



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report ABP-301965-18

### Development

Battery energy storage facility which will comprise of rechargeable battery units contained within up to 31 No. 40 foot containers on site and associated development of unit substations.

### Location

Culleenatreen or Flagford, Co.  
Roscommon

### Planning Authority

Roscommon County Council

### Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

PD18/7

### Applicant(s)

Kinbrace Ltd.

### Type of Application

Permission

### Planning Authority Decision

Grant

### Type of Appeal

Third Party

### Appellant(s)

Ray Gannon; John McDermott and Others; Frank and Anne McHugh and others; Residents Opposed to Battery Storage Development

**Observer(s)**

Maura Hopkins; Philip Martin; Des  
Glucklian; Gene Anderson; Leitrim  
County Council.

**Date of Site Inspection**

8<sup>th</sup> May 2019

**Inspector**

Una O'Neill

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## 1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site is located in a rural area, within the townland of Culleenatreen or Flagford, approx. 4km southwest of Carrick-on-Shannon. The site is accessed off the L-1034-0 and east of the junction with regional road R368, which connects Carrick-on-Shannon and Elphin.
- 1.2. The subject site, which is 3ha in area, is approx. L-shaped and crosses both sides of the L-1034-0. The northern portion of the site (1.3ha in area), where the main body of the battery energy storage facility is proposed, comprises agricultural land. The southern section of the site, south of the L-1034-0, forms part of the existing Flagford ESB substation and it is proposed to construct an underground cable connecting the northern battery storage facility to the Flagford ESB substation to the south of the road. There are a number of overhead lines connecting into the existing transmission station at Flagford.
- 1.3. The northern portion of the site, where the battery energy storage facility is proposed, is generally flat. The western boundary of the site is in close proximity to and partially adjoins the Killukin River. A drainage ditch is located along the northern and eastern boundary of the site which feeds into this river. There is also an open drain along the roadside boundary. Upon site inspection, I noted sections of the northern and eastern portion of the lands (north of the L-1034-0) were wet underfoot and comprises wet grassland. There are hedgerows along the northern and southern boundaries.
- 1.4. The existing ESB Substation, which comprises the southern section of the site, is a significantly scaled utility within this rural area. There is significant screen planting along it's.
- 1.5. There are a number of single rural dwellings in the wider area, the closest being 100m to the west of the existing ESB substation, at the junction with the R368. There is also a cluster of single dwellings at a crossroads approx. 226-326m to the southeast.

## 2.0 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the following:

- Battery energy storage facility, comprising of rechargeable battery units, contained in 31 x forty foot storage containers (c.12.2m long x 2.44m wide x 2.9m high), light grey in colour. The containers are located on the northern portion of the site, to the north of the L-1034-0, opposite the existing Flagford ESB substation. Connection to the existing ESB substation is proposed via an underground cable. The 31 containers are laid out in two rows, orientated north-to-south, with a unit substation located at each container. Each unit substation is 3.6m long x 2.7m wide x 2.4m high. Underground cables will connect these unit substations to the proposed 110 kV substation to the west of the container compound, comprising a building (15.6m x 6.3m x 6m high) contained in a secure compound, 45m x 21m, surrounded by 2.6m palisade fencing. An access road is proposed surrounding the perimeter of the container compound.
- A 110kV underground cable will connect the battery compound on the northern side of the L-1034-0 to the Flagford ESB Substation to the south of the L-1034-0.
- New vehicular access from the northern side of the L-1034-0.
- Security fencing, security cameras, a lighting mast and new site roads.
- Landscaping and boundary treatment works.
- Electricity is not being generated by the development but stored on site. The batteries are then recharged from power provided from the adjoining Flagford ESB Substation.

The application is accompanied by the following documents:

- Access and Transport Report
- Stage II – Flood Risk Assessment
- Screening Stage Assessment
- Landscape and Visual Statement
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Noise Impact Assessment

## 3.0 Planning Authority Decision

### 3.1. Decision

Permission GRANTED, subject to 13 conditions, including the following:

- C3: Development contribution.
- C4: Road condition survey required prior to commencement and upon completion of the construction phase.
- C5: Construction and Waste Management Plan
- C7: Surface water runoff to be collected and disposed of within the site.
- C9: Noise levels
- C12: Landscaping plans

### 3.2. Planning Authority Reports

#### 3.2.1. Planning Reports

Further Information was requested in relation to the following:

- Capacity of the battery storage facility (indicated to be maximum of 100MW).
- Further information in relation to flood risk and a cross section of existing and proposed levels.
- Further information in relation to construction traffic.
- Request for Noise Impact Assessment.
- Request for Ecological Impact Assessment.
- Lighting details.
- Proposal for disturbed material generated during construction.
- Proposal for existing open drain along the roadside boundary.

Following the receipt of significant further information, planning permission was granted subject to 13 conditions.

### 3.2.2. **Other Technical Reports**

Environment Department: No objection subject to conditions in relation to surface water and run-off during construction.

Roads & Transportation: No objection subject to condition in relation to application of a bond to ensure any damage caused to local roads during construction is rectified.

Fire Officer Report: No objection.

### 3.3. **Prescribed Bodies**

Waterways Ireland: No objection, subject to no breach from the facility into ground water or surface waters which may impact on the River Shannon.

### 3.4. **Third Party Observations**

A number of third party submissions were made, the grounds of which are largely addressed within the grounds of appeal hereunder.

## 4.0 **Planning History**

The following planning history relates to the ESB substation at Flagford. There is no history on the site where the battery storage area is proposed on the opposite side of the road to the substation:

PD07-1650: Permission GRANTED for telecommunications structure.

PD00-473: Permission GRANTED to erect a 110 kV line bay in existing Flagford 220 kV station.

PD00-220: Permission GRANTED to erect palisade fencing in place of existing chain link compound fence and landscaping.

PD99-180: Permission GRANTED for Flagford 200 kV station reinforcement project.



## 5.0 Policy and Context

### 5.1. European Policy Context

- **EU Directive 2009/28/EC**, the Renewable Energy Directive sets a target of 20% of EU energy consumption from renewable sources and a 20% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

### 5.2. National Policy

- **Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework (2018)** - section 9.2 seeks to shift from predominantly fossil fuel to predominantly renewal energy sources.
- **National Energy Efficiency Action Plan, 2017-2020**, sets out Ireland's energy efficiency ambitions. The Government has committed itself to achieving a 20% reduction in energy demand across the whole of the economy by 2020 through energy efficiency measures.
- **National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), 2010**, with follow on progress reports published, the latest being from February 2018: This sets out national targets for the share of energy from renewable sources consumed in transport, electricity and heating and cooling in 2020.
- **Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030** is a White Paper published by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment in December 2015. This is a framework to guide policy and the actions that the Irish Government intends to take in the energy sector and sets out a vision to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by between 80% and 95% compared to 1990 levels by 2050

### 5.3. Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020

- Chapter 4 Infrastructure; section 4.6: Energy
- Policy 4.54 - Promote a move away from fossil-fuel energy production and facilitate renewable energy infrastructure provision, including the development of renewable energy sources at suitable locations, so as to provide for the sustainable physical and economic development of County Roscommon.

- Policy 4.56 - Facilitate the provision of new high-voltage electricity infrastructure, where the development is required in order to facilitate the provision or retention of significant economic or social infrastructure including high voltage transformer stations within County Roscommon subject to normal planning considerations. The routing shall be identified with due consideration for social, economic, environmental and cultural impacts through relevant environmental assessment. The design of such infrastructure shall be such that it will achieve least environmental impact consistent with not incurring excessive costs. The significance of the Rathcroghan Archaeological Complex shall be given priority in the routing of such infrastructure.
- Policy 4.57 - Promote the maintenance and upgrade of electricity infrastructure throughout the county.
- Policy 4.59 - Facilitate the sustainable infrastructural development of energy generation and transmission networks, to ensure the security of energy supply and provide for future needs whilst also ensuring the preservation of scenic or otherwise significant landscapes from the visual intrusion of large-scale energy infrastructure.
- Policy 4.60 - Ensure that all plans and projects associated with the generation or supply of energy will be subject to screening for Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive Assessment.
- Objective 4.57 - Implement Government policy on limiting emissions of greenhouse gases and encourage the development of renewable energy sources in an appropriate and sustainable manner.
- Landscape Character Area 'LCA3 – Lough Corry Drumlin Basin. The Lough Corry Drumlin Basin is classified as Very High Value to reflect the boating, fishing and scenic amenities along the River Shannon. It is valued by tourists for its peaceful and largely undeveloped condition.

#### 5.4. Natural Heritage Designations

The site is located within 15km of one Natura 2000 site, the Annaghmore Lake SAC (001626), which is approx. 12km to the south. There are 14 pNHAs within 15km of

the site, the closest being Lough Drumharlow pNHA which is 4km north of the site and hydrologically separated from the proposed development. Lough Boderg and Lough Bofin pNHA are located approx. 9km from the site and are hydrologically linked to the appeal site, however this link is 20km downstream of the site.

## **5.5. EIA Screening**

The proposed development is not of any type included in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and it does not meet any of the criteria set out in schedule 7 of the Regulations for determining whether a sub-threshold development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, with regard to the characteristics of the proposed development, its location and the characteristics of potential impacts. Therefore, having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, its location within an agricultural field, and the separation distance to any sensitive location, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the development. The need for environmental impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded at preliminary examination and a screening determination is not required.

## **6.0 The Appeal**

### **6.1. Grounds of Appeal**

Four third party appeals have been submitted by John McDermott and others; Frank and Anne McHugh and others; Ray Gannon & Sons Ltd of Gannon Poultry; and a group titled Residents Opposed to Battery Storage Development. The issues raised are summarised as follows:

- The development is inappropriate and does not include sufficient safeguards for protection of the environment, human health, and animal health in an agricultural area.
- Concern is raised in relation to potential impact on free range egg farm, 1.5km as the crow flies from the appeal site, which requires a clean and stress free environment as part of the quality and brand image of the product. The proposal may affect water and air pollution.

- Fire risk proposed by batteries within this development, particularly given the sites location beside an existing ESB substation. Various documents are referenced examining fire risks of batteries and risk of run-off and air pollution.
- The proposal is in favour of reusable energy but is removed from the ethos of origin green.
- Water pollution potential and potential pollution of groundwater in an area which is at risk.
- The construction of the surface water storage pond as flood mitigation increases potential pollution in an extreme groundwater vulnerability area.
- Flood risk arises given location within a flood plain and location of compensation pond within this area.
- Traffic hazard will arise due to increased traffic volumes, particularly during construction.
- The proposal would be more appropriately located close to or alongside a renewable energy generation site and other co-location projects are listed.
- The proposal is not the most energy efficient as conversion from DC to AC incurs a loss of power.
- The Lough Corry Drumlin Basin is classified as very high value. The proposal would lead to the erosion of the rural character of the area, with detrimental impact on walking routes in proximity to the site and other tourist attractions in the wider area.
- Proposal is visually intrusive on the rural area given its industrial appearance.
- The proposed development is closer to dwellings than the stated 200m.
- The conditions attached to the permission cover only a small range of issues, are minimal and of a standard general type which fail to address concerns raised with high voltages, risk of fire and flood risk.
- Noise impact - proposal does not allow for the combined effects of noise from the proposed development and the existing ESB sub-station. The noise predictions do not take into account change of electricity flow from import to export and vice versa.

- Proposal would adversely impact the residential amenity and quality of life of local residents and would be in conflict with the current use and future development of the surrounding area for tourism and recreation.

## 6.2. Applicant Response

The applicant has responded to the grounds of appeal as follows:

- The reasons for the fire which occurred at a battery storage facility Belgium, sited in a number of the appeals, are not yet known or why the fire suppression system failed to extinguish the fire. However, such incidences are rare. Over 450MW of commercial scale battery storage facilities are operated safely in the UK with many of these providing services to the national electricity grid.
- The following firefighting measures are proposed:
  - The development shall be constructed in accordance with Part B (fire) of the second schedule of the building regulations, 1997-2014.
  - In the absence of local mains a fixed quantity of water should be provided on site for firefighting purposes.
  - Vehicular access for the fire brigade shall be provided.
  - A fire safety certificate is required.
- Further discussions will be held with the chief fire officer prior to construction to discuss and agree a suitable water supply.
- An emergency plan will be prepared in advance of construction to deal with the unlikely event of a fire.
- Flood Risk: A Stage II Flood Risk Assessment was carried out. As ground conditions are relatively wet there will be some infilling of the site in mapped flood zones. This will not contribute to downstream increase in flood risk as compensation for the infilling will be provided for within the boundary of the site, with provision for a shallow 150m<sup>3</sup> flood storage pond, which will be located in an area of the site where the probability of flooding is less than 1 in 1000 and which is outside the mapped PFRA fluvial flood zone. The key electrical infrastructure within the development area is at an elevation equivalent to the existing Flagford substation directly across

the road, which has not been subject to flooding, to ensure that the flood risk is minimised.

- Noise: Predicted noise levels are significantly below the WHO guidelines for community noise 1999. The facility could operate well within the noise limits stated in condition 9 of the planning permission issued by Roscommon County Council.
- The potential impacts have been robustly assessed through independent expert studies.

### 6.3. Planning Authority Response

None.

### 6.4. Observations

Five third party observations have been received. The issues raised include the following:

- Flood risk - the proposal will affect natural drainage in the area. The site is partially located on a flood plain. The impact on the Killukin River and ultimately the River Shannon needs to be addressed.
- Fire risk from use of lithium-ion battery and lack of plans in case of a fire. Evidence of a fire in Belgium is referenced.
- Water pollution during operational use is a risk.
- Potential pollution from lithium battery leakage and impact on electro-magnetic fields on human health.
- Potential for contamination from firefighting water entering the Killukin River.
- The scale of the proposal appears excessive in terms of required energy. Investment into the grid by ESB rather than batteries is suggested as an alternative.
- The site is inappropriately located in a rural area and would be better located in an industrial estate to serve larger populations.
- The applicant is a newly formed company, with no financial information available.

- Potential impact on existing ESB customers served by Flagford ESB Substation.
- Energy storage should be located at the point of renewable energy generation.
- Potential impact of sediment on the river during construction.
- The site is in an area of extreme groundwater vulnerability and there are a number of spring wells within the vicinity.
- The Cascade Waterfall is located 700m upstream of the site and is an important tourist facility which could be affected by the development.
- Potential pollution could impact on a local poultry business 1.5km from the site.

#### **6.5. Further Responses**

A further response was received from the group Residents Opposed to Battery Energy Storage supporting the other third party grounds of appeal.

#### **7.0 Assessment**

I consider that the relevant issues in determining the current appeal before the Board are as follows:

- Principle of Development / Policy Considerations
- Visual Impact
- Traffic
- Water Pollution and Flood Risk
- Noise
- Fire / Health and Safety
- Appropriate Assessment (AA)

## **7.1. Principle of Development / Policy Considerations**

- 7.1.1. Renewable energy projects are supported in principle at national, regional and local policy levels, with the impetus at all policy levels being the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce reliance on fossil fuels and combat climate change.
- 7.1.2. A target of the NREAP is for 40% of electricity to come from renewable sources by 2020. The Transmission Systems Operator (TSO, Eirgrid) states that to operate a secure electricity system with this level of renewables requires new system tools to ensure there is sufficient system services at all times. The proposal for Battery Energy Storage Facilities is one such tool, which this application is proposing. It is stated this development will provide necessary services to the electrical grid, in particular, frequency support and the provision of energy for short durations.
- 7.1.3. Chapter 4 of the Roscommon County Development Plan deals specifically with infrastructure and section 4.6 deals with energy. The proposal does not conflict with any specified land use objectives on or adjacent to the site. I am satisfied that there is substantial policy support at national, regional and local level for renewable energy projects, including battery storage compounds.
- 7.1.4. I consider the proposed development to be acceptable in principle at the subject site, subject to consideration of the identified key planning issues outlined hereunder.

## **7.2. Visual Impact**

- 7.2.1. The observers and third parties are concerned with the impact of the proposed development on the landscape character and consider the proposal would be visually intrusive, would lead to the erosion of the rural character of the area, with detrimental impact on walking routes in proximity to the site and other tourist attractions in the wider area.
- 7.2.2. The proposed development would be located within Lough Corry Drumlin Basin Landscape Character Area. The development plan classifies this area as Very High Value to reflect the boating, fishing and scenic amenities along the River Shannon. Forces of change as stated in the development plan relate to 'inappropriate and poorly sited development on the shoreline of Lough Corry and along the River Shannon which would have a negative visual and environmental impact on the



wetland landscape. It is noted that unchecked ribbon development along the R368 and other local roads connecting to Carrick-on-Shannon could have a comparable adverse impact. Increasingly marginalised farmland could also lead to a gradual down grading of the visual quality of the landscape’.

- 7.2.3. I note the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted by the applicant states the site is located closer to a moderate value LCA and is not as close to the River Shannon.
- 7.2.4. I note the site is flat with no significant variations in levels. There is no scenic designation in the immediate vicinity of the site. The proposed storage compound, north of the L-1034-0, is a rectangular shaped area, with the developed area having a road frontage of approx. 150m and the site depth is approx. 85m. The 40 foot container units are positioned in two rows with their narrow ends perpendicular to the local road to the south and positioned approx. 18.6m from the local road. The containers are 2.9m high with the substation west of the containers being 6m high. The cables connecting the units to the substation to the west will be positioned underground, as will the cable connecting this storage area north of the L-1034-0 to the existing Flagford substation south of the L-1034-0. The development is set off the boundaries of the site and a Landscape Mitigation Plan has been submitted with the application proposing additional planting of native species along the boundaries and reinforcement of all hedgerows. There is a proposed landscape buffer of approx. 10m from the road to the south, approx. 4m from the eastern boundary with advanced nursery stock proposed, 2m-4m wide reinforced hedgerow along the northern boundary and an approx. 80m wide landscaped area to the western boundary.
- 7.2.5. Having considered the general landscape in the area, and given the manner in which the storage units are positioned relative to the road, their overall low height, and the proposed landscaping mitigation measures, I consider the landscape is capable of absorbing this development and the proposal will not impact unreasonably on the visual amenities or landscape character of the area or impact on the wider tourism potential of this area.
- 7.2.6. I am unclear from the drawings submitted as to the position of the security fence along the boundary with the L-1034-0 relative to the proposed planting. I am of the view that should permission be granted, landscaping should be reinforced along the

boundary with the road with the security fence set back to ensure a soft landscaped roadside edge, as exists on the opposite side of the road where landscaping outside security fencing screens the existing ESB substation. A condition could adequately address this issue.

### **7.3. Residential Amenity**

- 7.3.1. I have had regard to the proximity of rural dwellings in the area and I consider that these are sufficiently separate from the proposed battery storage compound as to not be directly impacted in terms of outlook or loss of privacy. Furthermore the proposed landscaping measures around the perimeter of this relatively flat site, as discussed above, will ensure the site is screened from public view and becomes embedded within a landscape setting.

### **7.4. Traffic**

- 7.4.1. The subject proposal will generate significant traffic movements during the construction period, which is indicated to be approx. six months. The applicant stated by way of further information to the planning authority that over the construction period there will be an estimated 3082 movements.
- 7.4.2. I acknowledge that the level of traffic during construction will be significant. However, this impact is short-term in nature and the proposal will not generate significant traffic movements once construction is completed given the nature of the development.
- 7.4.3. I note a Construction Traffic Management Plan is to be put in place to manage construction traffic and a road condition survey is recommended to be undertaken before and after the construction phase. I note the planning authority concerns in relation to potential damage of the road by construction traffic and recommend a condition be attached to address this issue.
- 7.4.4. I consider that the proposed development will not give rise to a significant degree of traffic congestion during the construction phase, and that construction traffic will not give rise to a traffic hazard, subject to compliance with a Construction Traffic Management Plan.

## 7.5. Noise

- 7.5.1. A Noise Impact Assessment has been carried out, which examines predicted noise levels associated with three plant items (battery inverter units; air conditioning units; substation noise levels) at seven noise sensitive locations proximate to the site. Based upon the assessment, the battery storage units result in noise which is well below typical day and night time noise criteria, being in the range of 24.7dB to 30.6dB.
- 7.5.2. I note observers and third parties raise concerns in relation to the noise impact assessment not addressing the existing noise environment of the existing ESB substation. Upon site inspection I did not note an abnormal level of noise from the existing ESB substation and no evidence has been presented identifying the existing substation as being a noise nuisance in the area or having been investigated for noise nuisance issues.
- 7.5.3. I am satisfied that on the basis of the information before me that noise impact as a result of this development is not a significant issue and the proposed development would therefore not seriously injure residential amenity.

## 7.6. Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.6.1. A number of observers and third parties have raised issues in relation to potential for flood risk, damage to ground water and damage to surrounding water network from sediment during construction.
- 7.6.2. There are streams/drainage ditches to the north and east of the site which drain to the Killukin River to the west. The application was accompanied by a flood risk assessment. A section of land in the west corner of the site is identified as being within fluvial Flood Zone A, with the remainder of the site being within Flood Zone C. This infrastructure is classified as a highly vulnerable development, therefore a justification test was submitted in relation to the Flood Zone A area. Flood mitigation measures are proposed including implementation of SUDs design principles, raised formation levels, appropriate spacing of infrastructure, and proposed use of permeable fill. A shallow pond is proposed to provide flood storage in a significant flood event. The pond is located in an area of the site not located within the PFRA fluvial flood zone. Following a query from the planning authority in relation to the open drain along the southern site boundary and details in relation to the flood

compensation area, the issue of flood risk was deemed to be adequately addressed. I have reviewed the information submitted and am satisfied that the issue of flood risk has been adequately addressed

- 7.6.3. I note concerns were raised in relation to potential for pollutants entering Killukin River and risk to ground water given the site's location over a regionally important karstified aquifer. I note the soil type is a mix of mineral alluvium on the western part of the site and poorly drained mineral soils on the eastern side. There are no water or foul drainage requirements for the site. It is proposed that surface water will be discharged to a soakaway/field drains and will ultimately discharge to the Killukin River. Fire protection measures have been put in place within each container unit, which is not water based. SUDs measures are proposed on the site. While there is potential for impact on the Killukin River during the construction phase due to silt run off, I am satisfied that subject to compliance with best practice construction measures, compliance with a Construction Management Plan, and implementation of SUDs measures, the proposed development will not impact negatively on the surrounding drainage network or on the groundwater during construction or operation.
- 7.6.4. In the response from the applicant in relation to fire risk, it is stated further discussions with the chief fire officer will take place in relation to the issue of water supply in case of fire. In the event that water becomes part of the fire risk planning of the site, a separate fire water retention pond should be designed into the scheme to ensure no impact from run-off on the Killukin River. While fire hazard is dealt with through the building control regulations, I consider this potentially overlapping issue of water run-off could be adequately addressed by way of condition.
- 7.6.5. Overall, having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and the size of the area that would be covered by impermeable surfaces, in addition to proposed SUDs measures, I am satisfied that the site could be drained in a manner that would not give rise to excessive waterlogging or run-off and would not result in pollution during the construction or operational phases of development.

## **7.7. Fire / Health and Safety**

- 7.7.1. The information submitted with the application states that each container is equipped with a self-contained CO<sub>2</sub> firefighting system which will extinguish the flames should

a fire occur. The system is stated to be water free which will ensure no potential contamination of surface water run-off to the Killukin River.

- 7.7.2. Fire safety and compliance with building regulations is governed separately under the Building Control Regulations. This being said, I note the planning application was assessed by the Fire Authority which indicates no objection to the proposed development. In a further response from the applicant to the grounds of appeal, it is stated that further discussions will be held with the chief fire officer prior to construction to discuss and agree a suitable water supply. In the event that water is utilised as a fire fighting measure, I am of the view that a revised surface water strategy would be required to include a fire water detention pond to ensure any fire water run-off would not go directly to the Killukin River. This issue could be adequately addressed by way of condition.
- 7.7.3. The proposed development will not result in emissions to air and I am satisfied that subject to design in accordance with fire safety regulations, that emissions to air is not an issue warranting refusal in this instance.
- 7.7.4. Based on the information before me, I am satisfied that battery storage compounds do not pose risks greater than any other renewable energy project and that it is not a planning issue per se, given that it is governed by Building Control Regulations.

### **Appropriate Assessment**

- 7.8. The site is located within 15km of one Natura 2000 site, the Annaghmore Lake SAC (001626), which is approx. 12km to the south. The Qualifying Interests of the Annaghmore Lake SAC are as follows: 1013 Geyer's Whorl Snail *Vertigo geyeri*; and 7230 Alkaline fens.
- 7.9. The applicant has submitted a Stage 1 Screening Assessment. It is stated that the site lacks any clear connection, hydrological or through an ecological corridor, to the Annaghmore Lough SAC. The main potential impact is stated to be activities associated with construction which could lead to increased disturbance (eg light noise) in the vicinity, however, the SAC is located sufficiently far from the site that there would be no impact caused by disturbance or displacement of fauna.
- 7.10. It is reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information on the file, which I consider to be adequate in order to issue a screening determination that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects

would not be likely to have a significant effect on European Site No. 001626 (Annaghmore Lough SAC) or any other European Site, in view of the site's conservation objectives, and that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (and submission of a NIS) is not therefore required.

## 8.0 Recommendation

I recommend that planning permission should be granted for the proposed development for the reasons and considerations set down below, and subject to the attached conditions.

## 9.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the provisions of national policy objectives in relation to renewable energy, the provisions of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2020, the nature and scale of the proposed development, the landscape character and site layout, it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would support national and regional renewable energy policy objectives, would not conflict with the provisions of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020, would not have unacceptable impacts on the visual amenities of the area, would not unduly detract from the amenities of the area and would not pose a serious risk to public health and safety, would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety, and would, therefore, overall be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## 10.0 Conditions

1.	The 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 submitted to the planning authority on the 11 <sup>th</sup> day of January 2018, 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
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	<p>development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.</p> <p><b>Reason:</b> In the interest of clarity.</p>
2.	<p>The proposed development shall be undertaken in compliance with all environmental, ecological, construction and traffic safety commitments made in the documentation supporting the application.</p> <p>Reason: To protect the environment and in the interests of orderly development.</p>
3.	<p>Details of the materials, colours and textures of all the external finishes to the proposed buildings, storage containers, and fencing shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.</p> <p>Reason: In the interest of the visual amenity of the area.</p>
4.	<p>The developer shall comply with the following landscaping requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The developer shall submit a revised landscaping plan, indicating native species trees and hedgerows, details of boundary fencing, SUDs measures and the flood compensation pond.</li> <li>(b) Security fencing along the roadside boundary shall be set back sufficiently to support adequate planting along the roadside.</li> <li>(c) Existing field boundaries shall be retained where practicable and new planting undertaken.</li> <li>(d) All landscaping shall be planted to the satisfaction of the planning authority prior to commencement of development. Any trees or hedgerow that are removed, die or become seriously damaged or diseased within five years from planting shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees or hedging of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.</li> </ul> <p>Revised drawings showing compliance with these requirements shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.</p>

	<p><b>Reason:</b> To assist in screening the proposed development from view, and in the interest of the visual amenity of the area and biodiversity.</p>
5.	<p>The developer shall comply with the following surface water requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) A detailed surface water and SUDs plan shall be provided complying with the requirements of the planning authority.</li> <li>(b) In the event that a water supply is required for fire safety reasons, the applicant shall submit a revised surface water strategy incorporating a fire water retention pond.</li> </ul> <p>Revised drawings showing compliance with these requirements shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.</p> <p><b>Reason:</b> In the interests of environmental protection and public health.</p>
6.	<p>The developer shall comply with the following technical requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) CCTV cameras shall be fixed and angled to face into the site and shall not be directed towards adjoining property or the road.</li> <li>(b) Each fencing panel shall be erected such that for a minimum of 300 millimetres of its length, its bottom edge is no less than 150 millimetres from ground level.</li> <li>(c) Cables within the site shall be located underground.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reason:</b> In the interest of visual and residential amenity, to allow wildlife to continue to have access to and through the site and to minimise impacts on drainage patterns.</p>
7.	<p>The developer shall comply with the following requirements of the planning authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Prior to the commencement of development, a road condition survey shall be carried out by the developer in conjunction with the planning authority and submitted to the planning authority. A road condition survey shall also be carried out by the developer upon completion of the construction phase.</li> <li>(b) Any damage to the public road, verge or public facilities caused by the development hereby granted shall be fully reinstated by the</li> </ul>



	<p>applicant/developer at their own expense and to the satisfaction of the planning authority.</p> <p><b>Reason:</b> In the interests of orderly development and traffic safety.</p>
8.	<p>The construction of the development shall be managed in accordance with a Construction Management Plan, which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. This plan shall provide details of intended construction practice for the development, including hours of working, noise management measures, surface water management proposals, environmental management, the management of construction traffic and off-site disposal of construction waste.</p> <p><b>Reason:</b> In the interests of public safety and residential amenity.</p>
9.	<p>The site development and construction works shall be carried out such a manner as to ensure that the adjoining streets are kept clear of debris, soil and other material and cleaning works shall be carried on the adjoining public roads by the developer and at the developer's expense on a daily basis.</p> <p><b>Reason:</b> To protect the residential amenities of property in the vicinity.</p>
10.	<p>(a) During the operational phase of the proposed development, the noise level arising from the development, as measured at the nearest noise sensitive location shall not exceed:-</p> <p>(i) An Leq,1h value of 55 dB(A) during the period 0800 to 2200 hours from Monday to Saturday inclusive.</p> <p>(ii) An Leq,15 min value of 45 dB(A) at any other time. The noise at such time shall not contain a tonal component.</p> <p>At no time shall the noise generated on site result in an increase in noise level of more than 10 dB(A) above background levels at the boundary of the site.</p> <p>(b) All sound measurement shall be carried out in accordance with ISO Recommendation 1996:2007: Acoustics - Description and Measurement of Environmental Noise.</p>

	<b>Reason:</b> To protect the amenities of property in the vicinity of the site.
11.	<p>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 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 An Bord Pleanála to determine the proper application of the terms of the Scheme.</p> <p><b>Reason:</b> 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.</p>

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Una O'Neill  
Senior Planning Inspector

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019