Inspector's Report
ACP-324377-26

Development	Request to alter the terms of the already permitted 110kV substation (ABP-322690-25), increasing from a 2-bay to a 4-bay configuration
Location	Grangeford Old and Friarstown, County Carlow
Applicant	PRT Solar Limited
Type of Application	Section 146B – request to alter development approved under section 182A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.
Date of Site Inspection	8th October 2026
Inspector	Alaine Clarke

1.0 Introduction

1.1. By Order dated 19th December 2025, the Commission under ref. ABP-322690-25, granted permission under section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, to PRT Solar Limited for approval for a 110kV substation and 110Kv underground grid connection c. 8km in length between the proposed substation and the existing Kellistown 220Kv substation in Co. Carlow. Permission was granted subject to 14 no. conditions.

1.2. Malone O'Regan Environmental submitted this request on behalf of PRT Solar Limited pursuant to section 146B of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended, for alterations to ABP-322690-25. The proposed alterations to the permitted scheme are limited to the substation compound element of the permitted substation and grid connection development.

1.3. The permitted electricity substation and underground grid connection are to serve a permitted solar farm, Grangeford Solar Farm, permitted by Carlow County Council under reg. no. 23/60297.

2.0 Legislative Basis

2.1. Section 146B(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (the Act), provides that, subject to subsections (2) to (8) and to section 146C, upon request of any person who is carrying out or intending to carry out a strategic infrastructure development, the Commission may alter the terms of the development the subject of planning permission, approval or other consent granted.

2.2. Under sub-section 2(a), as soon as practicable after making such a request, the Commission is required to make a decision as to whether the making of the development would constitute a material alteration to the development concerned.

2.3. Under sub-section (2)(b), before making its decision under sub-section 146B (2), the Commission may invite submissions as it considers appropriate and is required to have regard to any submission made to it on foot of the invitation.

2.4. Under sub-section (3)(a), if the Commission decide that the making of the alteration would not constitute a material alteration, it is required to alter the planning

permission/approval/consent accordingly and to notify the requester and the planning authority of the alteration.

2.5. Under subsection (3)(b), if the Commission decide that the making of the alteration would constitute the making of a material alteration, the Commission is required to:

- Request the information specified in Schedule 7A, unless it or an EIAR has already been provided by the requester (sub-section (3)(b)(i)). This information is required to be accompanied by any further relevant information on the characteristics of the alteration and its likely significant effects on the environment including, where relevant, how environmental effects pertaining to EU legislation other than the EIA Directive have been taken into account (sub-section (3A)) and can include mitigation measures (sub-section (3B)).
- Following receipt of such information, determine whether to make the alteration, make an alteration of the terms of the development which differs from the proposed alteration (subject to it not representing a more significant alteration), or refuse to make the alteration (sub-section (3)(b)(ii)).

2.6. Under subsection (4), before making a determination under sub-section (3)(b)(ii), the Commission is required to determine whether the extent and character of the alteration being requested, or being considered by the Commission, would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

2.7. Under subsection (5), if the Commission determine that no significant environmental effects will arise, they proceed to make a determination under subsection (3)(b)(ii). If the Commission determines that significant effects will arise, the provisions of section 146C apply. These provisions relate to the preparation of an environmental impact assessment report.

2.8. Under subsection (7)(a), in making their determination, the Commission is required to have regard to:

- The criteria for the purposes of determining which classes of development are likely to have significant effects on the environment set out in any regulations made under section 176,
- The criteria set out in Schedule 7 to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001,

- The Schedule 7A submitted by the requester,
- The further relevant information, if any, referred to in subsection (3A) and the description, if any, referred to in subsection (3B) (summarised above),
- The available results, where relevant, of preliminary verifications or assessments of the effects on the environment carried out pursuant to European Union legislation other than the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, and
- Whether the development is situated in or would have potential to impact on a European site, or a recognised or protected area of natural heritage.

2.9. Under subsection (7)(b), the Commission is required to include in its determination, the main reasons and considerations, with reference to the relevant criteria listed in Schedule 7 to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, on which the determination is based.

2.10. Under subsection (8)(a) before making a determination under subsection (3)(b)(ii) or (4) the Commission is required to require the requester to make information about the alteration available for inspection, notify appropriate persons that the information is available and invite submissions or observations from these persons. Further under subsection 8(b) the Commission is required to have regard to these submissions in its determination.

3.0 Planning History

- ABP-322690-25: Permission granted for a 110kV electrical substation and grid connection to Kellistown substation.
- ABP-319470-24: The Commission decided that the proposed 110kV substation and underground cable development falls within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.
- Carlow Co. Co. ref. 23/60297: Permission granted for a ca. 91ha solar farm and 38kV substation and associated development. A NIS was submitted as additional information.

4.0 Background to the Proposed Alterations

4.1. The basis for the change, according to the application documentation, is to meet technical specification requirements of EirGrid, to facilitate future expansion of the electricity network. This alteration is required "to accommodate increased grid capacity demands arsing from other renewable energy development permitted within the vicinity of the site, while overall optimising the necessary infrastructure required."

5.0 Scope of Request

5.1. The requested alterations relate to the substation element of the permitted development are detailed in the cover letter accompanying the application and are set out below.

5.2. The proposed changes are:

- Two additional 110kV bays, increasing the permitted SID development from a 2-bay configuration to a 4-bay configuration.

6.0 Applicant's Case

6.1. The requester considers that the alteration will be broadly consistent with the design of the permitted substation, with the increase in the number of 110kV bays representing a modest amendment to the permitted design. The overall layout, design approach and operational characteristics will remain substantially unchanged. The applicant's case is summarised as follows:

- The proposed alteration is not material;
- There will be no change to the red line boundary of the permitted development;
- There are no changes required to the UGC element of the permitted development.

6.2. The application for amendments is accompanied by a number of documents:

- Letter of Consent from the landowner
- Planning Application drawings

- Addendum NIS
- Addendum Environmental Report.

AA Screening

The applicant has submitted an updated AA Screening and NIS addendum having regard to the entirety of the overall development, being the solar farm and grid connection. The applicant elects to progress to an addendum NIS on the basis of the proposed grid connection HDD crossings of the Aghalona River, Roscat River and Burren River and a potential indirect hydrological connection to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC. In addition, a potential indirect hydrological connection was identified between the permitted solar development and the River Barrow and River Nore SAC (ca. 12km downstream) via the Ardnehue River (ca. 560m to the west of the site), which is a tributary of the Burren River which discharges to the River Barrow.

NIS Addendum

The NIS Addendum states that the conclusions of the original NIS remain unchanged (no adverse effects on the integrity of any European designated site) as the proposed development will not introduce any new, additional or altered pathways for impacts on water quality or the qualifying interests of the River Barrow and River Nore.

7.0 Public Consultation

7.1. In accordance with Section 146B(2)(a) and (b), before the Commission makes a decision as to whether the making of the alteration to which the request relates would constitute the making of a material alteration of the terms of the development concerned it may invite submissions in relation to the matter. I am of the opinion given the minor nature of the proposed alterations that submissions are not necessary.

8.0 Assessment

8.1. Consideration of Materiality

8.1.1. The first consideration in relation to this request to alter the terms of the development approved under ref. ABP-322690-25 is to determine if the alteration would constitute the making of a material alteration of the terms of the approved substation and underground grid connection development.

8.1.2. The permitted scheme comprises the development of a substation and an underground grid connection, c. 8km in length, to connect a permitted solar farm to the Kellistown substation. The proposed amendments relate to the substation element only and I note the overall development works area /site of the substation remains unchanged. The function of the substation will remain unchanged i.e. to transport renewable energy generated by permitted adjacent solar farm to the national grid.

8.1.3. The specific alterations to the scheme are:

- Two additional 110kV bays, increasing the permitted SID development from a 2-bay configuration to a 4-bay configuration.

8.1.4. I have reviewed the drawings and accompanying documents submitted with the application and in my opinion, the proposed alterations are relatively minor in nature based on the following:

- The design changes are localised within the permitted substation only.
- The nature of alterations proposed.
- There are no alterations to the site boundary.

8.1.5. I consider (below) the materiality of alterations having regard to the environmental sensitivities and potential effects of the proposed alterations. The environmental sensitives in this instance are, I consider, residential amenity arising from noise impacts. An ambient noise survey was undertaken in April 2026 and informs the assessment. One less noise monitoring location than that which informed the permitted scheme was used, however, I am satisfied that that the recordings used in 2026 are representative of the local environment. I note that the noise levels from the

baseline monitoring conducted in 2026 were consistent with the noise levels measured in 2022. In respect of construction works, the proposed alterations are not expected to result in any substantial changes to noise source emissions. In respect of operational noise, noise modelling was run on updated software. All predicted site-specific values were below daytime and night-time limits. The predicted site-specific levels were lower than those presented in the original environmental report due to “a more accurate and updated noise model”. All noise sensitive receptors will remain considerably below the typical limits for daytime (55dB LAEq,T) and night-time (45dB LAEq,T). I am satisfied that the proposed alterations will have no significant effects on the noise environment.

8.1.6. I note the applicant has submitted an updated section on landscape and visual effects of the Environmental Report. An updated set of photomontages were submitted and accompany the application. I concur with the applicant that the changes are indiscernible and landscape and visual effects remain as assessed in the original application.

8.1.7. The applicant has also submitted updated sections on cultural heritage and traffic of the Environmental Report, and I note that the conclusions of the original Report remain valid in this regard.

8.2. **EIA Screening**

8.2.1. I note that an EIA was not undertaken in respect of the permitted substation and underground connection, ABP 322690-25 refers, as no element of the permitted development fell into a class of development contained in Schedule 5, Parts 1 or 2. I am satisfied that the proposed amendment development does not therefore constitute a development which requires a mandatory EIA, nor screening for EIA. An EIA Pre-screening Form is attached as Appendix 1.

8.3. **Conclusion on Materiality**

8.3.1. I consider that the alterations sought do not constitute the making of a material alteration of the permitted development and would not give rise to significant environmental effects beyond those already considered in the Commission’s assessment of ABP 322690-25.

8.4. Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

8.4.1. I have considered the proposed alteration to permitted '110kV electrical substation and associated 110kV infrastructure required to connect a solar farm to the existing Kellistown substation' in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. The proposed alteration relates to the substation element only and comprises two additional 110kV bays, increasing the permitted SID development from a 2-bay configuration to a 4-bay configuration.

8.5. The permitted110kV Substation will be located on a site that is circa 1.7 hectares in size within the townlands of Friarstown and Grangeford Old. The site and surrounding area are primarily agricultural in nature. The Slaney River Valley Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000781) lies approximately 2.6km to the east with the River Barrow and River Nore Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002162) c. 8.5km to the west to the substation site. There is no hydrological connection from the substation site to either of these European sites. The parent permission, ABP 322690-25, was screened in for Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2) on the basis of grid connection works proximate to the Aghalona River, Roscat River and Burren River which are hydrologically connected to the River Barrow and the River Barrow and River Nore SAC. The works in the vicinity of these rivers relate to the grid connection only and the alterations the subject of this 146B application are confined to the substation site.

8.6. Notwithstanding the applicant's AA Screening Report and NIS Addendum, which I detail in section 6.0 of this Inspector's Report, having considered the nature, scale and location of the proposed alterations, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it could not have any effect on a European Site.

The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The small scale and nature of the development;
- The location of the proposed alterations to the permitted substation, distant from European Sites and the absence of ecological pathways of the substation site within which the alterations are proposed to any European Site.

8.6.1. I conclude, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development would not have a likely significant effect on any European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and therefore Appropriate Assessment (under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000) is not required.

9.0 Recommendation

I recommend that the Commission decides that (a) the making of the alterations subject of this request do not constitute the making of a material alteration to the terms of the development as granted permission under ABP-322690-25 and that the permitted development shall be altered in accordance with the plans and particulars received by An Coimisiún Pleanála on 25th June 2026, and (b) the proposed modifications will not give rise to significant environmental effects or significant effects on the integrity of any European site, for the reasons stated below.

DRAFT ORDER

REQUEST received by An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 25th June, 2026 from Malone O'Regan Environmental, Unit 3, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18 on behalf of PRT Solar Limited under section 146B of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, to make alterations to the permitted 110kV substation and underground grid connection, a strategic infrastructure development the subject of a permission granted under An Coimisiún Pleanála reference number ABP-322690-25.

WHEREAS the Commission made a decision to grant permission, subject to conditions, for the above-mentioned development by order dated 19th December 2025, AND WHEREAS the Commission has received a request to alter the terms of the development, the subject of the permission,

AND WHEREAS the proposed alteration is described as follows:

- Two additional 110kV bays, increasing the permitted SID development from a substation with 2-bay configuration to a 4-bay configuration

AND WHEREAS having regard to the issues involved, the Commission decided, in accordance with section 146B(2)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as

amended, not to invite submissions or observations from the public in relation to the matter,

AND WHEREAS the Commission decided, in accordance with section 146B(2)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that the proposed alterations would not result in the making of a material alteration to the terms of the development, the subject of the approval,

AND WHEREAS having considered all of the documents on file and the Inspector's report, the Commission considered that the making of the proposed alteration would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment or on any European Site,

NOW THEREFORE in accordance with section 146B(3)(a) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, the Commission hereby alters the above mentioned development so that the permitted development shall be altered, in accordance with the plans and particulars received by An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 25th June, 2026 for the reasons and considerations set out below.

MATTERS CONSIDERED

In making its decision, the Commission had regard to those matters to which, by virtue of the Planning and Development Acts and Regulations made thereunder, it was required to have regard.

REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

In coming to its decision, the Commission had regard to the following:

(i) the limited nature and scale of the alterations,

(ii) the documentation on file,

(iii) the report of the Inspector.

The Commission was satisfied that the information before it was adequate to undertake a screening for appropriate assessment in respect of the proposed alteration.

Appropriate Assessment - Screening

In conducting a screening exercise for appropriate assessment, the Commission considered the nature, scale and context of the proposed alteration, the documentation on file including the AA Screening Report and NIS Addendum submitted with the application and the assessment of the Inspector in relation to the potential for effects on European Sites. In undertaking the screening exercise, the Commission accepted the analysis and conclusions of the Inspector. The Commission concluded that, by itself and in combination with other development in the vicinity, the proposed alteration would not be likely to have significant effects on any other European Site in view of their conservation objectives. A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (and submission of an NIS) is not, therefore, required. In reaching this conclusion, the Commission took no account of mitigation measures intending to avoid or reduce the potentially harmful effects of the development on any European site.

Conclusions on Proper Planning and Sustainable Development

Having regard to:

- the nature and details of the parent permission, ABP-322690-25,
- the limited nature and scale of the alterations,
- the location of the proposed alterations, within the footprint of the existing substation site,
- the limited visibility of the proposed alterations outside the confines of the site,
- the examination of the environmental impact, including in relation to European Sites, carried out in the course of that application,
- the absence of any significant new or additional environmental impacts arising as a result of the proposed alterations, and
- the report of the Commission's inspector, which is adopted,

The Commission concluded that the making of the proposed alteration would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has

influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.

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Alaine Clarke

Senior Planning Inspector

27th October 2026

Appendix 1 EIA Pre-Screening

Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	**324377-26**
Proposed Development Summary	Two additional 110kV bays, increasing the permitted SID development from a 2-bay configuration to a 4-bay configuration which relates to a permitted development as follows: 110kV electrical substation and associated 110kV infrastructure (8km underground cable) required to connect a solar farm to the existing Kellistown substation.
Development Address	Located within the townlands of Friarstown, Grangeford Old, Grangeford, Moanalow, Glenoge, Rathnashannagh, Inchisland Or Moatalusha, Rathtoe, Kellistown East, Ballycurragh and Kellistown West, County Carlow
	In all cases check box /or leave blank
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA? (For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	☒ Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2. ☐ No, No further action required.
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
☐ Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. **EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.**	State the Class here
☒ No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?	

☒ No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. **No Screening required.**	*The proposed development is not a class for the purposes of EIA as per the classes of development set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended (or Part V of the 1994 Roads Regulations). No mandatory requirement for EIA therefore arises and there is also no requirement for a screening determination. Refer to Form 1 in Appendix 1 of report.*
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. **EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required**	**n/a**
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. **Preliminary examination required. (Form 2)** **OR** **If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)**	**n/a**

4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
Yes ☐	
No ☒	**Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)**