

Environmental considerations

Overview

ABO Energy is undertaking an extensive update of environmental assessments prepared as part of the previously approved planning application, taking account of any changes in the baseline environment and to account for the layout revisions. All considerations are site specific and are informed by detailed surveys. A selection of some of the key environmental considerations are included below.



Access and transport

There is no change to the approved access arrangements onto Ballymoughan Road, as agreed by DfI Roads, nor is there anticipated to be any change in traffic movements to the site during construction and operational phase. Therefore, the proposal will not have an adverse impact on the local road network. The site will be visited occasionally for monitoring and maintenance works as and when required.



Drainage and flooding

An Addendum Drainage Assessment will be provided with the full planning application submission demonstrating that the proposed amendments will not be affected by surface flooding nor exacerbate flooding elsewhere. A watercourse, Gortagilly Burn, traverses through the eastern portion of the site. The strategic floodplain bounding the watercourse has been modelled and the BESS facility remains located beyond the flood extent save for the proposed access, as previously accepted by DfI Rivers.



Landscape and visual

Photomontages / wireframe visualisations and a detailed landscaping plan will be included as part of the application. The visualisations will demonstrate how the proposed amendments to the BESS can be integrated into the landscape from key viewpoints. As per the extant permission, given the proximity to Magherafelt Substation and associated overhead lines, the proposed development will be read in context with the existing infrastructure.

Existing vegetation will be retained where possible and new native species planting is proposed to screen the site.



Archaeology

An Archaeological Impact Assessment was previously prepared to accompany the previous approval, confirming there will be no adverse impact upon any archaeological site or monument within the site surroundings. The overall application area has not changed, and therefore, no impacts arise associated with the revised proposal.



Noise

A Noise Impact Assessment will be provided with the planning application demonstrating that there will be no adverse impact on the amenity of nearest sensitive receptors as a result of the proposed amendments to the development.



Ecology

The site is not subject to any priority habitat or environmental designation. A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was prepared for the extant permission which demonstrated that no unacceptable impact on habitats or species is likely to occur. There is no change in the approved site boundary and all mitigation measures previously proposed within the PEA, including provision of compensatory planting and necessary predevelopment surveys, remain applicable and ensures that there will be no adverse impact upon biodiversity during construction and operational phases.

An Addendum Construction Environmental Management Plan will be provided with the planning application to ensure best practice construction measures will be adhered to on site to prevent any adverse impact upon ecological or hydrological features



Fire risk and health & safety

Each battery container will be provided with extensive automatic fire detection, suppression and management systems as per the extant permission. An Addendum Fire Risk Assessment will be prepared providing detail on the fire detection and suppression measures.

There will be sufficient separation distance between each container unit to minimise potential for fire spread between containers. The proposed BESS layout has also been designed in accordance with the Health and Safety Executive Advice.