

Tushaline Sahseetharan

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Sent: Friday, September 18, 2026 3:31 PM
To: SIDS; Communications
Cc: Liam Currie; Yvonne Haughey
Subject: ACP-324417-26
Attachments: SID Submission under Section 182A 18.09.2026.pdf

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A Chara,

Please see attached submission from Westmeath County Council in respect of:

Application to An Coimisiún Pleanála under Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

ACP 324417-26 – Red Admiral DC Limited.

Kind regards,

Suzanne Cooke, Staff Officer, Planning Department
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Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

Strategic Infrastructure Act 2006

Submission by Westmeath County Council in respect of:

**Application to An Coimisiún Pleanála under Section 182A of the Planning and
Development Act 2000 (as amended)**

ACP 324417-26 – Red Admiral DC Limited.

Application Details:

Applicant:	Red Admiral DC Limited, Parsons House, 56 Axis Business Park, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
Lodged	3 rd July 2026
Agent:	Halston Environmental and Planning Ltd, IHub Building, Westport Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
An Coimisiún Pleanála Reference No:	ACP-324417-26
Proposed Development (Summary):	A 220kV Independent Power Producer (IPP) Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) substation, associated high voltage lines (HV), electric plant, and ancillary site development works. The Proposed Development adjoins a proposed Data Centre facility and Decentralised Energy Resource (DER) (Westmeath County Council (WCC) Planning Application Number 25/60344). The proposed development will connect to the existing and adjacent electricity transmission system (Castlelost 220kV GIS substation) and the Data Centre facility and DER. The development is described as follows: (i) a new two-storey IPP 220kV GIS substation building containing battery room, WC, messroom, workshop, generator room, stair

- cores, cable pits, storeroom, and switchgear rooms within a palisade fenced compound;
 - (ii) all HV circuits which will connect the proposed IPP 220kV GIS substation to the existing Castlelost 220kV GIS substation and to Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) compounds and electric plant associated with the Decentralised Energy Resource (DER) (WCC Planning Application Number 25/60344); including a solar farm, battery energy storage system (BESS) and a solid oxide fuel cell (SOFC);
 - (iii) a 36.0m high communications tower;
 - (iv) temporary construction compounds;
 - (v) a main entrance connecting to the R446 public road,
 - (vi) demolition and removal of existing derelict dwellings, outhouses and agricultural sheds;
 - (vii) all ancillary development including new internal roads, security fencing and gates, car parking, lighting, utilities, lightning protection masts, underground services, landscaping and associated engineering works to provide for the connection of site services and foul and surface water management and drainage.
- 10-year planning permission sought.
 - Once commissioned, the project will be connected to the national electricity transmission system operated by EirGrid. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

Site Location:

Townlands of Gneevebane, Farthingstown, Castlelost, Kiltotan and Collinstown, Rochfortbridge, Co. Westmeath. The lands are located between the M6 Motorway and R446 public road, west of Rochfortbridge.

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1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report has been prepared by Westmeath County Council in response to correspondence received from An Coimisiún Pleanála regarding a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) application submitted by Red Admiral DC Limited under Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The correspondence issued by An Coimisiún Pleanála invited the Planning Authority to make a submission in relation to the proposed development.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Planning Authority's assessment of the proposed development having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the provisions of the Westmeath County Development Plan, relevant national, regional and local planning policy, and all other material planning considerations. The report sets out the Planning Authority's observations and evaluation of the proposal across the relevant planning disciplines, including land use planning, transportation, engineering, environmental considerations, architectural heritage, archaeology and other matters considered pertinent to the determination of the application.

This submission has been prepared following a review of the documentation lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála by Red Admiral DC Limited, including the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), plans and particulars, and all supporting technical documentation accompanying the application. The report identifies matters arising from the Planning Authority's assessment and provides recommendations for the consideration of An Coimisiún Pleanála in its determination of the application.

As confirmed in the correspondence received from An Coimisiún Pleanála dated 10 July 2026, the subject application has been made directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála under Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Accordingly, An Coimisiún Pleanála is the decision-making authority in respect of the application. The statutory procedures relating to the preparation and submission of a Chief Executive's Report to the elected members of the Planning Authority do not apply in this instance. Consequently, there is no statutory requirement for the consideration of this report by the elected members of Westmeath County Council prior to the making of a submission to An Coimisiún Pleanála.

The observations and recommendations contained herein represent the considered views of Westmeath County Council in its role as Planning Authority for the area and are intended to assist An Coimisiún Pleanála in its assessment of the proposed Strategic Infrastructure Development application.

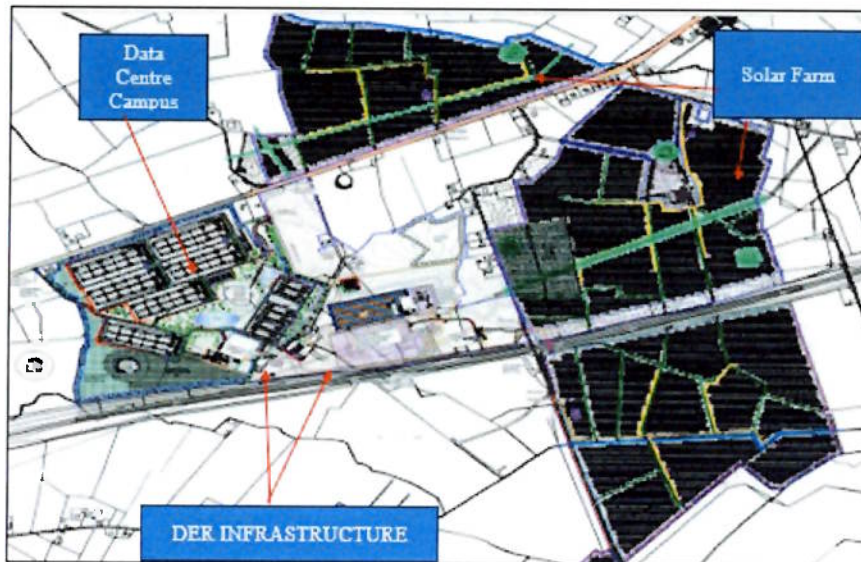
2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development for which permission under Section 182A is being sought constitutes a 220kV Independent Power Producer (IPP) Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) substation, associated high voltage lines (HV), electric plant, and ancillary site development works. The development which is the subject matter of this application is described as follows:

- i. a new two-storey IPP 220kV GIS substation building containing battery room, WC, messroom, workshop, generator room, stair cores, cable pits, storeroom, and switchgear rooms within a palisade fenced compound;
- ii. all HV circuits which will connect the proposed IPP 220kV GIS substation to the existing Castlelost 220kV GIS substation and to Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) compounds and electric plant associated with the Decentralised Energy Resource (DER) (WCC Planning Application Number 25/60344); including a solar farm, battery energy storage system (BESS) and a solid oxide fuel cell (SOFC);
- iii. a 36.0m high communications tower;
- iv. temporary construction compounds;
- v. a main entrance connecting to the R446 public road,
- vi. demolition and removal of existing derelict dwellings, outhouses and agricultural sheds;
- vii. all ancillary development including new internal roads, security fencing and gates, car parking, lighting, utilities, lightning protection masts, underground services, landscaping and associated engineering works to provide for the connection of site services and foul and surface water management and drainage.
- viii. 10-year planning permission sought.
- ix. Once commissioned, the project will be connected to the national electricity transmission system operated by EirGrid. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

The proposed development adjoins a proposed Data Centre facility and Decentralised Energy Resource (DER) development, granted permission by Westmeath County Council under Planning Application Ref. No. 25/60344, and is intended to facilitate the connection of those developments to the national electricity transmission network through the existing adjacent Castlelost 220kV GIS Substation. The proposed development would facilitate the transmission of electricity between the national grid and the permitted Data Centre and DER development and accordingly forms an integral component of the overall energy infrastructure associated with the wider development lands. The wider development comprises a Data Centre campus consisting of six two-storey buildings; Decentralised Energy Resources (DER), including a Fuel Cell installation, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated 220kV infrastructure located adjacent to the existing Castlelost FlexGen Power Plant and GIS Substation; and a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm extending across lands north and south of the M6 Motorway and north of the R446..

Map 1: Proposed Site layout



3. SITE LOCATION

The proposed development is located within an overall landholding of c.243 hectares across the townlands of Gneevebane, Oldtown, Farthingstown, Castlelost, Kiltotan, and Collinstown, approximately 2 km southwest of Rochfortbridge and 3.5 km northeast of Tyrrellspass.

The M6 Motorway forms the southern boundary of the DC and DER facilities, while the R446 defines the northern boundary. The site is generally gently undulating, ranging from approximately 90 m to 120 m above ordnance datum, with Croghan Hill (234 m) located about 6.3 km southeast.

The surrounding landscape consists of unzoned agricultural fields bounded by hedgerows and fencing. The site is adjacent to the recently permitted Castlelost Flexgen Plant, a 275 MW open-cycle gas turbine (OCGT) power station with a large BESS, designed to provide backup electricity to the national grid. An existing 220 kV overhead transmission line crosses the site.

Access to the data centre and DER facilities will be via the existing private access road from the R446, with an emergency access provided but normally closed. The solar farm will be served by three separate access points from surrounding local roads. Environmentally, the site is not within or immediately adjacent to any European designated site, although seven European Sites lie within its zone of influence. Numerous Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed NHAs, mainly associated with bogs and eskers, are located within 15 km. The site lies within the Castlejordan River and Mongagh River catchments, with several drainage ditches crossing the lands. The Mongagh River ultimately drains into the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC/SPA approximately 30 km downstream.



Map 2: Site Location Map – Development Lands

4. RELEVANT POLICY

International Energy Policy Framework

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Paris Agreement

Ireland is a signatory to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, which provides the international framework for addressing climate change. The Paris Agreement, ratified by Ireland and the European Union in 2016, commits Parties to holding the increase in global average temperatures to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5°C.

The Agreement has informed a broad range of European and national climate and energy policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing renewable energy generation and facilitating the transition to a climate-neutral economy.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Ireland has adopted the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 17 SDGs establish a framework for sustainable economic, social and environmental development. In the context of the proposed development, particular relevance attaches to Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and Goal 13 (Climate Action).

European Climate Policy

European climate policy seeks to achieve a climate-neutral economy by 2050 through a range of legislative and policy measures including the European Climate Law, the European Green Deal and the Fit for 55 legislative package. These measures seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase renewable energy generation, improve energy efficiency and strengthen energy security across Member States.

The transition to a low-carbon economy requires significant investment in electricity transmission, distribution and storage infrastructure and recognises the importance of grid reinforcement and modernisation to support renewable energy integration and security of electricity supply.

National Policy

Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 establishes a legally binding framework for Ireland's transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral economy by 2050. The Act provides for a system of carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings and commits the State to pursuing a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 51% by 2030 compared with 2018 levels.

Climate Action Plan 2025

The Climate Action Plan 2025 sets out the Government's strategy for achieving Ireland's climate objectives and transitioning towards a climate-neutral economy. The Plan identifies the decarbonisation of the electricity sector as a key component in achieving national climate targets and recognises the need for continued investment in electricity infrastructure, renewable energy generation, storage technologies and grid reinforcement.

National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030

The National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) establishes Ireland's strategy for achieving EU climate and energy objectives. The Plan promotes greater renewable energy deployment, improvements in energy efficiency, increased energy security and continued investment in electricity infrastructure necessary to support economic development and the energy transition.

Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply

The Government's Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply recognises the critical importance of maintaining a secure, resilient and reliable electricity system while facilitating the transition towards greater renewable energy generation. The Statement acknowledges that additional electricity transmission infrastructure, electricity storage facilities and associated energy infrastructure will be required to support security of supply and the integration of renewable energy into the national electricity system.

The Statement further recognises that the connection of large electricity users to the national grid must be carefully planned having regard to both security of supply and national decarbonisation objectives.

National Planning Framework (NPF) 2018-2040

The National Planning Framework (NPF) constitutes the Government's high-level strategic plan for the future development of Ireland and establishes a framework for sustainable economic, social and environmental development over the period to 2040.

Having regard to the nature of the proposed development, the following National Policy Objectives are of particular relevance:

- **NPO 66** The planning system will be responsive to national environmental challenges and ensure that development occurs within environmental limits having regard to relevant environmental and climate legislation.
- **NPO 70** Promote renewable energy generation and use at appropriate locations to support the transition to a climate-neutral economy.
- **NPO 71** Support the development and upgrading of national electricity grid infrastructure, including the delivery of renewable electricity generating development.
- **NPO 73** Support the co-location of renewable technologies with complementary land uses and supporting technologies at appropriate locations.

The proposed development represents strategic electricity infrastructure intended to facilitate connection to the national electricity transmission network and therefore falls within the broader policy framework supporting electricity transmission infrastructure, energy security and renewable energy integration.

Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland's Enterprise Strategy (2022)

The Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland's Enterprise Strategy acknowledges the importance of data centres as strategic digital infrastructure while recognising the need to ensure that future development occurs in a manner consistent with national climate objectives, electricity network capacity and security of electricity supply.

The Statement emphasises the importance of renewable energy integration, energy efficiency measures, grid capacity considerations and alignment with national climate policy. Given that the proposed development is intended to facilitate the connection of an adjoining permitted Data Centre and Decentralised Energy Resource development to the national electricity transmission network, the Statement is of relevance to the assessment of the wider development context.

Other Relevant National Policy and Guidelines

The following national policy documents and guidelines are also relevant to the assessment of the proposed development:

- The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009);
- National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030;
- National Landscape Strategy for Ireland; and
- Any relevant departmental guidance relating to climate action, energy infrastructure and environmental assessment.

Regional Policy

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region seeks to support sustainable economic development, climate action, renewable energy generation and the transition to a low-carbon economy. A key strategic objective of the RSES is to support climate mitigation and adaptation measures whilst facilitating the development of strategic infrastructure necessary to support economic growth and regional competitiveness.

Regional Strategic Outcome 9 seeks to support the transition to a low-carbon and climate resilient region by pursuing climate mitigation measures and facilitating the development of a more distributed renewable energy system. Section 7.9 of the RSES recognises the need for investment in energy infrastructure and the decarbonisation of the energy sector in order to achieve national climate objectives.

The RSES also recognises the importance of digital infrastructure and associated supporting infrastructure. In this regard, Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 8.25 supports the sustainable development of ICT infrastructure and Ireland's role as a location for strategic digital infrastructure, including data centres, at appropriate locations.

Having regard to the nature of the proposal, the development of electricity transmission infrastructure capable of supporting renewable energy integration, security of electricity supply and strategic economic development is consistent with the broad objectives of the RSES.

Local Policy

Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027

Chapter 5: Economic Development and Employment

Chapter 5 seeks to maximise the economic potential of County Westmeath and support enterprise development at appropriate locations supported by strategic infrastructure. Of particular relevance to the proposed development are:

- **CPO 5.1** which seeks to maximise the sustainable economic potential of Westmeath having regard to its strategic location within the Eastern and Midland Region.
- **CPO 5.2** which seeks to facilitate economic development and employment creation throughout the County.
- **CPO 5.10** which supports enterprise development proposals where strong locational or asset-based drivers exist.
- **CPO 5.29** which recognises that certain enterprise and industrial developments may require locations outside settlements due to their scale or operational requirements and provides assessment criteria for such proposals.
- **CPO 5.35** which supports the development of the ICT sector within County Westmeath.
- **CPO 5.44** and **CPO 5.55** which support economic resilience, emerging enterprise sectors and quality employment growth.

These policies are relevant having regard to the strategic energy infrastructure role of the proposed development and its relationship with the permitted Data Centre and DER development.

Chapter 9: Rural Development

The application site is located within a rural area and therefore the rural development policies of the Development Plan are applicable. Relevant policies include:

- **CPO 9.34** which supports renewable energy initiatives as a means of sustaining and diversifying the rural economy.
- **CPO 9.35** which supports innovation, ICT-based industries and developments that contribute to climate action and sustainability objectives.
- **CPO 9.36** which supports appropriately scaled business development in rural areas where environmental sensitivities are appropriately addressed.

These policies recognise the role that strategic infrastructure can play in supporting economic activity and diversification within rural areas.

Chapter 10: Infrastructure, Renewable Energy and Climate Action

Chapter 10 contains the most relevant policy framework for the assessment of the proposed development.

Climate and Energy

The Development Plan supports the transition to a low-carbon economy and the development of energy infrastructure necessary to support climate action objectives.

Relevant policies include:

- **CPO 10.139** Support initiatives aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions through renewable energy development and energy efficiency.
- **CPO 10.140** Facilitate measures which seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support climate action objectives.
- **CPO 10.141** Promote renewable forms of energy where appropriate.

Solar Energy

Given that the wider development lands include a permitted solar photovoltaic farm, the following objectives are relevant:

- **CPO 10.149** Support Ireland's renewable energy commitments through solar development.
- **CPO 10.150** Support solar energy infrastructure including solar photovoltaic developments.
- **CPO 10.151** Establish assessment criteria including landscape, archaeology, visual impact, access and grid connectivity.

Renewable Energy

- **CPO 10.155** Support renewable energy resources and programmes in accordance with national policy.
- **CPO 10.157** Support the production of sustainable energy from renewable sources at suitable locations.

ICT and Communications Infrastructure

Having regard to the permitted Data Centre development and the proposed communications mast, the following objectives are relevant:

- **CPO 10.177** Promote high-quality ICT infrastructure.
- **CPO 10.178** Support Ireland's role as a sustainable location for ICT infrastructure including data centres.
- **CPO 10.179** Support the delivery of high-capacity communications infrastructure.

Flood Risk Management

- **CPO 10.106** requires flood risk assessment where development is located within 200 metres of a watercourse or may be subject to flood risk.

Chapter 11: Climate Action

Chapter 11 seeks to support national, regional and local climate action objectives. Of particular relevance is:

- **CPO 11.1** which supports the implementation of European, National, Regional and Local climate adaptation and mitigation objectives including the Climate Action Plan and Climate Action and Low Carbon Development legislation.

Chapter 12: Biodiversity and Natural Heritage

The application site contains hedgerows, drainage features and ecological habitats and therefore the biodiversity provisions of the Development Plan are relevant.

Relevant policies include:

- **CPO 12.4** Protection of Natura 2000 Sites.
- **CPO 12.8** Requirement for ecological assessment where impacts on European Sites may arise.
- **CPO 12.25** Protection of biodiversity and non-designated habitats.
- **CPO 12.37, 12.39 and 12.40** relating to the protection and retention of trees, woodlands and hedgerows.

Chapter 13: Landscape Character

The application site is located within Landscape Character Area 10 - Lough Ennell and South Eastern Corridor. Section 13.16 of the Development Plan states "This Character Area comprises pasture land of mixed productivity. Lough Ennell is situated to the western side of this Landscape Character Area (LCA) and is designated as an Area of High Amenity, SPA and SAC. A number of preserved views are listed from the R446 between Tyrrellspass and Rochfortbridge. The area around Lough Ennell and particularly to the south of the lake is characterised by scrub land with a mixture of marsh, bog and poor pasture land. There is also a large tract of bog to the east of Rochfortbridge and Milltownpass along the county boundary. The bog areas in this LCA are mainly exploited but some have been left intact. This area has a large number of old demesnes, which are easily recognisable in the landscape with the existence of fine mature hardwood trees and estate walls in some cases. Settlements within this landscape have developed mainly along the main road network. These include Kinnegad, Milltownpass, Rochfortbridge, and Tyrrellspass along the former N6. Recreational areas have been developed on the shores of Lough Ennell including Ladestown, Lilliput and Tudenham. The M6 traverses the southern part of the LCA. The N52 By-Pass has also added to the transport corridor around Mullingar."

Relevant landscape policies include:

- **CPO 13.8** Protection of landscape character and scenic quality.

- **CPO 13.9** Preservation of landscape character types and consideration of landscape sensitivity.
- **CPO 13.12** Requirement for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment where significant impacts may arise.

Chapter 14: Archaeological Heritage

The archaeological provisions of the Development Plan are relevant having regard to the scale of excavation works proposed. Relevant policies include:

- **CPO 14.5** Protection and enhancement of archaeological heritage.
- **CPO 14.12** Requirement that archaeological investigations and excavation are undertaken in accordance with recognised best practice.

Chapter 16: Development Management Standards

Chapter 16 sets out the Development Management standards applicable to enterprise and infrastructure development. Relevant provisions include:

- **Section 16.7** Enterprise and Employment Development Standards, which require high quality design, landscaping and energy efficiency measures.
- **CPO 16.49**, which requires consideration of the principle of development, scale, traffic impacts, design quality, utility infrastructure and environmental effects.

Westmeath County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

The Westmeath County Council Climate Action Plan (2024–2029) builds upon the Council’s Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019–2024. This new plan incorporates previous adaptation measures, updates the risk assessment with the latest data, and introduces a comprehensive mitigation programme aimed at achieving the 51% emissions reduction target and fulfilling other statutory obligations. The plan also commits the Council to support the National Renewable Energy Action Plan and Ireland’s Transition to a Low-Carbon Energy Future 2015–2030 by promoting the expanded deployment of renewable energy while ensuring developments are carefully sited to protect environmental sensitivities.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

The subject SID application comprises a 220kV Independent Power Producer (IPP) Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation, associated high-voltage electrical infrastructure, plant and ancillary development works. The proposed development is intended to facilitate the connection of the adjoining Data Centre, Solar Farm and Decentralised Energy Resource (DER) development to the existing Castlelost 220kV GIS Substation and, in turn, the national electricity transmission network operated by EirGrid.

The application site forms part of a substantially larger landholding extending to approximately 243 hectares across the townlands of Gneevebane, Oldtown, Farthingstown, Castlelost, Kiltotan and Collinstown. Over recent years, a number of planning applications have been advanced across these lands relating to strategic energy generation, energy storage, electricity transmission and digital infrastructure. The subject proposal must therefore be considered within the context of this established planning history and the cumulative development framework which has emerged on the wider landholding.

The principal developments of relevance to the assessment of the current proposal are outlined below.

Data Centre, Solar Farm and DER Development

- **Planning Ref. 25/60344**
- **Red Admiral DC Limited**

Westmeath County Council granted permission for a Data Centre campus, solar photovoltaic farm, Decentralised Energy Resource (DER) development and associated infrastructure on lands adjoining the application site. The development comprises:

- A six-building Data Centre campus;
- Decentralised Energy Resource infrastructure including Fuel Cell technology, Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and associated electrical infrastructure;
- A solar photovoltaic farm extending over approximately 168 hectares;
- Associated utility, drainage, access, landscaping and site development works.

The Planning Authority's decision is currently the subject of a third-party appeal to An Coimisiún Pleanála under Appeal Reference PL25M.501596.

The planning application documentation submitted under Ref. 25/60344 specifically identified that a separate Strategic Infrastructure Development application would be made to An Coimisiún Pleanála for the high-voltage electrical infrastructure required to connect the development to the national electricity transmission network. The current proposal represents that associated grid connection infrastructure.

Electricity Generation and Storage Development

- **Planning Ref. 21/515**
- **Lumcloon Energy Limited / Castlelost FlexGen**

Permission was granted for a 275MW reserve gas-fired generation facility comprising five Open Cycle Gas Turbine (OCGT) units together with associated electrical infrastructure, Above Ground Installation (AGI), fuel storage, transformers, administration buildings and ancillary development.

The facility is designed to provide reserve generation capacity to support the national electricity system and is subject to EPA Industrial Emissions licensing requirements.

- Planning Ref. 23/60042
- Castlelost Flex Gen Limited

Permission was subsequently granted for amendments to the development permitted under Ref. 21/515, principally relating to revised administration and workshop buildings together with associated site layout modifications.

- Planning Ref. 24/60053
- Castlelost Flex Gen Limited

Permission was granted for further amendments to the FlexGen facility, including modifications to the Above Ground Installation (AGI), secondary fuel storage infrastructure, transformers, electrical equipment compounds and other ancillary infrastructure.

Battery Energy Storage Development

- Planning Ref. 21/532
- Lumcloon Energy Limited

Permission was granted for an Energy Storage System (ESS) development comprising:

- A Battery Energy Storage System (BESS);
- Synchronous condenser infrastructure;
- IPP buildings;
- Electrical compounds and transformers;
- Ancillary access, drainage and landscaping works.

The development was approved as strategic electricity infrastructure supporting the electricity transmission system and security of energy supply.

- Planning Ref. 26/60145
- Lumcloon Energy Limited

An application was subsequently submitted seeking amendments to the ESS development, including removal of the previously permitted Battery Energy Storage System compound and associated reconfiguration of the synchronous condenser facility and electrical infrastructure.

At the time of writing this report, the application remains under assessment following a request for Further Information.

Strategic Infrastructure Development

An Bord Pleanála Ref. 312783-22

Permission was granted by An Bord Pleanála under Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) for a strategic electricity transmission development comprising:

- A 220kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation;
- Two 220kV underground transmission cables;
- Interface compounds;
- Electricity pylons; and
- Associated transmission infrastructure.

The development provides a connection between the Castlelost energy developments and the national electricity transmission system.

This permission is of particular relevance to the current application as it established the principle of strategic electricity transmission infrastructure within the wider Castlelost energy cluster and is a key component of the transmission network to which the current proposal seeks to connect.

Planning Enforcement

A review of the Planning Register indicates that there are no active planning enforcement proceedings associated with the application site or the immediately adjoining permitted energy infrastructure developments.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The proposed development is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). The requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment arises having regard to the nature, scale and characteristics of the proposed development and the wider project of which it forms a constituent element.

It is noted that the subject application forms part of a wider and interrelated development project comprising:

1. The permitted Data Centre and Decentralised Energy Resource (DER) development (Westmeath County Council Planning Ref. No. 25/60344), comprising a Data Centre campus, solar photovoltaic farm, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), Solid Oxide Fuel Cell (SOFC) development and associated infrastructure; and

2. The subject SID application comprising a 220kV Independent Power Producer (IPP) Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation, associated high-voltage electrical infrastructure, underground and overground electrical connections, electrical plant and ancillary development works. The proposed development is intended to facilitate the connection of the permitted Data Centre and DER development to the national electricity transmission network via the existing Castlelost 220kV GIS Substation.

Given the functional interrelationship between the two developments and having regard to their proximity, scale and cumulative environmental effects, a single EIAR has been prepared by the applicant to assess the environmental impacts of the overall project. The EIAR therefore assesses both the Data Centre and DER development and the associated 220kV grid connection infrastructure as a single integrated project for the purposes of Environmental Impact Assessment.

The Planning Authority notes that the EIAR submitted with the application considers the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment under the relevant environmental factors prescribed by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The environmental information contained within the EIAR has informed the assessment set out in this report..

7. DESIGNATION SITES

European Sites

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report was submitted with the application in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. The assessment considered the potential for the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, to result in likely significant effects on European Sites within the Zone of Influence (Zoi).

The nearest European Sites identified within approximately 15km of the application site include:

- Raheenmore Bog SAC (Site Code: 000582);
- Lough Ennell SAC (Site Code: 000685);
- Lough Ennell SPA (Site Code: 004044);
- Split Hills and Long Hill Esker SAC (Site Code: 001831); and
- Wooddown Bog SAC (Site Code: 002205).

The AA Screening Report concluded that there is no direct hydrological, ecological or other pathway connecting the proposed development to any European Site that could give rise to likely significant effects. The report further concludes that, having regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposed development and the absence of significant emissions or pathways for impact, it can be excluded on the basis of objective scientific information that the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a likely significant effect on any European Site.

As the competent authority for the determination of the application, An Coimisiún Pleanála is responsible for carrying out the Appropriate Assessment process and reaching a determination in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

Natural Heritage Areas

A number of designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed NHAs occur within the wider receiving environment of the development site. The nearest NHAs are primarily designated for raised bog habitats and include:

- Cloncrow Bog (New Forest) NHA, located approximately 3km west of the application site;
- Milltownpass Bog NHA, located approximately 7.6km north-east of the application site;
- Nure Bog NHA, located approximately 8.4km north-west of the application site;
- Daingean Bog NHA, located approximately 12km south of the application site;
- Black Castle Bog NHA, located approximately 12.5km south-east of the application site; and
- Wooddown Bog NHA, located approximately 14.5km north of the application site.

Having regard to the separation distances involved and the nature of the proposed development, no direct impacts on designated NHA sites have been identified. Potential indirect effects on designated ecological receptors are considered within the ecological assessments accompanying the application and are addressed in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

8. PROTECTED STRUCTURES/ACAS/ARCHAEOLOGY/SPECIAL AMENITY AREA ORDERS

Protected Structures

There are no Protected Structures located within the application site or within the overall landholding associated with the proposed development. The nearest Protected Structure is the Forge/Smithy at Farthingstown (RPS No. 033-001; NIAH Reg. No. 15320002), located approximately 1.8km north-east of the application site.

Having regard to the separation distance involved, the nature of the receiving environment and the scale and location of the proposed works, the proposed development is not considered likely to result in direct impacts on any Protected Structure. The potential for indirect impacts on the setting of architectural heritage assets is assessed within the EIAR and accompanying architectural heritage assessment.

Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)

There are no Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) located within or adjoining the application site. The nearest ACA is Derrygreenagh Park ACA, located within Rochfortbridge approximately 2km north-east of the application site.

Given the separation distance and intervening landscape context, no direct impacts on any Architectural Conservation Area are anticipated.

Archaeology

There are no Recorded Monuments, National Monuments or known archaeological sites located within the application site boundary.

Notwithstanding the absence of recorded archaeological sites within the development lands, archaeological assessment and geophysical survey work undertaken in support of the application identified the potential for previously unrecorded subsurface archaeological features to be present within portions of the site. Accordingly, archaeological impacts and mitigation measures are considered in the archaeological assessment submitted with the application and are addressed further in this report.

Special Amenity Area Orders

There are no Special Amenity Area Orders (SAAOs) designated within County Westmeath. Consequently, no SAAO-related planning considerations arise in respect of the proposed development.

9. INTERNAL REPORTS

District Engineer

The District Engineer's report dated 10th July 2026 outlines that there is no objection to the proposed development from an engineering perspective, subject to conditions in relation to roads, water/wastewater, surface water and the inclusion of a special levy.

Environment Section

The Environment Section has undertaken a review of the Appropriate Assessment screening report and the CEMP submitted was carried out.

It is noted that all European Sites within a 15km zone of influence were screened out due to distance and/or absence to any pathways, including River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC/SPA. However, An Coimisiún Pleanála is the competent authority in making a determination on appropriate assessment.

In addition, the subject lands are not within a designated NHA site and the nearest NHA is located a distance in excess of 3 kilometres from the proposed development. Having regard to the development proposed and separation distance to these NHA sites, no likely impacts are envisaged.

The CEMP submitted is acceptable subject to an updated version to be submitted prior to commencement of development for matters such as waste management, fuel storage/location, monitoring locations and key personnel. The inclusion of a condition is put forward in the event of a grant of permission by ABP in respect of requirements associated with the CEMP.

10. THIRD PARTY OBSERVATIONS/SUBMISSIONS SUBMITTED TO AN COIMISIÚN PLEANÁLA

The receipt and consideration of any such submissions is a matter for An Coimisiún Pleanála as part of its assessment of the application.

11. REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT (EIAR)

In this case, An Coimisiún Pleanála is the competent authority for the purposes of carrying out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Coimisiún Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (August 2018) specify that (as per EU Directive 2014/52/EU) there is a requirement for the EIAR to be prepared by competent experts. The EIAR submitted consists of a wide-ranging, comprehensive assessment of the full range of issues and factors that could reasonably be anticipated for the proposed development. The Non-Technical Summary (NTS) is considered adequate.

The following sub-sections provides the Planning Authority's views in relation to the adequacy of the EIAR that accompanies this SID application. The EIAR submitted considers the potential environmental impacts for the Data Centre (DC) facility and its own Decentralised Energy Resource (DER) on c. 243 hectares. A high voltage (HV) modern electricity node (Castlelost GIS substation) is located on adjoining lands and connects the 275MWe Castlelost Flexgen Power Plant (currently under construction and nearing completion) to the electricity grid. The proposed development lands are also served by multiple IT fibre network connections along with Gas Networks Ireland's transmission pipeline offering the key utilities a modern digital facility needs without long, disruptive off-site connection and associated development corridors. The EIAR focuses on each respective project under each chapter.

The sub-sections below provide a brief summary of the environmental impacts of the proposal as outlined in the chapters contained within the EIAR with respect to the LEL GIS Castlelost Project which is the subject matter of this SID application.

11.1 Chapter 1 – Introduction

The introduction is clearly set out and refers to the legislative context of the EIA with regard to Strategic Infrastructure Development under Section 37A of the Act.

The main EIAR text follows a ‘grouped format’ structure whereby environmental factors are assessed and presented as separate chapters. Chapters are organised in a consistent approach which commences by considering the existing or baseline environment, with a subsequent assessment of the likely significant impacts of the proposed development followed by identification of measures to mitigate and monitor.

Reference is made to the scoping process carried out along with interaction undertaken with the various stakeholders during the consultation process.

Chapter 1 of the EIAR states that each chapter has been completed by a competent experts and a ‘Statement of Authority’ has been provided in each chapter. The level of expertise of the competent experts appears reasonable however this is a matter for An Coimisiún Pleanála to determine.

This chapter concluded that no significant difficulties were encountered in compiling the information required to be provided in this EIAR.

11.2 Chapter 2 – Project Description

Chapter 2 of the EIAR provides a detailed description of the overall project, including the site context, project rationale, design evolution, construction methodology, operational characteristics and consideration of reasonable alternatives. The chapter describes both the Data Centre and Decentralised Energy Resource (DER) development and the associated SID comprising the high-voltage electrical infrastructure. The EIAR confirms that both applications constitute a single project for the purposes of EIA and AA.

The chapter re-emphasises that the proposed development forms an integral component of the wider energy infrastructure strategy for the overall project and will support the transmission of electricity between the national grid, the proposed Data Centre development, the proposed Battery Energy Storage System the proposed Solar PV development and the proposed Fuel Cell facility.

In relation to the subject SID application, Chapter 2 describes the proposed internal electrical connections, communications infrastructure, access arrangements, drainage infrastructure, temporary construction compounds and ancillary site development works necessary to facilitate operation of the proposed electricity infrastructure.

The chapter further describes the proposed construction methodology, which is anticipated to be undertaken over a phased construction programme, and outlines the environmental protection measures proposed during construction, including implementation of a Construction Environmental Management

Plan, surface water management measures, ecological protection measures, traffic management procedures and mitigation measures relating to noise, dust and construction emissions.

Chapter 2 also outlines the operational characteristics of the wider project and confirms that the proposed electricity infrastructure has been designed to facilitate integration of renewable energy generation, energy storage technologies and flexible electricity demand while making use of the existing transmission infrastructure at Castlelost. The chapter identifies the strategic role of the proposed 220kV substation in facilitating connection between the wider development and the national electricity transmission network.

11.3 Chapter 3 – Need for the Development & Alternatives

Chapter 3 of the EIAR examines the need for the proposed development and outlines the reasonable alternatives considered during the evolution of the project, including the do-nothing scenario, alternative technologies, alternative locations, alternative site layouts and alternative design approaches. The chapter also identifies the principal environmental considerations that informed the selection of the preferred development option.

The do-nothing scenario would result in the application site remaining in agricultural use and would avoid the temporary environmental effects associated with construction activities. However, the chapter concludes that this option would not facilitate the provision of the strategic electricity infrastructure necessary to connect the proposed Data Centre and Decentralised Energy Resource development to the national electricity transmission network. The EIAR further states that the do-nothing scenario would fail to support national objectives relating to digital infrastructure, energy security, renewable energy integration and economic development.

In relation to alternative technologies, the EIAR outlines the assessment of a range of energy generation, storage and management technologies undertaken during the design process. Alternative generation and storage technologies, including conventional gas generation and alternative battery technologies, were reviewed before the preferred DER configuration was selected. The preferred energy strategy incorporates a 160MW Fuel Cell facility, a 250MW/500MWh Battery Energy Storage System, a 180MWp Solar PV development and associated electricity infrastructure. The design also includes a 220kV grid connection to the existing Castlelost GIS Substation, which forms the subject of the current SID application. Cooling technologies for the wider development were also assessed, with non-evaporative cooling selected in preference to more water-intensive alternatives.

With regard to site selection, the EIAR identifies the presence of existing strategic infrastructure as a key determining factor in the selection of the application site. Particular emphasis is placed on the site's proximity to the existing Castlelost 220kV GIS Substation, the national electricity transmission network, the existing gas network, available telecommunications infrastructure and the strategic road network. The chapter states that the availability of these services significantly reduces the extent of additional off-site infrastructure required and minimises associated environmental impacts.

The EIAR also outlines a number of alternative design and layout iterations considered throughout the project design process. These included amendments to the layout of the Data Centre campus, DER infrastructure and associated grid connection facilities, together with modifications to landscape design, building siting, setback distances and access arrangements. The final layout was informed by environmental surveys, engineering constraints, landscape considerations and operational requirements. The chapter concludes that the adopted design represents the preferred balance between operational efficiency, environmental protection, infrastructure requirements and landscape integration.

In relation to the subject SID application, the chapter identifies the proposed 220kV IPP GIS Substation and associated high-voltage infrastructure as a critical component of the overall project, providing the necessary connection between the proposed Data Centre and DER development and the existing national electricity transmission network at Castlelost.

11.4 Chapter 4 – Planning & Policy

Chapter 4 assesses the proposed development in the context of Planning policy, with reference to relevant European, national, regional and local planning, climate, energy and economic policy.

The assessment reviews the project against a comprehensive policy framework, including the European Green Deal, EU Taxonomy Regulation, Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework, the National Development Plan, Climate Action Plan 2025, the National Energy and Climate Plan, national strategies for hydrogen, biomethane, digitalisation and artificial intelligence, the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, and the Westmeath County Development Plan and Climate Action Plan.

The EIAR concludes that the proposed development is consistent with these policy objectives and supports national and regional priorities for sustainable economic development, digital infrastructure and the transition to a low-carbon economy. The project is expected to contribute to regional balanced growth in the Midlands by providing significant investment and employment opportunities while strengthening digital resilience and supporting Ireland's climate and energy objectives.

Overall, Chapter 4 concludes that the proposed development is fully aligned with the relevant planning and policy framework and can be delivered without significant adverse effects on population or human health, while providing long-term social and economic benefits.

11.5 Chapter 5 - Population and Human Health

Chapter 5 assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on population and human health, with related topics such as noise, air quality, traffic, landscape and vibration assessed in the relevant technical chapters of the EIAR. The assessment confirms that all recommendations of the Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) have been addressed and that the proposed development will operate safely in traffic terms.

The development is not expected to affect local or regional population levels or settlement patterns, as it does not include residential or community facilities. While minor, temporary impacts on residential amenity may occur during construction due to increased traffic and construction activities, these will be effectively managed through mitigation measures. The proposed layout also provides adequate separation from the nearby lower-tier COMAH site, ensuring that emergency planning and evacuation arrangements remain unaffected.

Health and safety risks are assessed as low, with construction-related effects on air quality, noise, vibration and climate predicted to be temporary, minor and within applicable standards. Operational impacts are expected to be negligible. Mitigation measures will be implemented through the Construction Environmental Management Plan, and following their implementation, all residual effects on population and human health are predicted to be temporary, slight and not significant, with no significant cumulative impacts anticipated.

11.6 Chapter 6 - Biodiversity

Chapter 6 assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on biodiversity. The site is not located within or adjacent to any European designated sites, and an AA Screening Report concluded that there is no direct ecological or hydrological connectivity to nearby Natura 2000 sites. Accordingly, no significant effects on European sites are predicted.

The ecological assessment was informed by comprehensive desktop studies and seasonal field surveys undertaken between August 2024 and May 2025. The site is dominated by improved agricultural grassland and arable land, with hedgerows, treelines, drainage ditches and scattered mature trees providing the principal ecological features. Surveys recorded a range of common flora and fauna, including seven bat species, sixteen bird species, and breeding Barn Owls, while no evidence of badgers or otters was identified. Limited areas of Japanese Knotweed were recorded and are largely under control.

The EIAR concludes that the site is of generally low ecological value and that potential impacts on habitats, birds, bats and watercourses will be minor and can be effectively managed. A range of mitigation measures is proposed, including seasonal restrictions on vegetation clearance, ecological supervision during construction, retention and replacement of hedgerows, habitat enhancement through wild bird cover and ponds, monitoring of Yellowhammer populations, and sensitive lighting design to minimise disturbance to bats.

With these measures in place, the residual effects on biodiversity are predicted to be neutral, imperceptible and not significant, while the proposed habitat enhancement measures are expected to provide long-term ecological benefits across the site.

In this regard and having considered the details submitted, the proposed development area is considered as being of Low Local Ecological Value and that the potential direct effects on biodiversity at construction and operation stage will be imperceptible and neutral.

11.7 Chapter 7 – Soils and Geology

Chapter 7 assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on soils and geology throughout the construction, operation and decommissioning phases. The assessment was informed by desktop studies and intrusive site investigations, including boreholes and trial pits, in accordance with relevant EPA and Institute of Geologists of Ireland guidance.

The site is characterised by predominantly agricultural land underlain by limestone-derived soils and bedrock, with limited areas of peat. No geological heritage sites or karst features were identified within the development footprint, and the site is considered to have generally low geological sensitivity.

The principal potential impacts relate to the construction phase and include soil disturbance, erosion, compaction and the risk of accidental contamination from fuels or chemicals. Operational impacts are expected to be limited, with only a low risk of contamination associated with cooling systems and hardstanding areas.

A range of mitigation measures will be implemented, including careful management and reinstatement of topsoil, appropriate storage and handling of fuels and chemicals, erosion and sediment control measures, and vibration monitoring where required. The use of lightweight foundations for the solar PV development will minimise ground disturbance and facilitate future decommissioning. With these mitigation measures in place, the report concludes that residual effects on soils, superficial deposits and geology will be slight to imperceptible, localised and not significant. It is considered, on the basis of the information provided in terms of the detailed site investigations, that the proposed development would not have adverse impact on the lands, soils and geology of the area.

11.8 Chapter 8 – Water

Chapter 8 assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on the water environment, including both surface water and groundwater, during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases. The assessment was undertaken in accordance with EPA (2022) guidance, the Water Framework Directive (WFD), and informed by desk studies, field surveys and a Stage 3 Flood Risk Assessment.

The site is located within the Boyne catchment and overlies the Athboy Groundwater Body, which is currently classified as having Good surface water status and moderate groundwater quality. The site is at low risk of flooding, with only minor drainage ditches present and no significant watercourses crossing the development footprint.

The principal potential impacts relate to the construction phase, where earthworks and excavations could result in sediment runoff, soil erosion or accidental spillages affecting surface water or groundwater if not properly managed. During operation, potential impacts are limited to accidental leaks, changes in surface water drainage and localised reductions in groundwater recharge. Water demand for the development

will be met through a combination of on-site groundwater abstraction and a public water supply, with overall demand remaining low.

A range of mitigation measures will be implemented through the Construction Environmental Management Plan, including sediment and erosion controls, pollution prevention measures, appropriate storage of hazardous materials and regular environmental monitoring. The operational drainage strategy incorporates Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), including swales, attenuation ponds and rainwater harvesting, to maintain natural drainage patterns and protect water quality. The solar PV development will retain permeable ground cover, allowing rainfall to infiltrate naturally. The EIAR concludes that, following implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, residual effects on both surface water and groundwater will be imperceptible to slight and not significant, with no adverse impacts on Water Framework Directive objectives anticipated.

In this regard, having reviewed the foregoing it is considered that the proposal will not have any significant residual effects on the water environment post implementation of mitigation at construction and operational stage.

11.9 Chapter 9 – Material Assets

Chapter 9 assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on material assets, including land ownership and access, land use, existing services and infrastructure, and demolition works. Other material assets such as transport, water, soils and cultural heritage are assessed separately within the relevant EIAR chapters.

The site currently comprises agricultural land with access from the surrounding road network and benefits from existing strategic infrastructure, including a 220 kV electricity connection, the national gas transmission network and dark fibre telecommunications. The proposed development will utilise these existing utilities, minimising the need for off-site infrastructure works.

The principal impact will be the permanent change in land use from agriculture to a data centre and associated energy infrastructure. Water supply, wastewater treatment, drainage and utility services have been designed to operate within the available network capacity, with sustainable drainage measures incorporated to manage surface water. Excavated soils will be retained on site for landscaping, reducing the need to export material and limiting the loss of agricultural land. Mitigation measures include restricting works to the application site, implementing best practice soil management, and coordinating utility installations to minimise ground disturbance. Following these measures, the EIAR concludes that there will be no significant adverse effects on material assets, with the development providing a long-term enhancement of regional infrastructure while maintaining sustainable water, wastewater and utility services. Residual impacts are predicted to be neutral, imperceptible and not significant.

Having regard to the foregoing it is considered that the proposed development would not have any unacceptable direct or indirect impacts in terms of material assets and that cumulative effects are not likely to arise.

11.10 Chapter 10 – Air Quality

Chapter 10 assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on air quality and climate during the construction and operational phases. The assessment was undertaken in accordance with EPA (2022) and IAQM (2024) guidance and included baseline monitoring, meteorological data and air dispersion modelling to evaluate compliance with applicable EU and World Health Organization air quality standards.

Baseline monitoring confirmed that the existing air quality in the area is good, with pollutant concentrations well below relevant regulatory limits. During construction, temporary dust emissions and minor exhaust emissions from construction plant and vehicles have the potential to affect nearby receptors. During operation, emissions will be limited to low levels of nitrogen oxides (NOx) from the fuel cells and infrequent testing of the emergency generator. Air quality modelling demonstrated that pollutant concentrations at nearby residential properties and designated ecological sites will remain well within applicable standards.

Mitigation measures include the implementation of a comprehensive dust management plan as part of the Construction Environmental Management Plan, incorporating dust suppression, wheel washing, speed controls, regular monitoring and appropriate fuel and chemical storage. Operational mitigation includes the use of low-NOx fuel cell technology, optimised stack heights and robust environmental management procedures.

The EIAR concludes that, following mitigation, construction-related air quality effects will be temporary, short-term and not significant, while operational impacts on air quality and climate will be imperceptible, long-term and not significant, with all emissions remaining within applicable environmental standards.

Having considered the documentation received, it is accepted that potential air quality impacts associated with the proposed development are within the relevant Air Quality Standards. Furthermore, the impacts at construction stage will be short-term in duration and will not have a significant impact on climate and the operational stage will have an imperceptible impact on climate.

11.11 Chapter 11 - Noise & Vibration

Chapter 11 assesses the potential noise and vibration effects associated with the construction and operation of the proposed development. The assessment was based on baseline noise monitoring, predictive modelling and relevant EPA guidance to evaluate potential impacts on nearby noise-sensitive receptors.

Baseline surveys confirmed that the existing acoustic environment is dominated by traffic noise from the M6 motorway and the R446. Thirty-five nearby dwellings were identified as the principal noise-sensitive receptors. During construction, temporary increases in noise may occur at a small number of properties closest to the works; however, these effects will be short-term and vibration levels are predicted to remain well below applicable guideline limits. Operational noise modelling indicates that noise levels from the data centre and associated energy infrastructure will comply with EPA daytime and night-time limits at surrounding receptors, with only one project-related dwelling predicted to marginally exceed the night-time criterion.

Mitigation measures include the implementation of a Noise and Vibration Management Plan during construction, incorporating noise monitoring, the use of low-noise plant, temporary acoustic screening where necessary, and vibration monitoring. During operation, acoustic louvres, routine plant maintenance and, where required, site-specific mitigation will ensure compliance with applicable standards.

The EIAR concludes that, following implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, construction and operational noise and vibration impacts will not be significant, with residual effects predicted to be neutral to imperceptible. Based on the detail provided, it is considered that the proposal and findings put forward appear logical and reasonable and that the development proposed will have no significant adverse effects in terms of noise and vibration on the surrounding area.

11.12 Chapter 12 – Landscape and Visual

Chapter 12 of the EIAR contains a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the proposed development and assesses the likely landscape and visual effects arising during both the construction and operational phases. The assessment was undertaken in accordance with EPA Guidelines (2022) and the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3).

The chapter identifies the site as being located within a predominantly rural agricultural landscape which is influenced by existing infrastructure, including the M6 Motorway, the existing Castlelost FlexGen facility, the Castlelost 220kV GIS Substation and existing electricity transmission infrastructure. The proposed 220kV IPP GIS Substation, associated electrical infrastructure and 36-metre communications mast will introduce additional built infrastructure into the receiving environment.

The LVIA concludes that the most significant landscape and visual effects would occur during the construction phase and from locations in close proximity to the site. The assessment concludes that visual effects would generally reduce with increasing distance from the development due to existing landform, vegetation, established hedgerows and intervening infrastructure. Extensive landscape mitigation measures are proposed including retention of existing vegetation, additional planting and landscape enhancement works.

Following implementation of mitigation measures, the EIAR concludes that residual landscape and visual effects would range from moderate to slight in the immediate vicinity of the development and negligible to imperceptible at greater distances.

Having regard to the foregoing, it is considered that the proposed development, when viewed in conjunction with the associated Data Centre and Decentralised Energy Resource developments, would introduce a significant scale of energy and utility infrastructure into a predominantly rural landscape. Notwithstanding this, the site is located adjacent to the M6 Motorway corridor, the existing Castlelost FlexGen facility, the Castlelost 220kV GIS Substation and existing electricity transmission infrastructure. In this context, it is accepted that the sensitivity of the receiving landscape is moderated by the presence of existing strategic infrastructure and that the overall significance of effect identified within the LVIA as moderate to slight is reasonable.

11.13 Chapter 13 – Traffic and Transport

Chapter 13 assesses the potential traffic and transport effects of the proposed development during construction and operation, both individually and in combination with other developments. The assessment was undertaken in accordance with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and EPA guidance and included traffic surveys, road safety assessments and traffic modelling.

The proposed development will be accessed from the R446 adjacent to the Castlelost Flexgen Plant. Traffic surveys and modelling demonstrate that the surrounding road network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional traffic generated by the development. During the peak construction period, only a small increase in Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) movements is predicted, with construction traffic routed via the M6 and N52 to minimise impacts on nearby villages. Once operational, the development will employ approximately 360 staff working across several shifts.

Traffic modelling confirms that all surrounding junctions will continue to operate well within their available capacity, with no significant congestion predicted. A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit concluded that the development could operate safely, subject to the implementation of the recommended design improvements. Mitigation measures include monitoring and repairing any construction-related damage to the local road network, implementing all Road Safety Audit recommendations, and adopting a Mobility Management Plan to encourage sustainable travel by employees and visitors. The plan includes ongoing monitoring, travel surveys and management measures to minimise reliance on private vehicles. The EIAR concludes that, following implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, the development will not give rise to significant impacts on traffic flow, road capacity, road safety or the surrounding transport network during either the construction or operational phases.

In this context, it is considered that the proposed development will not have significant environmental effects as a result of traffic and transport associated with the project. It is considered that the proposed mitigation measures, including the provision of a wheel wash facility together with the recommendations

set out within the accompanying Stage 1 Road Safety Audit should be implemented in full in the event that permission is granted.

11.14 Chapter 14 – Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

Chapter 14 assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage within the site and surrounding area. The assessment identifies known heritage assets, evaluates the potential for previously undiscovered archaeological remains, and proposes measures to avoid or minimise impacts.

The wider site contains a number of recorded archaeological monuments, including ringforts, a possible enclosure, historic field systems and features associated with the area's agricultural and industrial heritage, such as former farmsteads, lime kilns, wells and a nineteenth-century forge. The development layout has been designed to avoid direct impacts on these known heritage features through the provision of appropriate stand-off distances and buffer zones. While no direct impacts on recorded monuments are predicted, there remains the potential for previously unrecorded archaeological remains to be encountered during construction. The assessment also identifies limited indirect effects on the setting of nearby monuments and the loss of some historic field boundaries and vernacular structures.

Mitigation measures include the establishment of protective buffer zones around known monuments, additional geophysical surveys and archaeological test trenching where required, archaeological monitoring of groundworks, and the preservation in situ or excavation and recording of any archaeological remains discovered. Historic boundaries and vernacular structures will be fully recorded prior to any removal, and works near the historic forge will be undertaken under archaeological supervision. The EIAR concludes that, following implementation of these mitigation measures, residual impacts on archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage will be neutral to imperceptible and not significant, with no significant cumulative effects anticipated.

In light of same, it is accepted that the matter of archaeological test trenching on the subject lands can be appropriately addressed by way of an appropriate condition and under license, which should be submitted to the Planning Authority for written approval prior to the commencement of any works on the subject lands.

11.15 Chapter 15 – Climate

Chapter 15 assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on climate during the construction and operational phases, considering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, climate resilience and alignment with relevant climate policies and guidance. The assessment recognises climate change as a significant global and national challenge and evaluates the project's contribution to emissions reduction targets.

The assessment identifies that Ireland is experiencing rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns and increased frequency of extreme weather events. The proposed development has therefore been assessed against this changing climate context, including potential climate-related risks such as flooding, storms, heatwaves and drought.

During construction, the primary climate impact relates to embodied carbon associated with building materials and construction activities. These emissions are considered minor in the context of national carbon budgets, with construction activities contributing only a small proportion of Ireland's overall emissions. Climate-related risks to construction activities are also considered low and manageable.

During operation, electricity demand represents the main source of potential emissions. However, the integrated Decentralised Energy Resource system, incorporating solar generation, battery storage and fuel cell technology, will significantly reduce carbon intensity compared with reliance on the national electricity grid. The development will also incorporate energy-efficient design measures, LEED principles, carbon monitoring and future compatibility with renewable gases such as biomethane and hydrogen.

Mitigation measures include the use of low-carbon construction materials, resource efficiency, waste reduction, renewable energy generation, energy-efficient building design and intelligent energy management through the Digital Carbon Passport system. The EIAR concludes that construction-related climate effects will be short-term, minor and not significant, while operational emissions will reduce over time as energy networks decarbonise. The overall residual climate effect is considered minor adverse and not significant in EIA terms.

The EIAR also considers the potential cumulative effects and interactions between environmental factors across the proposed development components, including the data centre, DER infrastructure and associated works. Environmental interactions during construction, operation and decommissioning have been assessed through an interaction matrix covering topics such as biodiversity, water, air quality, noise, landscape, traffic and climate. The assessment concludes that potential interactions have been identified and appropriately considered throughout the design process. With the proposed mitigation measures in place, no significant adverse cumulative effects or unacceptable interactions between environmental factors are anticipated.

Having regard to the foregoing assessment, it is considered that the proposed development will not give rise to any significant adverse effects in relation to climate. The incorporation of renewable energy generation, energy-efficient design measures and the integrated Decentralised Energy Resource system will minimise greenhouse gas emissions and support the transition towards a low-carbon energy system. Accordingly, the residual climate impacts associated with the construction and operational phases are considered to be minor and not significant, with no significant cumulative effects anticipated.

11.16 Chapter 16 – Interactions & Cumulative Effects

A matrix is presented in Chapter 16 of the EIAR to identify potential interactions between the various aspects of the environment. The matrix highlights the occurrence of potential positive or negative impacts during both the construction and operational phases of the proposed development. Where any potential interactive impacts have been identified, it is put forward that appropriate mitigation is included within the associated relevant sections contained within the EIAR.

All environmental factors are interrelated, and the assessment of these interactions is integral to the EIAR process. Having assessed the interaction of likely effects during the construction and operational phases, it is considered that the proposal is not likely to contribute to significant cumulative effects on the environment. The likely impacts which have been identified in this EIAR indicate that the proposed development will not result in any likely significant negative impact on the environment. Overall, it is concluded that the impact of the proposed development on the receiving environment is not likely to be significant. In light of the above, it is considered that all interactions of effects were assessed and have been fully considered in the relevant chapters of this EIAR.

12. PLANNING AUTHORITY'S ASSESSMENT

Principle of Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises a 220kV Independent Power Producer Gas Insulated Switchgear Substation, associated high-voltage electrical infrastructure, plant and ancillary development works. The proposed development is intended to facilitate the connection of the adjoining Data Centre and Decentralised Energy Resource development (WCC Ref. 25/60344), currently the subject of an appeal to An Coimisiún Pleanála to the national electricity transmission network via the existing Castlelost 220kV GIS Substation.

The proposed development forms an integral component of the wider energy infrastructure associated with the adjoining Data Centre, Solar Farm and DER development and provides the necessary electrical infrastructure to facilitate the import and export of electricity between those developments and the electricity transmission network. In this regard, the proposal must be considered in the context of the wider cluster of energy and digital infrastructure that has been established or approved within the Castlelost area, including the existing Castlelost 220kV GIS Substation, the Castlelost FlexGen facility, energy storage infrastructure and the adjoining Data Centre and DER development.

The site benefits from proximity to existing strategic electricity infrastructure and is located within an area that has become established as a strategic energy hub. The co-location of the proposed electrical infrastructure with the adjoining energy generation, energy storage and digital infrastructure developments represent an efficient and coordinated approach to infrastructure provision and reduces the requirement for separate or more extensive grid connection infrastructure elsewhere.

The Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 recognises that the provision of electricity infrastructure is necessary to facilitate economic development and support the transition to a low-carbon economy. Section 10.22 of the Development Plan acknowledges that future diversification and adaptation to new energy technologies will be required in transitioning to a low-carbon economy. Furthermore, CPO 10.139 supports initiatives aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency and renewable energy development, while CPOs 10.169, 10.173 and 10.176 support the improvement and expansion of electricity infrastructure and the delivery of transmission infrastructure necessary to facilitate future energy development.

Having regard to the strategic function of the proposed development, its relationship with existing and permitted infrastructure at Castlelost, and the policy support contained within the Westmeath County Development Plan, it is considered that the principle of the proposed development is acceptable.

Notwithstanding this, the proposed development has also be assessed having regard to its potential impacts on landscape and visual amenity, archaeology, ecology, surface water management, traffic and transportation, residential amenity and all other relevant planning and environmental considerations.

Accordingly, subject to satisfaction of these considerations, the principle of the proposed development is accepted.

Surface Water Drainage and SuDS

The site is a greenfield location with no existing stormwater infrastructure. Ground investigations and soakaway testing confirmed poor infiltration capacity; therefore, the proposed drainage system has been designed without infiltration. Surface water will be managed through SuDS measures, including bypass separators, attenuation/firewater ponds, habitat ponds, hydrobrake controls, rainwater harvesting tanks, swales and filter drains. Roof, road and hardstanding runoff will discharge through the controlled drainage network to the existing outfall system. Firewater containment measures, including automated penstock valves and dedicated attenuation storage, will prevent contaminated runoff reaching downstream receptors during a fire event.

Foul Water Drainage

There is no existing foul wastewater infrastructure within the development lands. Foul effluent generated from the Data Centre campus and associated security building is proposed to be collected via a gravity drainage network and discharged to the public wastewater network via a pumped connection. In respect of the low-occupancy IPP and energy infrastructure buildings, foul effluent is proposed to be collected in sealed holding tanks for periodic removal by a licensed contractor. The details submitted in relation to these arrangements are considered satisfactory.

Water supply to the development is proposed through a combination of groundwater abstraction wells and a connection to the public water supply network. The applicant has demonstrated that both sources are available to serve the development and associated infrastructure.

The proposed surface water management strategy incorporates attenuation measures, SuDS principles, hydrocarbon interception, firewater retention infrastructure and controlled discharge arrangements designed to limit runoff rates and protect receiving waters. The overall drainage strategy is considered robust and appropriate having regard to the scale and nature of the proposed development.

Having regard to the information submitted, it is considered that the proposed development can be accommodated without giving rise to significant adverse impacts on surface water quality, groundwater quality, flood risk or the receiving drainage network. The District Engineer has reviewed the proposals relating to water supply, foul drainage and surface water management and raises no objection to the development, subject to compliance with the recommended conditions.

Visual Amenity

The subject site is located at Castlelost within a predominantly rural landscape setting adjacent to the M6 Motorway, the R446 and the local road network. The site falls within Landscape Character Area 10, *Lough Ennell and South Eastern Corridor*, as identified in the Westmeath County Development Plan. As outlined previously, the proposed development forms a key component of a wider strategic energy and digital infrastructure project and is required to facilitate the connection of the adjoining Data Centre development (WCC Ref. 25/60344) to the existing Castlelost 220kV GIS Substation and the national electricity transmission network. As such, the development constitutes essential enabling infrastructure that will support strategic economic investment while facilitating energy security, grid resilience and the integration of renewable and low-carbon energy technologies.

The proposed development includes a two-storey GIS substation building, associated electrical plant, high-voltage infrastructure and ancillary works.

The site generally slopes upwards from south to north and west, with the southern portion adjacent to the M6 situated at a lower elevation. The GIS substation building occupies a central position within the site and is set back from the southern boundary adjoining the motorway. The proposed structure measures approximately 17 metres in height, c.18 metres in width and c.61 metres in length and is to be finished with Kingspan insulated panel elevations. The principal gable elevation faces south towards the M6 motorway.

The eastern mini-interface compound is located in close proximity to the GIS substation and forms part of a cluster of existing and permitted utility and communications infrastructure. In addition, the development incorporates the undergrounding of the existing overhead line connection through the provision of two new mini electrical interface compounds located to the east and west of the LEL Flexgen Castlelost Project, thereby reducing the extent of overhead infrastructure within the wider landscape.

A Visual Impact Assessment submitted as part of the EIAR assessed the likely effects of the development based on receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of change arising from the proposal. It is acknowledged that the GIS substation building represents the most visually prominent element of the development. Owing to its scale and horizontal massing, particularly along its east-west axis, the structure will protrude above sections of the existing hedgerow network and will be visible from a range of viewpoints in the surrounding area.

Notwithstanding this, the nearest residential property is located approximately 310 metres to the east along the adjoining local road. Given this separation distance, together with the proposed external treatment, retention of existing vegetation, setting within an established utility site and implementation of the comprehensive landscape planting scheme submitted with the application, it is considered that visual impacts on nearby residential receptors will be moderated to an acceptable level. While the building will remain visible, the overall effect on residential visual amenity is not considered to be significant.

The GIS substation and associated infrastructure will also be visible from sections of the M6 Motorway to the south. However, the motorway corridor is regarded as a low-sensitivity visual receptor due to the transient nature of views experienced by road users travelling at speed. While the development will be noticeable from this location, such views will generally be brief and contained within an already altered infrastructure corridor characterised by major transportation and utility infrastructure.

The proposed interface compounds and associated electrical infrastructure are considered consistent with the established and emerging character of the area as an energy and infrastructure hub. These elements are reflective of the intended future use of the lands and are not considered to adversely affect any protected views or scenic prospects identified within the Development Plan.

Similarly, while the associated communications tower will have a maximum height of 36 metres, it is located adjacent to the GIS substation and within a broader cluster of existing and permitted infrastructure development. Its slender lattice design will reduce its visual mass and assist in its assimilation within the overall infrastructure complex. Consequently, the tower is not considered to give rise to unacceptable landscape or visual effects when viewed in the context of the wider development.

Having regard to the scale and nature of the proposal, the characteristics of the receiving environment, the separation distances to nearby dwellings, the proposed landscaping measures and the findings of the EIAR, it is considered that the landscape and visual effects arising from the development will be localised and acceptable. The proposal will not result in significant adverse impacts on the visual amenities of the area and is considered compatible with the evolving infrastructural character of the locality.

Flood Risk

A Stage 3 Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) was prepared for the proposed development and submitted as part of the EIAR. The assessment considered the potential flood risks associated with the site, which

drains towards the Castlejordan River to the north and the Mongagh River to the south. Site-specific surveys and hydraulic modelling were undertaken to assess existing and potential flood conditions. The FRA identified localised fluvial flooding within the southern part of the site, primarily associated with existing culvert capacity constraints. The assessment confirms that the northern and central areas of the site are located within Flood Zone C, where the proposed development is considered appropriate. A portion of the solar farm is located within Flood Zone A; however, this land use is considered water compatible, with solar panels elevated above predicted flood levels and designed to allow floodplain function to be maintained.

The assessment concludes that the proposed development will not increase flood risk to the surrounding area. Mitigation measures include maintaining existing drainage pathways, avoiding flood defence works that could displace floodwaters elsewhere, raising solar panels above flood levels and ensuring that electrical infrastructure is positioned above predicted flood elevations. The FRA concludes that, subject to implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, the development will not adversely affect the local drainage network, neighbouring properties, the surrounding environment or human health in relation to flood risk. The findings of the FRA are considered acceptable, with any planning permission subject to ensuring that the development does not cause or exacerbate flooding beyond the site boundary. The District Engineer considers the contents of the FRA to be satisfactory and raises no further outstanding matters in this regard.

Archaeology

An archaeological assessment undertaken by Donald Murphy and Magda Lyne in June 2024, which included a desk-based archaeological impact assessment. The applicants landholding 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 legally protected under the Record of Monuments and Places pursuant to Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. Given the scale, extent, and location of the proposed development, there is potential for impacts on subsurface archaeological remain and to address the moderate to high potential for impacts on unknown sub-surface archaeology, archaeological investigations shall be conditioned.

Carrying Capacity and Safety of Road Network

Chapter 13 Traffic and Transport and relevant appendices (including Stage 1 Road Safety Audit and traffic counts undertaken) of the EIAR which accompany this application provide appropriate details in respect of the proposed road network. The matter of carrying capacity and safety of road network has been considered by the District Engineer and no objection has been raised. No further outstanding matters raised in this regard.

Ecology

The proposed development site is not within a designated European Site and is a distance in excess of three kilometres from the nearest Natural Heritage Area. The documentation submitted with this application identified that there are no rare or protected habitats recorded in the study area and that overall, the proposed development area is of Low ecological Value. The EIAR submitted concludes in Section 5.9 that *'there will be no significant effects on designated sites in the potential Zone of Influence of the proposed development lands'*. In this regard, it is considered that the proposed development is consistent with local policy CPO 10.174 to *'Support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity and gas supplies, which do not negatively impact on environmental quality, landscape, wildlife, habitats or residential amenity and which are critical to the economic development of the County'*.

Environmental Carrying Capacity of the Subject Site and Surrounding Area

Please refer to Section 11 of this report which addresses this matter in the context of the EIAR submitted and the consideration(s) of the Planning Authority.

Development Contributions

Westmeath County Council's Development Contribution Scheme (2022) made under section 48 of the Act should apply in the event of a grant of planning permission and is subject to any applicable indexation provisions of the Scheme at the time of payment.

Special Development Contribution

In the event of a grant of permission a condition requiring pre-surveying of affected roads, post construction survey and any required repair/remedial works to the public road arising from development works (District Engineer's report refers) should be applied.

13. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Having regard to the nature, scale and function of the proposed development, it is considered that the proposed 220kV Independent Power Producer Gas Insulated Switchgear Substation, associated high-voltage electrical infrastructure, plant and ancillary development works constitute strategic electricity infrastructure that is appropriate at this location.

The proposed development is intended to facilitate the connection of the adjoining Data Centre and Decentralised Energy Resource development, the subject of Planning Ref. 25/60344, to the existing Castlelost 220kV GIS Substation and, in turn, the national electricity transmission network. In this regard, the proposal forms an integral component of the wider energy infrastructure serving the Castlelost area and supports the coordinated development of energy generation, energy storage, electricity transmission and digital infrastructure within an emerging strategic energy and employment hub.

The site is located adjacent to existing strategic infrastructure, including the Castlelost GIS Substation, the Castlelost FlexGen facility, the M6 Motorway corridor and associated electricity infrastructure. The

proposed development therefore represents a logical extension of the established infrastructure network within the area and makes efficient use of existing electricity transmission infrastructure.

Having regard to the EIAR the planning history of the area, the provisions of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the assessments undertaken by the Planning Authority, it is considered that the proposed development can be accommodated on the subject site without giving rise to unacceptable impacts on residential amenity, landscape character, biodiversity, archaeology, cultural heritage, traffic safety, water resources or other environmental receptors.

The Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposed development:

- Facilitates the connection of the adjoining Data Centre and DER development to the national electricity transmission network;
- Supports the continued development of strategic energy and digital infrastructure within the Midlands Region;
- Strengthens local and regional electricity infrastructure;
- Facilitates the integration of renewable energy generation and energy storage technologies;
- Is acceptable in terms of visual impact, landscape character, ecology, archaeology, drainage and traffic considerations; and
- Accords with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Having regard to the foregoing assessment, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and consistent with the relevant provisions of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Accordingly, subject to the EIAR and Appropriate Assessment determinations of An Coimisiún Pleanála, and subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions, it is recommended that approval be granted for the proposed development.

Appendix 1: Strategic Infrastructure Development - Recommended Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the plans and details received by An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 30th June 2026 except for any alterations or modifications specified below.

Reason: In the interests of clarity and orderly development.

2. The permission hereby granted is for 10 years. All development works shall thereby be fully completed within 10 years of the grant order date of this permission, unless otherwise permitted under a subsequent planning approval.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

3. The applicant shall engage the services of a suitably qualified archaeologist to carry out an archaeological assessment of the development site. No sub-surface developmental work, including geotechnical test pits, shall be undertaken until the archaeological assessment has been completed and commented on by the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage and written approval received by the Planning Authority.

The archaeologist shall carry out any relevant documentary research and inspect the development site. As part of the assessment a programme of test excavation shall be carried out at locations chosen by the archaeologist (licensed under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004), having consulted the site drawings and the National Monuments Service section of the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage. Having completed the work, the archaeologist shall submit a written report stating their recommendations to the Planning Authority and to the National Monuments Service section of the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage. Where archaeological material/features are shown to be present, preservation in situ, preservation by record (excavation) or monitoring may be required. The development thereafter shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details.

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

4. Site development and building works shall be carried out only between the hours of 0800 to 1900 Mondays to Fridays inclusive, between 0900 to 1400 hours on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and public holidays. Deviation from these times will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written approval has been received from the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to safeguard the residential amenities of property in the vicinity.

5. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall submit an updated, detailed project Construction Environmental Management Plan for the construction phase to the Planning Authority for written approval. The updated CEMP shall include;

- Estimates for the quantities of waste to be generated in each waste stream
- Identify authorised waste collectors and facilities which are to be used.
- Location and nature of waste segregation and storage facilities on site
- Location and nature of fuel storage and refueling facilities.
- Identify the persons holding key management, waste management and environmental management positions during the construction stage of the project including; Project Manager, Site Foreman, Environmental Officer/Waste Representative, PSCS, etc.
- Identify monitoring locations for noise and dust emissions.

Reason: In the interest of clarity, protection of the environment and the proper planning and development of the area.

6. Roads

- i. Prior to commencement the developer shall undertake a detailed condition survey of the proposed haul route (L11272 and R446) and any other local or regional roads used as haul routes for construction materials. The developer shall submit a Pavement Strength Analysis and Culvert/Bridge Bearing Capacity Analysis Report for roads identified as the construction material haul routes. The report should include the proposed ongoing maintenance programme to be implemented during the construction stage to avoid deterioration of the regional and local roads.
- ii. The condition survey of the roads and bridges along the haul routes shall be carried out by an independent consultant engineer both before and after construction of the proposed development at the developer's expense. This shall include a schedule of required works to enable the haul routes and in particular local roads in the Westmeath County Council area, to cater for construction related traffic. The extent and scope of the survey and the schedule of works shall be agreed with the planning authority before development commences.
- iii. Within 3 months of the cessation of the end of the public road(s) being used as haul routes, a condition survey of the roads, bridges and any other public infrastructure, accompanied by a schedule of repair/ upgrade works shall be carried out at the developer's expense by a suitably qualified person. This shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority within 3 months of the cessation of use of public roads by construction traffic. All agreed works shall be completed by the developer at the developer's expense within 12 months of the cessation of public roads being used as haul routes.
- iv. All traffic management on public roads to be carried out in accordance with the current 'Chapter 8 – Temporary Traffic Measures & Signs for Roadwork's'.
- v. Abnormal load haul routes shall be restricted to the identified haul route and no other local roads shall be used for these elements of the development.

- vi. Prior to commencement, the applicant shall provide details of the sources and volumes of quarry/ aggregates/ concrete products and any other materials used in significant quantities to be used during construction works. Changes to sources of materials during construction shall be notified to the planning authority as any deviation from agreed haul routes may have an adverse impact on public infrastructure.
- vii. A wheel wash facility must be provided on site before commencement of any development on site. All vehicles leaving site must use this facility. No muck is to be dragged onto the public road.

Reason: In the interests of traffic safety and to ensure the proposal integrates appropriately with its setting.

7. Surface Water

- i. Prior to commencement calculations that confirm that the existing culvert under the M6 can accommodate the surface water generated by the proposed development.
- ii. The surface water system shall be designed to mimic existing green field runoff from the proposed site during a hundred year rainfall event and the discharge rate shall be restricted to no greater than 5l/s/ha.
- iii. All surface water from all hard standing areas shall be passed through adequately sized and located petrol/oil bypass interceptors before any discharge to the existing drains. Prior to commencement the developer shall submit to the planning authority for agreement full details of the petrol/oil interceptors and hardstand area. All fuel, lubricants or other chemical storage tanks shall be adequately bunded to protect against spillage. Bunding shall be impermeable and capable of retaining a volume equal to 1.5 times the capacity of the largest tank. The developer shall take precautions to ensure that oils and fuels used in the operations are stored in a secure place. All waste oil shall be removed from the site and disposed of in accordance with the Waste Management Act 1996-2003 and to the satisfaction of the planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of public health and orderly development.

8. Noise (Construction Phase)

Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority;

During the construction phase of the proposed development, the noise level from within the premises, measured at noise sensitive locations in the vicinity, shall not exceed:

- (a) an L_A(1 hour) value of 70 dB(A) during the period 0700 to 1900 hours from Monday to Saturday (inclusive), and

(b) an LAeq(15 minutes) value of 45 dB(A) at any other time. All sound measurements shall be carried out in accordance with ISO Recommendation R 1996, "Assessment of Noise with Respect to Community Response" as amended by ISO Recommendations R 1996:2007: Acoustics – Description and Measurement of Environmental Noise, as appropriate.

Reason: To protect the amenities of properties in the vicinity of the site.

9. Noise (Operation Stage)

Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority;

(a) During the operational phase of the proposed development, the noise level arising from the proposed development, as measured at the nearest noise sensitive location, shall not exceed:

(i) An LAeqT value of 55 dB(A) during the period 0800 to 2200 hours from Monday to Saturday inclusive. [The T value shall be one hour.]

(ii) An LAeqT value of 45 dB(A) at any other time. [The T value shall be 15 minutes].

The noise at such time shall not contain a tonal component. [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.]

(b) All sound measurement shall be carried out in accordance with ISO Recommendation 1996 "Assessment of Noise with respect to Community Response" as amended by ISO Recommendation 1996:2007: Acoustics – Description and Measurement of Environmental Noise, as applicable.

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

10. Material Finishes

Notwithstanding the materials and proposed finishes for the LEL GIS Castlelost Project detailed on submitted plans and drawings, prior to the commencement of any development on site, the applicant/developer shall assemble and submit composite panels of all materials, finishes, architectural detailing and elevational treatment for the written agreement of the Planning Authority. The development thereafter shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

11. Signage/Advertisements

No signs, symbols or advertisements, shall be erected on site without the prior written agreement of the Planning Authority whether or not such development would otherwise constitute "exempted development" under the terms of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to maintain proper planning control over the proposed development.

12. Development Contribution

Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall pay the sum of €55,633.24 (Fifty Five Thousand, Six Hundred and Thirty Three Euros and Twenty Four Cents), to the Planning Authority as a contribution, in accordance with Westmeath County Council's Section 48 Development Contribution Scheme adopted in 2022, in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the Planning Authority, and that is provided or that it is intended will be provided by, or on behalf of, the Council.

The contribution payable will be based on the contribution rate applicable at the time of payment and is subject to annual revision with reference to the Wholesale Price Index (Building and Construction), and interest for late payment, in accordance with the terms of the Council's Development Contribution Scheme.

<i>Class of Infrastructure</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Rate</i>	<i>Amount of Contribution</i>
Class 3 Commercial/ Industrial	2,034sqm	€26.86 per sqm	€54,633.24
Class 13 Transmission & Utility Supply Lines	800m length (approx.)	€1,000 per Km	€1,000
Total			€55,633.24

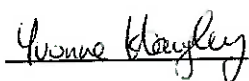
Reason: It is considered reasonable that the developer should contribute towards the expenditure incurred or proposed to be incurred by Westmeath County Council in respect of the provision/improvement of public services/infrastructure benefitting development in the area of the Planning Authority.

13. Special Levy

The planning authority is of the view that the construction of this development will lead to long term damage to the road network used as a haul route for the development. The applicant shall

be required to contribute to the cost of repairing this damage and a cash bond of **€289,367.12** shall be paid to the Planning Authority, shall be payable prior to commencement.

Reason: It is considered reasonable that the developer should contribute to the repair of public infrastructure as a result of the proposed development.



10th September 2026

Yvonne Haughey

Date

Executive Planner

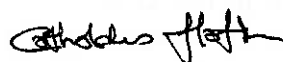


16th September 2026

Liam Currie

Date

Senior Executive Planner



18/09/2026

Cathaldus Hartin

Date

Senior Planner