



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-300167-17 1st meeting

Case Reference / Description	ABP-300167-17		
	110kV substation cable and two cable end masts in townlands of Vesingstown and Harlockstown, Dunboyne, Co. Meath		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st		
Date	08/02/18	Start Time	11 a.m.
Location	Meeting Room 3	End Time	11.50 a.m.
Chairperson	Phillip Green	Executive Officer	Kieran Somers

Attendees		
Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Staff Member	Email Address	Phone
Phillip Green, Assistant Director of Planning		
Pauline Fitzpatrick, Senior Planning Inspector		
David Curran, Senior Executive Officer		
Kieran Somers, Executive Officer	k.somers@pleanala.ie	01-8737107

Representing the Prospective Applicant		
Aidan Collins, Principal Planner, Lightsource Renewable Energy Ireland Limited		
Barry Wadding, Business Development Manager, Lightsource Renewable Energy Ireland Limited		
Mark Evans, Grid Connections Manager, Lightsource Renewable Energy Ireland Limited		

The meeting commenced at 11 a.m.

Introduction:

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant requesting pre-application consultations and advised the prospective applicant that the instant meeting essentially constituted an information-gathering exercise for the Board; it also invited the prospective applicant to outline the nature of the proposed development and to highlight any matters it wished to receive advice on from the Board.

The Board mentioned general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process as follows:

- The Board will keep a record of this meeting and any other meetings, if held. Such records will form part of the file which will be made available publicly at the conclusion of the process. The record of the meeting will not be amended by the Board once finalised, but the prospective applicant may submit comments on the record which will form part of the case file.
- The Board will serve notice at the conclusion of the process as to the strategic infrastructure status of the proposed development. It may form a preliminary view at an early stage in the process on the matter.

- A further meeting or meetings may be held in respect of the proposed development.
- Further information may be requested by the Board and public consultations may also be directed by the Board.
- The Board may hold consultations in respect of the proposed development with other bodies.
- The holding of consultations does not prejudice the Board in any way and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or any legal proceedings.

The Board said that the main purpose of the instant meeting was to seek further information from the prospective applicant in order to inform its determination as to whether or not the proposed development might constitute strategic infrastructure. In this regard, the Board said that it would be having particular regard to section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and the definition of transmission. The Board will also have regard to the criteria stated under section 37A(2) of the Act in determining whether or not the proposed development is SID although accepting that section 182A does not make specific reference to such.

Presentation by prospective applicant:

The prospective applicant provided the Board with a background to the company and the technology it employs with respect to solar farm developments. With regard to solar farms generally, the prospective applicant commented that the technology utilised is simple and proven, is safe, has a dual land use and constitutes a bankable source of renewable energy.

Permission has been sought from Meath County Council under reference number RA/170873 for a 55MW solar farm and a 110kV substation. It is located approximately three kilometres north-west of Dunboyne in the townlands of Vesingstown, Harlockstown and Polleban. It will have the capacity to provide power to over 19,300 homes.

Further information has been sought on the planning application including the requirement that the prospective applicant satisfy itself that the proposal for the substation and 110kV cable are not strategic infrastructure.

The prospective applicant confirmed that the site of the proposed substation and 110kV cable are within the site boundary as delineated for the proposed solar farm; however, for the purposes of the instant pre-application discussions, the site of the proposed substation and cable, only, are defined.

The prospective applicant said that the 110kV substation would be looped into the existing Corduff-Mullingar 110kV circuit and would comprise of elements such as two cable end masts and 110kV cable linking the existing line to the substation. The prospective applicant stated that the proposed substation would comprise of four bays despite the fact that one bay is not actually required for the proposed solar farm. The said bay will not be fitted out. The prospective applicant clarified this latter point by saying that four bays are required by Eirgrid as this is their standard construction methodology with respect to substations. In response to the Board's query on the matter, the prospective applicant stated that the proposed development, the subject of this pre-application case, is solely to facilitate the proposed solar farm. With regard to the pertinent legislation, the prospective applicant repeated its opinion that the proposed development would not constitute SID as it does not come under the Seventh Schedule and does not satisfy any of the criteria set out under section 37A(2). The prospective applicant said that it has reviewed previous Board decisions in coming to this conclusion.

In relation to the fourth bay, which is to be provided but not fitted out, the prospective applicant advised that Eirgrid does not envisage any immediate future use for this bay.

The Board's representatives noted the presentation of the prospective applicant and said that the critical matter for it to consider would be whether the proposed substation and looped-in/looped-out cabling element of the proposed development might entail transmission and, therefore, constitute SID within the meaning of the Act. The Board also said that it would have to consider if this might become a key node on the transmission network. In response to the Board's query on the matter, the prospective applicant said that Eirgrid had expressed its opinion that this would not be a key point on their transmission network. The Board said the proposed development might still fall to be considered SID with respect to the proposed substation and looped-in/looped out 110kV circuit. The Board remarked that a single cable tail fed substation might be considered differently.

Conclusion:

The Board indicated that it may consult with Eirgrid and, possibly, the Commission for Energy Regulation in writing in facilitating its understanding of the case and coming to an eventual conclusion as to whether the proposed development is SID. Following such written communication, the Board's representatives said that a report may be prepared to go to the Board or they would meet with the SID division of the Board in order to elicit a preliminary opinion on the SID status of the proposed development.

The Board undertook to revert to the prospective applicant in due course regarding this preliminary opinion. If it is determined that the proposed development is not SID, then such a decision will be conveyed by way of a formal letter. If the preliminary opinion is otherwise, then a further meeting will be convened; at that point in time, the formal procedures for making a SID application to the Board would be given to the prospective applicant and a further discussion could take place on issues that may have a bearing on the Board's decision.

Finally, in response to the prospective applicant's query on the matter, the Board clarified that an EIAR is not mandatory with respect to section 182A electricity transmission applications. Noting this, the prospective applicant said that it had not been required to submit an EIAR with its planning application for the solar farm to the local authority.

The Board also advised that the record of the instant meeting will issue shortly to the prospective applicant.

The meeting concluded at 11.50 a.m.

Phillip Green
Assistant Director of Planning