



To: Directors of Planning in each local authority

CC: Chief Executives
Senior Planners
An Bord Pleanála
Office of the Planning Regulator
Directors of Regional Assemblies

Circular Letter PL 12/2021

10 December 2021

Re: Government Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply

I have been asked by Mr Peter Burke, T.D, Minister of State for Planning and Local Government to advise planning authorities of the recent adoption and publication by the Government of a new Policy Statement on Security of Electricity Supply, as prepared by the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications. A copy of the Policy Statement is attached for information.

The background to the Policy Statement is the short to medium term risk to electricity security of supply as identified by the Commission for the Regulation of Utilities (CRU) due to a number of factors:

- lower than expected availability of some existing power stations;
- anticipated new power stations not being developed as planned;
- expected growth in demand for electricity, due to increased activity by high energy consuming industries including the growth of data centres,
- the expected closure of power stations which make up approximately 25% of conventional electricity generating capacity over the coming years.

In this regard, it should be specifically noted - as can be seen from page 5 of the Policy Statement - that the Government has approved that:

1. the development of new conventional generation (including gas-fired and gasoil distillate-fired generation) is a national priority and should be permitted and supported in order to ensure security of electricity supply and support the growth of renewable electricity generation;
2. it is appropriate that existing conventional electricity generation capacity should be retained until the new conventional electricity generation capacity is developed in order to ensure security of electricity supply;



3. the connection of large energy users to the electricity grid should take into account the potential impact on security of electricity supply and on the need to decarbonise the electricity grid;
4. it is appropriate for additional electricity transmission and distribution grid infrastructure, electricity interconnection and electricity storage to be permitted and developed in order to support the growth of renewable energy and to support security of electricity supply; and
5. it is appropriate for additional natural gas transmission and distribution grid infrastructure to be permitted and developed in order to support security of electricity supply.

In essence, the Policy Statement recognises the need in the current circumstances for a continued mixture of electricity generation and supporting infrastructure to maintain security of electricity supply. In this connection, planning authorities are advised that where planning applications are submitted for electricity infrastructure or infrastructure that may impact on electricity supply – including for existing conventional electricity generation – that they should, until further notice, be considered having regard to the Policy Statement. Furthermore, it is requested that the determination of all such planning applications should be prioritised as much as possible in light of the current circumstances relating to electricity supply.

Terry Sheridan

Principal

Planning Policy and Legislation