



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-302397-18

Development	Grid system services facility with containerised battery storage, substation, switch station & site works.
Location	Silloge, Navan, Meath.
Planning Authority	Meath County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	KA180340
Applicant(s)	Grid Systems Services Ltd.
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant
Type of Appeal	Third Party
Appellant(s)	Carmel Mc Cormack
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	15 th February 2019
Inspector	Karla Mc Bride

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site is located within a rural area c.4km to the N of Navan in County Meath and the surrounding lands are mainly in agricultural use. The site is located in the townland of Silloge on the N side of the R163 regional road and to the E of a railway track. There is an existing 110kV electrical substation located to the immediate W of the site along with several houses and farm buildings along the public road to the E. The R163 also provides access to the Tara Mines Tailing Dam at Randalstown to the SW of the site.
- 1.2. The “L” shaped site is located within an agricultural field that slopes down gently from S to N, the site boundaries are defined by mature hedges, trees and drainage ditches, and there is a stream along the field boundary to the N. The site is traversed by overhead powerlines that connect with the adjacent substation. The site is not served by an existing field entrance off the public road.
- 1.3. The surrounding area has a rich archaeological heritage and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA and SAC is located to the SW, S and SE of the site.
- 1.4. Photographs and maps in Appendix 1 describe the site and environs in more detail.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Install a grid services storage facility on the 1.27ha site comprising:
 - Single storey substation building & customer switchgear unit
 - Electrical inverter/transformer station modules (x12)
 - Containerised battery storage modules (x 8)
 - Associated heating, ventilation & air conditioning units
 - Perimeter fencing & pole mounted CCTV security cameras
 - New vehicular entrance & internal access track
 - All associated site works & services

Accompanying documents:

- Planning Statement
- Environmental Report
- Construction & Traffic Management Report
- Design and Access Statement
- Drainage Report
- Noise Assessment Report
- Archaeological Impact Assessment
- AA Screening report
- Decommissioning Report
- Copy of Project Presentation

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Further Information request

Further information was requested in relation to the following items:

1. Details of site access off R136 along with alternative access options – *details provided along with 2 other options.*
2. Further details of attenuation system & ground conditions – *not provided.*
3. Details of compliance with the Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines (Site Justification Test) – *not necessary as most of the site is located within Zone C with no development proposed for Zone A along site boundary.*
4. New public notices if required – *FI not deemed to be significant*

3.2. Decision

Following the receipt of FI, the planning authority decided to grant planning permission subject to 19 conditions.

- Condition no.2 required the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment which accurately identifies potential flood zones throughout the site & no development should be located within Zones A & B.
- Condition no. 4 required the submission of BRE 365 test results for the site of the attenuation system & details of ground water levels.
- Condition no.7 required the submission of details of the transformers.
- Condition no. 9 required the submission of a decommissioning plan.

3.3. **Planning Authority Reports**

3.3.1. Planning Reports

The Planning Officer recommended that planning permission be granted.

3.3.2. Other Technical Reports

Transportation: No objection following receipt of FI subject to conditions.

Flooding: FI requested.

Water Services: FI requested & no objection following receipt of FI.

EHO: Noise conditions recommended.

Fire Officer: Application for Fire Safety certification required.

3.4. **Prescribed Bodies**

HSA: No observations, outside the scope of the H&S regulations.

3.5. **Third Party Observations**

One submission received from Carmel Mc Cormack who raised concerns in relation to: - inadequate site notice, description & operational details; no consideration of alternative sites & locations; lack of grid connection details; speculative, experimental & unsustainable development; and inadequate EIA, cost benefit analysis & health impact analysis.

4.0 Planning History

None attached for site and extensive planning history for adjoining 110kv substation.

NA110397: permission granted for extension of existing substation.

NA70129: permission granted for alterations to existing substation.

NA60205: permission granted for a new 110kv overhead power line to Rathcoon.

NA40283: permission granted for alterations to existing substation.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. National and Regional Policy

EU Directive - Energy from Renewable Resources

EU Directive (2009/28/EC) sets a target of 20% of EU energy consumption from renewable sources and a 20% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

National Planning Framework, 2018 (NPF)

NFP seeks to harness the country's renewable energy potential, achieve a transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, and promote new energy systems & transmission grids.

Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009:

These Guidelines seeks to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and avoid new developments increasing flood risk elsewhere and they advocate a sequential approach to risk assessment and a justification test.

Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) 2010-2022

Strategic Policy PIP4 states that the energy needs of the GDA shall be delivered by way of investment in new projects and corridors to allow economic and community needs to be met, and to facilitate sustainable development and growth.

5.2. Meath County Development Plan 2013 to 2019

Energy & communications:

EC POL 1: facilitate energy infrastructure provision at suitable locations.

EC POL 9: support innovative energy efficient technologies.

EC POL 11: support & facilitate enhanced electricity supplies & networks.

EC POL 12: co-operate & liaise with statutory & other energy suppliers.

EC POL 13: transmission infrastructure should protect important landscapes.

EC OBJ 1: ensure that all plans & projects are subject to AA screening and AA.

EC OBJ 4: integration of transmission network.

Agriculture & rural areas:

ED POL 5: promote continued growth in rural areas by encouraging rural enterprise (including energy production) in a sustainable manner at appropriate locations.

ED POL 19: recognise the contribution of rural employment to the overall growth of the economy and to promote this growth by encouraging rural enterprise and diversification (including renewable energy production & food production).

Flooding:

WS POL 29: use Flood Risk Guidelines (Sequential Approach & Justification Tests).

WS POL 32: require a Flood Risk Assessment, as appropriate.

Transportation:

Section 10.16.2: sets out access requirements for new developments.

RD POL 38: access should not endanger public safety by way of a traffic hazard.

RD POL 39: identify & protect important regional roads from unnecessary accesses.

RD POL 43: adequate sightlines and stopping distances required.

Heritage:

LC OBJ 1: to ensure the preservation of the uniqueness of all landscape character types, to maintain the visual integrity of areas of exceptional value & high sensitivity.

LC OBJ 5: seeks to protect views & prospects and the visual amenity of landscapes.

Appendix 7 - Landscape Character Assessment: the site is located within Landscape Character 6 (Central Lowlands), which is described as having a High landscape value and Moderate landscape sensitivity, and which has the capacity to absorb renewable energy developments, overhead cables, sub stations & masts.

5.3. **Natural Heritage Designations**

River Boyne & River Blackwater SAC & SPA c.3.5km & c.5km to the SW & SE.

5.4. **Screening for Environmental impact assessment**

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 Third Party Appeal**

- Procedural errors prevented objector from commenting on FI response.
- Large scale battery storage is a hazardous & speculative development.
- Cumulative impacts of similar proposals should be assessed nationally.
- Experimental & untested technology, and no international standards for transport, installation, operation, maintenance and decommissioning.
- Potential adverse impacts on health, safety and the environment.
- Risk of fire, explosions & lithium battery thermal runaway reactions.
- COMAH Regs. 2015 & Annex 11 of the EU 2015/830 Regs. apply.
- Increased risk of accidents & water contamination on/close to flood plain.
- Impossible to assess impacts in the absence of safety tests & standards.
- Fire Certificate required & query expertise of local Fire Service.

- Seveso scale of development; input required from neighbouring counties, NPWS, HSA; and AA & EIS should have been required.
- Project splitting as the grid connection is outside the site boundary.
- Property devaluation, adverse impacts on amenity, unsustainable job creation, questionable economic benefits, overdevelopment of battery storage systems compared to rest of world and potential terrorist threat.

6.2. **First Party response**

No response received.

6.3. **Planning Authority Response**

No new issues raised.

6.4. **Prescribed Bodies**

No further submissions.

6.5. **Prescribed Bodies**

None received

7.0 Assessment

The main issues arising in this case relate to the following:

- Principle of development & sustainability
- Visual & residential amenity
- Flood risk & drainage
- Movement & access
- Other issues

7.1. Principle of development and sustainability

The proposed development would comprise a grid energy storage facility containing 8 x rechargeable lithium-ion battery units, 12 x inverter/transformers units, an electrical substation and customer switchgear unit, related equipment and associated site works. The proposed facility would not produce electricity. It would be used to store and discharge energy to the grid intermittently throughout the day in order to balance fluctuations in supply and demand as required. This type of facility is currently being used to address grid stability issues associated with intermittent renewable energy generation at wind and solar farms. The proposed facility would adjoin and service an existing 110kv substation where the energy sources are not differentiated. The project would have a projected lifetime of c.30 years and the applicant states that the facility could provide services to the Transmission Systems Operator EirGrid as part of the DS3 programme and that it would have the potential meet the electricity needs of 34,300 homes for one hour.

The proposed development would comply with national, regional and local planning policy which supports a move to a low carbon future and it would help to maintain the long-term stability of the electricity system in Ireland.

The proposed development would be located on agricultural lands that are currently used for tillage. There is no national guidance in relation to where grid energy storage facilities should or should not be located and there is no policy which precludes their development on agricultural land. Although national policy seeks to

increase agricultural productivity, having regard to scale of the proposed facility on the c.1.27ha site it is unlikely that it would compromise this strategic objective. At local level, policies ED POL 5 and 19 of the Development Plan seek to encourage and promote rural enterprise and farm diversification, including energy production.

In relation to sustainability and ensuring the security of future energy supplies, it is noted that the proposed development would comprise lithium-ion batteries and that Lithium is not a naturally occurring mineral in this country or the EU.

Conclusion:

Having regard to the foregoing, I am satisfied that the proposed development would comply with relevant EU, national, regional and local planning and energy policy and that the proposed grid energy storage facility would be acceptable in principle.

7.2. Visual and residential amenity

Visual amenity:

The proposed development would be located within Landscape Character 6 (Central Lowlands) which is described as having a High landscape value and Moderate landscape sensitivity and this landscape has been identified as having the capacity to absorb renewable energy developments. The surrounding rural lands slope down gently from E to W and from S to N and the proposed grid storage facility would occupy a relatively low-lying site next to an existing 110kv substation. The site boundaries to the S and W are defined by mature hedgerows and trees whilst the boundaries to the N and E are undefined, and the neighbouring substation site is partly screened by a line of mature trees.

The proposed grid energy storage facility would occupy a rectangular shaped area (c.45m x c.65m) within the overall site, it would be set back c.80m from the roadside boundary and it would be surrounded by a c.2.4m high green palisade security fence and a c.4m high earth berm. The proposed facility would contain a series of 8 x battery containers units (c. 15.5m wide, 2.6m deep & 3m high), 12 x inverter/ transformer units (c.8m wide, 2m deep & 2.6m high), a single storey sub-station (c.8m wide, 6m deep & 3.6m high) and a customer switchgear container (c.12.5m

wide, 2.6m deep & 2.4m high), and pole mounted CCTV security cameras (c.2.5m high). All ducting and cabling would be underground.

The proposed development would occupy an exposed and relatively low-lying location within an agricultural field, however the proposed c.4m high earth berm around the site would screen the proposed development from public view which is acceptable. The visual impact on the rural landscape could be further mitigated by way of a landscaping scheme for the berm that should include native trees and hedgerows. This concern could be addressed by way of a planning condition.

Residential amenity:

The proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the residential amenities of the neighbouring houses located to the SE of the facility by way of overshadowing, overlooking or loss of privacy because of the substantial separation distances. Any residual impacts on visual amenity would be addressed by the aforementioned tree and hedgerow planting along the earth berms.

Furthermore, no artificial lighting should be installed or operated on site without a prior grant of planning permission and the CCTV cameras should be fixed and angled to face into the site and not directed towards the road or nearby houses. These concerns could be addressed by way of a planning condition.

The contents of the applicant's Noise Assessment Report are noted, and a noise control condition should be attached to ensure that the amenities of the nearby houses or other noise sensitive locations are not disturbed by operational noise at inappropriate times.

Health and safety:

The appellant raised health and safety concerns in relation to the risk of fire, explosion and thermal runaway at Lithium-ion battery storage facilities. The presentation that accompanied the planning application addressed fire safety concerns for such systems, it described the storage system, the thermal management and exhaust systems attached to each unit, and the fire safety features along with an overview of fire safety tests. The contents of the presentation are noted. The proposed facility is not a Seveso development and it lies outside the scope of the Health and Safety Authority. However, it would need to be assessed under the relevant fire safety legislation at the Fire Safety Certification stage.

Conclusion:

Having regard to the above, I am satisfied that the proposed grid energy storage facility would not have any significant adverse impacts on the visual or residential amenities of the surrounding area.

7.3. Flood risk and Drainage**Context:**

The proposed development would be located within an agricultural field where the lands slope down gently from S to N towards a stream and the W section of the site is bound and traversed by drainage ditches. The lands immediately surrounding the stream are at risk from Fluvial flooding however no historical flooding has been recorded by the OPW in the vicinity of the proposed facility, and the site has been identified as being of low risk for potential flooding from surface water runoff.

Background:

The application was accompanied by a Drainage Report which stated that the proposed development would result in small increase in impermeable area (c.656sq.m) as the containers would be elevated above the ground on concrete pad foundations, and that no formal offsite drainage is required. It also stated that a SUDs infiltration drainage system would be implemented and that that all surface water runoff would be drained through ground soakaways to a 100-year return period storm with an allowance for climate change.

The Engineering department raised concerns in relation the nature of the proposed facility which is classified as a “highly vulnerable development” and its proximity a nearby watercourse and Flood Zone A where there is a high probability fluvial flooding. This department noted the submission of an Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) which but raised concerns in relation to the absence of a Justification Test to assess the appropriateness of the development. The FRA concluded that a small portion of the N section of the site is in the Flood Plain but that the actual facility is outside the flood zones. However, the applicant did not calculate the critical flood flows that would be expected at times of critical flood events (100and 1000-year events). The Water Services Department raised concerns in relation to the management of surface water runoff within the site.

The planning authority requested further Information in relation the submission of BRE test results for the site, ground water levels and details of an attenuation system, and details of compliance with the Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines with regard to the Justification Test.

The required information was not submitted. However, the applicant stated that the final details of the drainage scheme could be conditioned and that irrespective of drainage conditions, a suitable sustainable drainage scheme could be implemented on site which would not increase flood risk to adjacent sites. The Water Services Department was satisfied with this response subject to compliance with conditions. The applicant stated that a Justification Test was not necessary as most of the site is located within Flood Zone C with no development proposed for Zone A. The planning authority was satisfied with this response subject to compliance with conditions, although there was no response from the Engineering Department.

The planning authority subsequently sought to deal address these concerns by way of condition nos.2 and 4 of the decision to grant planning permission which required the submission of an FRA and BRE 365 test results for the site of the attenuation system and details of ground water levels.

Flood risk:

The stream to the N of the site is located within Flood Zone A and this zone extends as far S as the northernmost section of the overall site boundary. The site of the proposed grid energy storage facility is located c.50m to the S of the site boundary and entirely within Flood Zone C. According to the Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009) there is a high probability of flooding in Zone A (1% or 1 in 100 years) and a low probability in Zone C (less than 0.1% of 1 in a 1000 years). The Sequential Approach set out in paragraph 3.2 of the Guidelines requires a Justification Test for development in Zones A and B, Table 3.1 of the Guidelines classifies the proposed development as Highly Vulnerable, and Table 3.2 indicates that Highly Vulnerable developments are appropriate in Flood Zone C and states that a Justification Test is not required.

The stream is located c.65m to the N of the site boundary, c.105m from the c.4m high berms and c.110m from the grid energy storage facility which will mainly be located above ground level. The site levels in the vicinity of the stream and the N

section of the overall site (where no development will take place) are indicated on the submitted plans as being c.55mOD. The levels are between c.56mOD and c.57mOD at the N boundary of the proposed facility to the S of the c.4m high berm. The FFL of the battery container units would be c.57.60mOD whilst the FFL of the substation and customer switchgear container would be c.56mOD and c.57.345mOD respectively. Thus, there would be a c.1m to 2m difference in site levels between the lands surrounding the stream and the site of the proposed facility, a c.2.6m difference in levels with the battery container units, and a c.1.0m and c.1.35m difference with the substation and switchgear container respectively.

Drainage:

In relation to the management of surface water runoff, having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and the size of the area that would be covered by impermeable surfaces, I am satisfied that the site could be drained in manner that would not give rise to excessive waterlogging or run-off, subject to compliance with the requirements of the planning authority. This concern could be addressed by way of a planning condition.

Conclusion:

Having regard to the above, I am satisfied that the site of the proposed grid energy storage facility would not be at risk of flooding and the proposed development would not give rise to a flood risk. I am also satisfied, having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, that it would not give rise to excessive surface water runoff, subject to compliance with planning authority drainage requirements for the management of runoff within the site.

7.4. Movement and access

The proposed development would be located along the R163 regional road and along a section of carriageway that slopes down from E to W towards a bend in the road to the W of the site and adjacent 110kv substation. The road is trafficked by HGVs and operational speeds are relatively high. The adjacent substation and several agricultural and residential sites have direct access to this road which also serves the Tara Mines Tailing Dam at Randalstown to the SW. The originally proposed vehicular access would be directly off the R163 in the SW corner of the

site next to the entrance to the ESB substation, and the originally proposed internal access road (c.80m) would run parallel to the W site boundary with the substation.

The application was accompanied by a Construction and Traffic Management Report and a Design and Access Statement. The Construction and Traffic Management Report includes a Swept Path Analysis of the site, a Visibility Splay drawing of the entrance which indicates the provision 160m sightlines to the E and W, and details of the HGV delivery route from Dublin Port via the M1, N51 and R163. The reports state that the construction/installation phase would take c.10 weeks with 38HGV (76 x 2-way) movements anticipated (1 or 2 per day) during normal working hours, and that c.20 construction workers will be employed. The report states that the facility will require between 10 and 20 site visits per year during the operational phase. The applicant's Decommissioning Method Statement states that traffic movements during the decommissioning phase will be similar to the construction/installation phase.

The Council's Roads Department raised concerns in relation to the location of the proposed vehicular access close to the existing substation entrance and to a bend in the road to the W. Further Information was request and received in relation to 2 x alternative access points to the E of the site further along the R163 (c.23m and c.38m), and both options would entail the construction of lengthy internal access roads across the adjoining agricultural fields. The Roads Department concluded that the original access was acceptable, having regard to the anticipated low levels of operational traffic and subject to the provision of adequate sightlines.

Having examined the three vehicular access options during my site inspection and having regard to the predicted levels of traffic generation during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases, I am satisfied that the original proposal is the most acceptable in terms of traffic safety and the protection of the rural character of the area. However, the Construction Management Plan should incorporate a traffic management plan which should be prepared in advance of the works and agreed with the planning authority. It should include advance warning and information signing indicating a temporary works access and the likelihood of traffic ahead, during the construction and decommissioning phases. This concern could be addressed by way of a planning condition.

The effects of construction traffic on the operation of the R163 would be acceptable given the limited duration of the works (c.10 weeks). Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development along with the remote monitoring and infrequent maintenance visits, I am satisfied that the proposed development, which would result in a new entrance off the R163, would not give rise to a significant increase in vehicle movements during the operational phase.

Conclusion:

Having regard to the above, I am satisfied that the originally proposed vehicular access arrangements off the R163 are acceptable and that the traffic generated during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases would not give rise to a traffic hazard or endanger the safety of other road users, subject to the provision of adequate sightlines along the road.

7.5. Other issues

Archaeology: There are several features of archaeological interest in the wider area, the contents of the applicant's Archaeological Impact Assessment are noted and the standard pre-development testing condition should be attached.

Cable connection: It is intended to connect the proposed facility to the adjacent 110kv substation which is owned by ESB networks by way of an underground cable and indicative details have been provided.

Ecology: The proposed development would comprise works in the vicinity of internal hedgerows and drainage ditches which could have an adverse impact on biodiversity, however most species will gradually return and habituate to the works.

Environmental services: The proposed development should comply with the requirements of Irish Water and the planning authority.

Decommissioning: The Decommissioning Method Statement states that the site will be fully decommissioned, the land reinstated to agricultural use, and the batteries will either be repurposed or recycled.

Procedural issues: The concerns raised by the appellant in relation to public notices and further formation are noted, however I am satisfied that the planning authority complied with all of the relevant statutory requirements.

7.6. Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Compliance with Articles 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive

The Habitats Directive deals with the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora throughout the European Union. Article 6(3) of this Directive requires that any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The competent authority must be satisfied that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site.

Stage 1 AA Screening Report

The screening report described the site, the location and the proposed development, it summarised the regulatory context and it carried out a desk top surveys. It stated that the site is in the catchment of the River Boyne and it identified the presence of manmade ditches that drain to a stream to the N of the site which ultimately discharges to the River Boyne c.3.6km to the SW of the site. The River Boyne is covered by two European site designations (River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA). The report confirmed that the proposed development would not be located within any of the European sites. It described the sites and their respective qualifying habitats and species and it listed their conservation objectives. The Stage 1 AA Screening Report concluded that the proposed development would not present a significant risk to the Qualifying Interests or Conservation Objectives of the European sites and that an NIS was not required.

AA Screening Assessment

The proposed development would not be located within an area covered by any European site designations and the works are not relevant to the maintenance of any such sites. The following European sites are located within a 15km radius and their Qualifying and Conservation Interests, and separation distances are listed below.

European Site	Site Code	Relevant QIs & CIs	Distance
River Boyne & River Blackwater SAC	002299	River lamprey, Salmon, Otter, Alkaline fens & Alluvial forests	c.3.5km to SW c.5.0km to SE
River Boyne & River Blackwater SPA	004232	Common Kingfisher	c.3.5km to SW c.5.0km to SE

The construction phase of the proposed development would comprise site levelling, the construction of an internal access road, the installation of the grid energy storage facility and related structures, and works in the vicinity of the drainage ditches. There would be moderate site clearance and excavation works. Adherence to best practices methodologies during the construction phase would control the release of sediments to surface water and prevent surface and ground water pollution as a result of accidental spillages and leaks. There is an aquatic connection between the site and the European sites via the onsite drains and a stream which drains into the River Boyne to the SW of the site. However, the having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed works and the substantial c.3.5km separation distance to the nearest European site, it is unlikely that any sediments released during the construction phase would reach the European sites, provided that best construction practices are adhered to. The operational phase of the proposed grid energy storage facility would be relatively benign with no adverse effects anticipated. There is no potential for cumulative impacts in-combination with other plans and projects in the surrounding area, having regard to the contained nature of the works. It is noted that there is no direct aquatic connection with the River Boyne to SE.

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, and notwithstanding the presence of an aquatic connection to the European sites via the onsite drains and nearby watercourses, and taking account of the substantial separation distance to the nearest European sites and to the nature of their qualifying interests and conservation objectives, it is my opinion that the proposed development, subject to compliance with best construction practices, does not have the potential to affect the European sites or their conservation objectives.

AA Screening Conclusion

It is reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information on the file, which I consider 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. 002299 and 004232, or any other European site, in view of the site's Conservation Objectives, and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not therefore required.

8.0 Recommendation

Arising from my assessment of this appeal case 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 the County Meath Development Plan 2013 to 2019, and to the nature, and scale of the proposed development, it is considered that subject to compliance with the following conditions, the proposed development would not seriously injure the amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity or give rise to a traffic hazard. The proposed development would, therefore, 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 and the further information received by the planning authority on 03th day of July 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 development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The permission shall be for a period of 25 years from the date of the commissioning of the grid energy storage facility. The grid energy storage facility and related ancillary structures shall then be removed unless, prior to the end of the period, planning permission shall have been granted for their retention for a further period.

Reason: To enable the planning authority to review the operation of the grid storage facility in the light of the circumstances then prevailing.

3. For the avoidance of doubt, the vehicular access arrangement that was proposed under the original planning application received by the planning authority on the 06th day of April 2018 and later indicated as Option 3 in the further information received by the planning authority on 03th day of July 2018, shall be implemented in its entirety, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

4. Water supply and drainage arrangements, including the disposal of surface water, shall comply with the requirements of Irish Water and the planning authority for such works and services as appropriate.

Reason: In the interest of public health and to ensure a proper standard of development.

5. The developer shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority in relation to the provision of adequate sightlines at the site entrance off the R163.

Reason: In the interest of traffic safety.

6. The storage structures shall be dark green in colour. The external walls of the proposed substation and switch room shall be finished in a neutral colour such as light grey or off-white; the roof shall be of black tiles.

Reason: In the interest of the visual amenity of the area.

7. The developer shall comply with the following technical requirements:
 - a. No artificial lighting shall be installed or operated on site unless authorised by a prior grant of planning permission.
 - b. CCTV cameras shall be fixed and angled to face into the site and shall not be directed towards adjoining property or the road.
 - c. 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.
 - d. Cables within the site shall be located underground.

Reason: In the interest of clarity, of visual and residential amenity, traffic safety, and to allow wildlife to continue to have access to and through the site.

8. The developer shall comply with the following landscaping requirements:
- a. Existing field boundaries shall be retained and new planting undertaken.
 - b. Revised drawings, indicating proposed landscaping of the earth berms which shall include native species trees and hedgerows, shall be submitted for written agreement of the Planning Authority prior to commencement of the development.
 - c. 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.

Reason: In the interest of biodiversity, the visual amenities of the area, and the amenities of dwellings in the vicinity.

9. The developer shall comply with the following restoration requirements:
- a. Prior to commencement of development, a detailed restoration plan, including a timescale for its implementation, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority.
 - b. On full or partial decommissioning of the grid energy storage facility, or if the facility ceases operation for a period of more than one year, the site shall be restored and structures removed in accordance with the said plan within three months of decommissioning/cessation, to the written satisfaction of the planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory reinstatement of the site on full or partial cessation of the proposed development.

10. The developer shall comply with the following archaeological requirements:

- (a) Pre-development archaeological testing shall be undertaken by a suitably qualified archaeologist, licensed under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. No sub-surface work shall be undertaken in the absence of the archaeologist without his/her written consent.
- (b) A report, containing the results of the assessment, shall be submitted to the planning authority and, arising from this assessment, the developer shall agree in writing with the planning authority details regarding any further archaeological requirements (including, if necessary, archaeological excavation) prior to commencement of construction works. A copy of the report shall be submitted to the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.
- (c) The planning authority and the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs shall be notified in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of any site operation (including hydrological and geotechnical investigations) relating to the proposed development.

In default of agreement on any of these requirements, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála for determination.

Reason: In order to conserve the archaeological heritage of the area and to secure the preservation (in-situ or by record) and protection of any archaeological remains that may exist within the site.

12. 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.

Reason: To protect the residential amenities of property in the vicinity.

13. 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 a traffic management plan, intended construction practice for the development, including hours of working, noise management measures and off-site disposal of construction/demolition waste.
Reason: In the interests of public safety and residential amenity.

14. 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. The application of any indexation required by this condition 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.

Reason: 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.

Karla Mc Bride
Senior Planning Inspector
07th March 2019