Dear resident,

This is intended as a final project update ahead of submission of a planning application for the Greenhills Renewable Energy Park. We wish to thank you for your patience as we have been working to fine-tune the designs, adapting to a constantly evolving policy environment and ensuring we have addressed any reasonable concerns from the planning authorities and residents where possible. The work is ongoing, with comprehensive environmental reports currently being finalised across a range of specialisations, assessing the existing status of and potential impacts on varied topics, including ecology, flood-risk, landscape, traffic and cultural heritage. By understanding the existing situation and how our proposed development fits into that, we can ensure that through appropriate design and mitigation measures, we can avoid negative impacts and, in some cases, even improve on the baseline scenario, as is the case with the ecology and flood-risk side of our proposal. As we collate all the outputs from these specialists into a planning application, timelines are always evolving, with many moving pieces all collectively feeding into each other. Current projections have us on schedule to lodge a planning application to Cork County Council in December for the solar farm and BESS parts of the project, while the substation and grid connection will follow at a later date in 2026, as we await engagement with An Coimisiún Pleanála. Please note that all of our newsletters and updates provided to date can be found on the project webpage at **https://orsted.ie/greenhills.**

The Solar Farm

The Solar Farm part of the development proposal is estimated to have an maximum export capacity (MEC) in the region of 240MW. We have recently revised this figure down slightly in line with updated modelling based on our final proposed planning layout. Some setback distances have been increased throughout the site to reduce the potential for impacts where possible, following feedback from the local community. This MEC figure is likely to increase again over the coming months, as the reality is that solar panels are consistently improving their output and efficiency per sq m, leading to improved yields within the same area. Under a RESS contract, this MEC has a direct bearing on the potential annual community benefit fund available in the area, but current estimates would put the value of the fund at around €450,000 per year for the first 15 years of the project. Further information on the community benefit fund and the rules of how it is governed can be found on the SEAI website, or at the link to our own webpage provided above.

The BESS

The BESS part of the development proposal provides an important service to the national grid, helping to prevent blackouts and ensure a more reliable, secure and consistent power supply. By charging at times of high supply/low demand and discharging at times of low supply/high demand, this storage system brings a whole range of stability benefits to the grid, helping to balance supply and demand. It also allows for increased usage of renewable energy on the grid, which has been shown to decrease electricity prices for the consumer, while offsetting the use of coal, oil and gas. Our BESS layout has been designed to use the latest advances in the technology with the highest safety standards possible. These standards, combined with 24/7 monitoring, ensure that the BESS operates as intended, providing the benefits to both the national grid and to consumers, without any negative impacts on the surrounding area.

The Substation

The onsite substation part of the development proposal expects to connect into the existing Knockraha to Cullenagh 220kV overhead line. The use of an onsite proposed substation and existing onsite overhead line is the lowest impact grid connection method that it is possible to have here. The ownership of this electrical grid infrastructure, once constructed, will be permanently handed over to the national grid operators as a national asset. These sorts of assets provide a connection point for large energy users, something that is currently missing in this side of East Cork. This connection point then helps to facilitate the future sustainable development of industry and commerce in the region, for example on the outskirts of Youghal town.

Note: This map is intended as a high-level overview. It is not possible to show finer detail at this scale. Details are subject to change, pending final pre-planning review. Not to scale.

R634 Regional Road

Existing 220kV Overhead Line

Inch

Park Cross Roads

River Tourig

LEGEND

- Development Boundary
- 33kV Interconnector Cable to Proposed Greenhills Substation
- Inverter / Transformer & Installation Hardstand
- Drainage Swale
- Retained & Enhanced Hederow
- Hedgerow - New
- Native Woodland Planting
- Species Enriched Grasslands
- Proposed Solar Panel Tables
- Proposed Access Track
- Upgraded Existing Track
- Temporary Compound / Set Down Area
- Substation Area
- BESS Area

Meet the Team

Aidan Stakelum
Community Engagement Lead

Aidan is the community liaison representatives for the project. He is responsible for developing community engagement strategies and stakeholder management plans to engage with communities on renewable energy projects. Aidan is available to discuss the proposed project with the local community.

Patrick McMorrough
Project Developer

Patrick is the project developer responsible for managing the Greenhills project from initial conception to the submission of the planning applications and throughout the subsequent planning process. Patrick manages a team of skilled specialists from a range of backgrounds in preparing the necessary reports and documents to inform the planning process.

Contact Us

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