

Tushaline Sahseetharan

From: LAPS
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2026 11:44 AM
To: SIDS; Niamh Hickey
Subject: FW: SID application ACP-324417-26, Westmeath
Attachments: SID-WM-2026-032.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Categories: Niamh

From: Simon Dolan (Housing) <Simon.Dolan@npws.gov.ie>
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2026 12:58 PM
To: LAPS <laps@pleanala.ie>
Subject: SID application ACP-324417-26, Westmeath

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A chara,

Attached please find the Archaeological & Nature Conservation observations.

Regards,



Simon Dolan

An Roinn Tithíochta, Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Executive Officer
Aonad na nIarratas ar Fhorbairt
Development Applications Unit
Oifigí an Rialtais
Government Offices
Bóthar an Bhaile Nua, Loch Garman, Contae Loch Garman, Y35 AP90
Newtown Road, Wexford, County Wexford, Y35 AP90



Your Ref: ACP-324417-26

Our Ref: SID-WM-2026-032

(Please quote in all related correspondence)

21 August 2026

The Secretary
An Comisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

Via email to laps@pleanala.ie

Re: Notification under the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.

Proposed Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID): Construction of a 220kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) substation, associated high voltage lines (HV), electric plant, and ancillary site development works in the townlands of Gneevebane, Farthingstown, Castlelost, Kiltotan & Collinstown, Co. Westmeath.

A chara

I refer to correspondence received in connection with the above.

Outlined below are heritage-related observations/recommendations coordinated by the Development Applications Unit under the stated headings

Archaeology

It is noted that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) submitted as part of the planning application incorporates a desk-based Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) which was carried out in relation to the proposed development by ACSU Ltd. (EIAR Chapter 14; date June 2026). It is noted that the EIAR was informed by a programme of Advance Archaeological Geophysical Survey as well as a walkover survey.

It is noted that the proposed development site (PDS) contains six Recorded Monuments: WM033-066----: Ringfort – rath, WM033-061----: Ringfort – rath, WM033-068----: Ringfort – unclassified, WM033-067----: Ringfort – rath, WM033-069----: Ringfort – rath and WM033-046----: Ringfort – unclassified all of which are subject to statutory protection in the Record of Monuments and Places, established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. It is noted that the proposed mitigation measures include the preservation in situ of specified archaeological sites.



The EIAR also acknowledges there is a potential that previously unknown sub-surface archaeological features or deposits may be present within the proposed development site (PDS). If present, these would be directly impacted by the proposed development. This Department advises that advance archaeological test excavation of all greenfield areas of the PDS should be carried out in advance of any development to determine if previously unknown sub-surface archaeological features or deposits are present. If such material is present, then additional mitigation measures to ensure the preservation in situ or preservation by record (i.e. full archaeological excavation) of such discoveries will be necessary. It is advised that this can be addressed by the inclusion of an appropriate condition if the development is permitted.

Therefore, the Department advises that the following should be included as a condition of any grant of permission. Note these recommended conditions align with Sample Conditions C3, C5, C6 and C7 as set out in *OPR Practice Note PN03: Planning Conditions* (October 2022), with appropriate site-specific additions/adaptations based on the particular characteristics of this development and informed by the findings of the EIAR.

Archaeological Requirements:

1. All mitigation measures in relation to archaeology and cultural heritage as set out in Chapter 14 of the EIAR (June 2026) shall be implemented in full, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the conditions of this Order.
2. The developer shall engage a suitably qualified archaeologist (licensed under the National Monuments Acts) to carry out a pre-development Archaeological Test Excavation for all areas of proposed ground disturbance and to submit an archaeological impact assessment report for the written agreement of the planning authority, following consultation with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, in advance of any site preparation works or groundworks, including site investigation works/topsoil stripping/site clearance and/or construction works.
 - a. The archaeologist shall liaise with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to establish the appropriate scope of the Archaeological Test Excavation to adequately characterise the character and extent of any potential sub-surface archaeological material within the development site.
 - b. The report on the Archaeological Test Excavation shall include an archaeological impact statement and mitigation strategy. Where archaeological material is shown to be present, avoidance, preservation in-situ, preservation by record (archaeological excavation) and/or monitoring may be required.
 - c. Any further archaeological mitigation requirements specified by the planning authority, following consultation with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, shall be complied with by the developer.
 - d. No site preparation and/or construction works shall be carried out on site until the archaeologist's report has been submitted to and approval to proceed is agreed in writing with the planning authority.
3. A suitably qualified archaeologist shall be retained to advise on and establish appropriate Exclusion Zones around the external-most elements of vulnerable Heritage



Assets located within or in close proximity to the development site (as identified in Chapter 14 of the EIAR (June 2026) or by any subsequent investigations associated with the project).

- a. Exclusion Zones shall be fenced off or appropriately demarcated for the duration of construction works in the vicinity of the monuments. The location and extent of each Exclusion Zone and the appropriate methodology for fencing off or demarcating at each location shall be agreed in advance with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the planning authority.
 - b. No groundworks of any kind (including but not limited to advance geotechnical site investigations) and no machinery, storage of materials or any other activity related to construction will be permitted within Exclusion Zones.
4. A Conservation Management Plan for Recorded Monuments: WM033-066----: Ringfort – rath, WM033-061----: Ringfort – rath, WM033-068----: Ringfort – unclassified, WM033-067----: Ringfort – rath, WM033-069----: Ringfort – rath and WM033-046----: Ringfort – unclassified as well as the sub-circular enclosure with annexe and possible early field system identified by advance archaeological geophysical survey (Detection Device Consent 24R0163) shall be prepared, following consultation with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and submitted to the planning authority for their written agreement prior to commencement of development.
 - a. The plan shall provide for the long-term maintenance and management of these sites to ensure that preservation in situ of the specified sites can be achieved and maintained.
 - b. The plan shall be agreed in advance of the commencement of construction works to ensure that the management and coordination of all phases of construction works are consistent with the policies and procedures for the long-term protection and preservation of the specified sites.
 - c. The plan shall incorporate a landscaping plan that is sympathetic to the monuments and incorporates appropriate surface expression of the sub-surface remains.
 - d. The final Conservation Management Plan, including details of implementation, shall be submitted to the planning authority and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
5. The Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) shall include the location of any and all archaeological or cultural heritage constraints relevant to the proposed development as set out in Chapter 14 of the EIAR (June 2026) and by any subsequent archaeological investigations associated with the project. The CEMP shall clearly describe all identified likely archaeological impacts, both direct and indirect, and all mitigation measures to be employed to protect the archaeological or cultural heritage environment during all phases of site preparation and construction activity.
6. The planning authority and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage shall be furnished with a final archaeological report describing the results of all archaeological monitoring and any archaeological investigative work/excavation required, following the completion of all archaeological work on site and any necessary



post-excavation specialist analysis. All resulting and associated archaeological costs shall be borne by the developer.

Reason: To ensure the continued preservation (either *in situ* or by record) of places, caves, sites, features or other objects of archaeological interest.

Nature Conservation

The Department notes the location of the existing Castlelost 220kv GIS Substation within the context of the current SID proposal. The Department is satisfied that the effects of the proposed development on ecological receptors will not differ significantly from those previously identified and evaluated as part of the consented Red Admiral Data Centre Facility (25/60344) and taking into consideration the timeline from the issuing of consent for said development.

You are requested to send any further communications to this Department's Development Applications Unit (DAU) at manager.dau@npws.gov.ie or to the following address:

The Manager, Development Applications Unit (DAU), Government Offices, Newtown Road, Wexford, Y35 AP90

Is mise le meas,

Julie Sullivan
Assistant Principal
Development Applications Unit
Administration