

EIA Screening

The proposal is for the installation of an energy storage system, including battery enclosures, power conversion units, transformers, substation buildings, grid connection infrastructure, vehicular access and associated works. The site is located approximately 340m south of 5 Magheraboy Road, Rasharkin.

It is noted that that Battery Energy Storage development is not specifically mentioned within the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017, it is considered that regulations have a broad scope. Initial consultation with Causeway Coast and Glens Council it was concluded that Class 3 (a) and 10(b) of the regulations is relevant to Battery Storage.

Upon review of the regulations, as noted above, the proposed development does not fall within Schedule I of the Regulations. However, as agreed with Causeway Coast and Glens Council it does fall within Schedule II of the regulations, under;

3 (a) Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1); - in that the development exceeds 0.5 hectares in area.

10 (b) Urban development projects, including the construction of shopping centres and car parks;— in that the development exceeds 0.5 hectares in area.

The proposed development has been assessed under Selection criteria referred to in Article 4.3 of the Directive of Schedule 3 as per below;

1. Characteristics of development.

The characteristics of development must be considered having regard, in particular,

to: -

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| a the size of the development; | The site area does not exceed 6.2ha wherein battery compound equates to approximately 2ha, with the remainder of the proposal being grassland, access tracks or an attenuation pond. Any impacts from the development will only be experienced in the immediate vicinity, with impacts diminishing the further you get from the development. The size and scale of the development will not have significant detrimental impact on the environment. A Drainage and Flood Assessment has been provided and the mitigation |
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contained within it has been completed in line with the Rivers Agency requirements. The site is currently an agricultural field with low biodiversity value; the development intends to enhance the biodiversity through additional landscaping and the introduction of the pond.

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| b | the cumulation with other development; | The site is located as close to the Rasharkin substation as possible whilst still protecting residential amenity and visual amenity. There is other battery development approved in the area and a solar farm, however, when read with such it is considered that the cumulative environmental impacts with other residential properties/development are thought not to be significant. |
| c | the use of natural resources; | The development has been designed to ensure that any use of natural resources will be used in a sustainable manner, where it will not put the environment or habitats at risk. |
| d | the production of waste; | There will be no production of waste from the operational energy storage system. |
| e | pollution and nuisances; | Noise is the main possible nuisance of this type of development, however, the site has been designed in such a way to ensure that there is no adverse impact on residential amenity. Overall the risk of pollution from the proposal is low. Measures have also been included in the Drainage Assessment to ensure this is the case. |
| f | the risk of accidents, having regard in particular to substances or technologies used. | The proposed development will be developed to all applicable safety standards and will be remotely monitored to reduce any risks of accidents. A fire risk statement has been prepared which provides further detail. As such it is considered that risk to environment and human health is low. |
| g | The risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution). | This development is unlikely to result in any risks to human health in terms of air pollution and water contamination due to the BESS being sealed containerised units. |

2. Location of development

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development must be considered, having regard, in particular, to: -

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| a) the existing land use; | Part of a larger agricultural field used for grazing with a low biodiversity value. |
| b) the relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area; | Natural resources will not be detrimentally impacted. The proposal will enhance the biodiversity of the site. |
| c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:- | |
| i.) wetlands; | The proposal is not located within and will not have a detrimental impact on the environment of this habitat; |
| ii.) coastal zones; | The proposal is not located in and will not have a detrimental impact on the environment of this habitat; |
| iii.) mountain and forest areas; | The proposal is not located within and will not have a detrimental impact on the environment of this habitat; |
| iv.) nature reserves and parks; | The proposal is not located within and will not have a detrimental impact on the environment of this habitat; |
| v.) areas classified or protected under EEA states' legislation; areas designated by EEA states pursuant to Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds (a) and Council Directive | The proposal is not located within and will not have a detrimental impact on the environment of this habitat; |

92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (b);

vi.) areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in Community legislation have already been exceeded;

vii.) densely populated areas;

viii.) landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

The proposal is not located in such an area.

The proposal is located within open countryside outside the settlement of Rasharkin. Population within the settlements will not suffer significant environmental detriment by this proposal.

The proposal is not located in such an area.

3. Characteristics of the potential impact

The potential significant effects of development must be considered in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 above, and having regard in particular to: -

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| a) the extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population); | The impact of this proposal will be limited to its immediate surrounds. The extent of the impact is thought not to be significant. |
| b) the nature of the impact; | The nature of the impact will be throughout certain times of the day during construction but will not be continuous. Within the construction cycle certain nuisances will be more prevalent but thought not to be significant. Once the site is in the operation phase it will not have a significant impact. |
| c) the transboundary nature of the impact; | It is not considered there will be any transboundary impacts for a project of this size and scale. |

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| d) the intensity and complexity of the impact; | There are potential environmental impacts associated with developments of this type. However, this is not considered to be significant in terms of its range or complexity, therefore an Environmental Statement is not required. The issues arising will be dealt with through the normal decision-making process. |
| e) the probability of the impact; | There is a very low probability of impact due to the proposed mitigation measures within the supporting reports. |
| f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact; | The impact will be limited wherein after the lifespan of the project the lands will be returned back to its current state.. |
| g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development; | Visually the proposal will be integrated into the existing setting and additional landscaping established. Cumulative impacts are thought not to be significant. |
| h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact. | By following best practice during the construction period will ensure the impact will not go beyond that above. In addition, mitigation measures will be put in place to aid in reducing impact. |

Through initial screening of the proposal and discussion with a number of consultants, the view is that the environmental impacts of the project are thought not to be so significant as to warrant an Environmental Statement under current EIA legislation. Cumulative impacts with other existing and Energy Storage developments in the area are thought not to be significant.