



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

ABP-315485-23

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| Development | Demolition of LRP Station (Previously approved ABP ref PL14.125540). Construct and operate and electricity grid services consisting: battery storage system (BESS) and a synchronous condenser (Sync Con). EIAR and NIS accompany application. |
| Location | Aughamore and Lanesborough, Co. Longford |
| Planning Authority | Longford County Council |
| Planning Authority Reg. Ref. | 2275 |
| Applicants | Electricity Supply Board |
| Type of Application | Permission |
| Planning Authority Decision | Grant Permission |
| Type of Appeal | Third Party |
| Appellant | Liam Kelly |
| Inspector | Dolores McCague |

1.0 Background to Addendum Report

- 1.1.1. This addendum report is required, in response of the Board Direction of 12th September 2023, to provide a planning assessment which identifies and addresses the relevant national regional and local policy which applies, as referenced in the planning report submitted with the application documentation, and any relevant updates in statutory policy since.

2.0 Legal & Policy Context

2.1. National Policy

2.2. National Planning Framework (NPF), 2018-2040

- 2.2.1. This plan sets out a strategic national planning framework for the country. It recognises the need to move toward a low carbon and climate resilient society, 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.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) National Strategic Outcome 8 - Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society, includes:

New energy systems and transmission grids will be necessary for a more distributed, more renewables focused energy generation system, harnessing both the considerable on-shore and off-shore potential from energy sources such as wind, wave and solar and connecting the richest sources of that energy. State-owned commercial enterprises are significant players in the energy market, which is subject to an EU regulatory framework. Promotion of renewable energy is supported by policy in the form of a public service obligation levy.

The diversification of our energy production systems away from fossil fuels and towards green energy such as wind, wave, solar and biomass, together with smart energy systems and the conversion of the built environment into both generator/consumer of energy and the electrification of transport fleets will require the progressive and strategic development of a different form of energy grid.

Outcomes include - reinforce the distribution and transmission network to facilitate planned growth and distribution of a more renewables focused source of energy across the major demand centres.

2.3. National Development Plan, 2021-2030

2.3.1. This plan underpins the NPF and sets a framework for investment priorities.

2.4. National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP), 2021-2030

2.4.1. This Plan outlines Ireland's energy and climate policies in detail for the period from 2021 to 2030 and looks onwards to 2050. The NECP is a consolidated plan which brings together energy and climate planning into a single process. It envisages a target of at least 55% renewable energy in electricity by 2030.

2.5. Climate Action Plan, 2023

2.5.1. This plan seeks to tackle climate breakdown and it commits Ireland to a legally binding target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, an emissions reduction of 75%, and up to 80% of electricity demand to be from renewables by 2030. Large scale deployment of renewables, both onshore and offshore, will be critical to decarbonising the power sector as well as enabling the electrification of other technologies.

2.6. Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act, 2021

2.6.1. This establishes a framework to develop the transition towards a low carbon economy.

2.6.2. Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015

2.6.3. Section 15 requires a relevant body to have regard to the approved national mitigation plan, adaptation framework and sectoral adaptation plans, national transition objectives, and the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State.

2.7. Regional Policy

- 2.7.1. The Regional Economic & Spatial Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern, & Midlands Region 2019-2031 seeks to facilitate the sustainable development of additional electricity generation capacity throughout the region and to support the sustainable expansion of the transmission network. The Regional Authority seeks to ensure that future strategies and plans for the development of renewable energy, and associated infrastructure, will promote the development of renewable energy resources in a sustainable manner.

The document has three key themes, one of which is specifically targeted at Climate Action and includes six connected outcomes including: '4. Support the transition to low carbon and clean energy'.

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RPO 10.19: Support roll-out of the Smart Grids and Smart Cities Action Plan enabling new connections, grid balancing, energy management and micro grid development.

2.8. Other Policy Documents

EU Energy Directives and Roadmaps and associated national targets for renewable energy by sector.

Strategy for Renewable Energy 2012-2020

Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future, DCENR, 2015-2030

Renewable Energy Policy and Development Framework. DCENR, 2016

2.9. Development Plan

- 2.9.1. Longford County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 is the operative plan.

Chapter 3 addresses climate change, noting the National Adaptation Framework (NAF 2018), the Climate Action Plan 2019, and the Climate Action Charter 2019. It

refers to the National Planning Framework (NPF) where the role of the planning system in facilitating mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change while ensuring that sustainable infrastructure networks build resilience to climate change are set out. National Strategic Outcome (NSO) no. 8 is quoted.

The Midlands Just Transition Fund 2019, is referred to, including €6m carbon tax funding and a €5m contribution from the ESB, in recognition of the reliance on peat powered electric generation plants within the Midlands; which includes the peat generated power station at Lanesborough. The accelerated exit from peat will mean that at least 1.25 million tonnes of carbon will be saved each year and emissions reduced.

Policy Objectives

Support the implementation and achievement of European, national, regional and local objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation.

Energy Network Policy Objectives - The Council will continue to support the infrastructural renewal and development of electricity.

CPO 5.131 - Support and promote the sustainable improvement and expansion of the electricity transmission and distribution network that supply the County, subject to landscape, residential, amenity, environmental and other planning considerations.

CPO 5.133 - Support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity and gas supplies, and associated networks, to serve the existing and future needs of the county and facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects that might be brought forward in the lifetime of this Strategy, including the delivery of the necessary integration of transmission network requirements to facilitate linkages of renewable energy proposals to the electricity and gas transmission grid in a sustainable and timely manner subject to appropriate environmental assessment and planning merits.

CPO 5.136 - Support the development, reinforcement, renewal and expansion of the electricity transmission and distribution grid, including the development of new lines overhead lines, underground cables, pylons and substations as required to provide for the future physical and economic development of County Longford.

Renewable Energy Policy Objectives -

CPO 5.146 - Support and facilitate the development of secure, appropriately-scaled energy storage facilities at suitable locations throughout the county.

Volume 2 includes a settlement plan for Lanesborough: zoning Industrial / Alternative Energy -

To primarily provide for industrial/workshop, warehouse and commercial or business development including compatible uses such as offices and distribution and to allow for the expansion of existing energy infrastructure.

To facilitate the transition from peat burning to renewable energy sources, the zoning also provides for the expansion of green and alternative energy production facilities including biomass/biofuels, solar, wind and geothermal sourced energies.

Manufacturing, servicing and research and development linked activities will also be considered.

3.0 **Assessment**

- 3.1.1. The proposed development is in accordance with the hierarchy of policies from national to local and is acceptable in principle.

Planning Inspector

26 September 2023

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Climate Action Plan, 2023, extracts.

Appendix 2 National Framework Plan, 2018-2040, extracts.

Appendix 3 Regional Economic & Spatial Strategy for the Eastern, & Midlands Region 2019-2031, extracts.

Appendix 4 Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, extracts.