (e.g. Rural Prime Special Amenity and Rural Secondary Special Amenity). The Landscape chapter of the Development Plan states that a Landscape Character Assessment will be undertaken during the lifetime of the plan, however, at present it appears that no such assessment has been undertaken. The potential landscape and visual impact of the scheme is considered in the Landscape Section of the Planning and Environment Report that accompanied the application.

7.3.3. The applicant does not consider that the scheme is out of keeping with the scale and nature of the receiving landscape context, which it is stated is one of a productive rural landscape without protective landscape designation. While, it is acknowledged by the applicant that the proposed Solar Farm will be visible from its immediate surrounds and also from directly across the Smearlagh Valley where it is seen on the opposing mid-slope it is also submitted that outside of these areas, the scheme has a relatively low degree of potential visual exposure. I agree with this assessment.

7.3.4. I also agree for the most part with the applicant that Objective ZL-1 1 is a broad objective and that it does not provide adequate justification for refusing this development proposal having regard to the sites location within a landscape designated as Rural General in this instance. While I also agree with the applicant that in an age of renewable energy that the *challenge for landscape professionals and planners alike, is to manage rather than resist the changes that will occur* it is also my view that this “management” is done through the rigours of the Development Plan process. I refer to McGarry v Sligo County Council (1989) where the Supreme Court described an adopted development plan as “an environmental contract between the planning authority, the council and the community, embodying a promise by the council that it will regulate private development in a manner consistent with the objectives stated in the plan”. It is in this context that I am of the view that to permit the proposed scheme at this location would be to the detriment of the established residential amenities of homes that are proximate to the site by reason of visual impact within its immediate surrounds.

7.3.5. While the scheme appears to balance so many of the necessary planning criteria required it falls short with regard to its proximity and impact on adjoining houses by reason of the exposed nature of the site at a local level. As observed on day of site inspection the appeal site is clearly visible from within its immediate surrounds i.e. the surrounding road network and houses, as the existing site boundaries provided virtually no screening. In turn the proposed mitigating landscape planting and fencing is likely to be a height and density that it would alter the open character of the area in a negative way. I agree with the SEE Planner that having regard to the sloping nature of the site, the proposed landscaping works would not screen the development when viewed from the east and south west. On balance I recommend that permission be refused.

7.4. **Archaeology**

7.4.1. Kerry County Council in their second reason for refusal stated that in the absence of pre-development archaeological testing of areas of potential ground disturbance on the site, they were not satisfied that the proposed development would not endanger the archaeological heritage of the area.

- 7.4.2. The Kerry County Archaeologist in their report of 21st September 2016 stated that there are no recorded monuments in proximity to the site. The report further recommended that pre-development archaeological testing of underground cable duct routes, entrance, access track, temporary compound and any other areas of potential disturbance should be requested. It would appear from the Case Planners report that the decision to refuse permission was informed by the County Archaeologist Report.
- 7.4.3. This first party appeal contends that this second reason for refusal is entirely unwarranted considering that the Planning Authority ignored the proposed mitigation measures set out in Section 10 (Mitigation) of Appendix 5.1 (AIA) of the originally submitted Planning and Environmental Report, in addition to ignoring the recommendations of their own archaeologist set out in his internal report which recommended that pre-development test excavations be undertaken as an item of FI.
- 7.4.4. As documented there are no archaeological monuments or recorded monuments within the appeals site. I have considered the Archaeological Impact Assessment submitted with the application together with the report of the County Archaeologist and in my view I am satisfied that this matter can be dealt with by suitable worded condition whereby the applicant employ a suitably qualified archaeologist in advance of development and that any material found is notified to the Department and that recording of any such material found shall be facilitated.

7.5. Depreciation of Residential Property Values

- 7.5.1. I note that concern is raised in observations to both the Planning Authority and the Board regarding the depreciation in adjoining residential property values. I have considered the Valuation and Appraisal report prepared by Property Partners (17th October 2016) and together with nature and proximity of the scheme that will adjoin established residential properties I also share the concerns raised. I therefore consider that to permit a development of this nature at this location would lead to devaluation of property values in the vicinity. Refusal is recommended.

7.6. Glint & Glare

- 7.6.1. The issues of glint and glare are dealt with in the Planning and Environment Report that accompanied the application. It is noted that the proposed development does not include tracking panels and that the panels are instead fixed in one orientation, facing due south. Solar PV panels, in order to be efficient, need to absorb as opposed to reflect solar irradiation. I support the findings of the Planning and Environment Report that it is not considered that there will be any significant nuisance effects to surrounding dwellings or along surrounding roads from glint and glare generated by the proposed solar farm.

7.7. Traffic Impact

- 7.7.1. A Traffic & Transportation Assessment was submitted with the Planning and Environment Report that accompanied the application. For developments this nature the construction phase is the busiest period with respect of the traffic impact experienced on the surrounding road network in terms of both additional traffic volumes generated on the network and the geometric requirements of the heavy goods vehicles that will be used to deliver material to and from the site. During the operational phase of the solar farm the impact on the surrounding local road network will be negligible save for the occasional visit by maintenance staff to the site.
- 7.7.2. The effects of construction traffic on the operation of the adjoining road network would be acceptable in light of the likely temporary duration involved. Given the location of the appeal site together with the nature and layout of the proposed scheme I am satisfied that the vehicular movements generated by the scheme would not have a significant material impact on the current capacity of the road network in the vicinity of the site or conflict with traffic or pedestrian movements in the immediate area.

7.8. Flooding

- 7.8.1. I refer to the Flood Risk Assessment (see Planning & Environmental Report) that accompanied the application. The Smearlagh River runs close to the eastern boundary of the appeal site. Analysis by the applicant of the flood mapping prepared by the OPW indicates that the river can be subject to flooding but only in the area

outside of the site boundary to the south east and south of the proposed site (Figure 10.1 Flood Risk Map of Planning & Environmental Report refers). The map illustrates the extent of flood risk with respect to the proposed development site boundary. It is stated that the proposed site falls within Flood Zone C i.e. all area of the plan which are not in Zones A or B and where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is low.

7.8.2. Having regard to the information available on file I am satisfied that the potential impacts of the proposed development in terms of flooding have been established and that the type of development proposed is appropriate for this flood zone. I do not consider that the proposed development would exacerbate the risk of flooding in the area.

7.9. Appropriate Assessment Screening

7.9.1. The application was accompanied by a Screening Assessment the contents of which have been noted. It is stated that the proposed connection will be via overhead or underground cable from the proposed development site to the exiting Smearla substation, approximately 2.4km north east of the site. The potential ecological impacts of the grid connection cable route were assessed in the Screening Assessment document. It should be noted that the proposed connection does not form part of this planning application and subsequent appeal.

7.9.2. The site is not located within a designated Natura 2000 site. I refer to Figure 5.1 "European Sites within 15km" in the Screening Assessment. The Smearlagh River which forms part of the Lower River Shannon SAC (Site No 002165) occurs approximately 0.8m south of the proposed appeal site. The Moanveanlagh Bog SAC (Site No 002351) is c 3.9km to the north east. The Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA (Site No 004161) is located 3.4km to the south. The River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (Site No 004077) is located 13 km to the north of the appeal site.

7.9.3. As documented there is a stream and drainage ditches around the appeal site that would provide hydrological connectivity to the SAC. However, a buffer is to be maintained to this watercourse and there is no instream works proposed. I agree with the Kerry County Council Biodiversity Officer that no direct impacts on the SAC

annexed habitats and / or species is considered likely considering the distance of the appeal site from designated Natural sites and the nature of work on site.

- 7.9.4. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, the nature of the receiving environment and proximity to the nearest European site (Lower River Shannon SAC (Site No 002165), Moanveanlagh Bog SAC (Site No 002351), Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA (Site No 004161) and River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (Site No 004077)) no appropriate assessment issues arise and it is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a European site.

7.10. Environmental Impact Assessment

- 7.10.1. The proposed development falls below the threshold levels in Schedule 5 of the Regulations in relation to EIA, and does not involve potential impacts on any sites or areas of specific environmental sensitivity. Having regard to the limited nature of the development, the absence of any nature conservation designation in the immediate area, the absence of any emission from the development and the absence of any connection to watercourses, it must be concluded that the development will not have a significant impact on the environment. Overall it is considered that the proposed development does not come within the scope of the classes of development requiring the submission of an EIS as set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2011. The submission of an environmental impact statement is not required.

7.11. Development Contribution

- 7.11.1. Kerry County Council adopted a Development Contribution scheme under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The proposed development does not fall under the exemptions listed in the “Exemptions from Payment of Development Contributions” Section of the scheme and it is therefore recommended that should the Board be minded to grant permission that a suitably worded condition be attached requiring the payment of a Development Contribution in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000.

7.12. Summary & Conclusions

8.0 Recommendation

8.1. Having considered the contents of the application, the provision of the Kerry County Development Plan 2015 – 2021, the grounds of appeal and the responses thereto, my site inspection and my assessment of the planning issues, I recommend that permission be **REFUSED** for the reasons and considerations set out below.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The proposed development is of significant scale having regard to the established pattern of development in the local area which is primarily agricultural in use and also consists of a concentration of rural houses in close proximity to the proposed development. There is a lack of guidance at national, regional and local level in relation to the appropriate location, scale and distribution of future proposals for solar power. Having regard to the scale of the proposed development and its potential impacts on the rural character of the area, including visual impacts, of residential property, the Board is not satisfied that the proposed development would not seriously injure the amenities, or depreciate the value of property in the vicinity. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proposed planning and sustainable development of the area.

Mary Crowley

Senior Planning Inspector

15th March 2017