

Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: CLW-C10-19

Údar: Lightsourcebp

Stádas: Submitted

Submission: Solar Farms and Climate Action

Comhairliúchán:

Draft Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028

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## Chapter 4: Enterprise and Employment

**Caibidil:** Volume 1: Written Statement » Chapter 4: Enterprise and Employment

The draft County Development Plan has considered business, employment, and enterprise creation within Chapter 4. Lightsource bp are of the view that economic development must be sustainable and achieved within the context of carbon reductions. This is lacking within the tone and wording of Chapter 4. The Enterprise and Employment Strategy refers to the following policy:

- *ES. P1: Work in partnership with Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, adjoining local authorities, the Regional Assembly and all other relevant agencies to proactively pursue sustainable enterprise and economic development in line with the vision of Carlow County Council together with policies and objectives set out in national, regional and local strategies.*

Through the new Development Plan, Carlow has an opportunity to take ambitious steps to attract inward investment, both indigenous and foreign direct investment (FDI). It is the view of Lightsource bp that utility scale solar is a key incentive in this process. Increasingly FDI companies wish to locate near to a secure supply of renewable electricity. This can be seen in Ireland with Facebook in Meath, Eli Lilly in Kinsale, Amazon in Cork, and Microsoft in Dublin. Peter Freed, Data Centre Renewable Energy Manager in Facebook encapsulates this 'green goal' very well in the statement below:

*"Our goal is simple: power our data centres with clean and renewable energy and, where possible, help green the grid by adding new renewable resources."*

The infrastructure facilities that are normally promoted in any town referred to within a County Development Plan are likely that the town boasts a number of fully serviced sites, it has excellent transport links, and the availability of high-speed broadband in the area. What very often is not considered is the potential end user's requirements for clean, secure, and renewable energy. Quality Indicators used to steer the location for FDI investment include access to reliable energy that has come from low carbon sources.

Amongst the type of FDI companies that may consider Carlow as a location are likely to be Pharmaceutical providers, Data Centres and other FDIs with internal corporate policies that require substantial (if not 100%) of their energy to be sourced from renewable sources, to reduce their and carbon footprint. In N. Ireland, Lightsource bp has developed solar farms which serve a local manufacturer called Brett Martin (produces plastic sheet manufacturing) and Belfast International Airport. These are excellent examples of solar energy supporting local enterprise, creating and protecting jobs, and meeting renewable energy targets. The Council should be aspiring to become a supporting

platform for local business development and companies that embrace renewables. Policies that are both positive towards renewable technology such as utility scale solar, and actively forge the link between employment, investment and renewable energy are required in Chapter 4.

The policies within the new Carlow County Development Plan therefore should be clear, targeted, and focused, demonstrating how renewable forms of energy are to be encouraged and in what areas of the local economy they can particularly assist. The use of renewable energy like solar, can stimulate jobs and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. As stated above, Quality Indicators used to locate many foreign direct investment companies include access to reliable energy that has come from low carbon sources.

Utility scale solar developments provide the best opportunity to achieve both local 'green' targets set within the County Development Plan and help assist with national targets on electricity generation. In addition, they facilitate reductions in carbon emissions and contribute positively to the local environment through biodiversity enhancement.

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**Documents Attached:** Níl