



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-306330-20 1st meeting

Case Reference / Description	ABP-306330-20 Proposed construction of 110kV infrastructure is to facilitate the connection of Gaskinstown Solar Farm to the transmission network at Duleek, County Meath.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st		
Date	10/03/20	Time	11.30 – 12.20

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Staff Members
Anne Marie O'Connor, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Breda Gannon, Senior Planning Inspector
Ellen Morrin, Senior Administrative Officer
Rob Mac Giollarnáth, Executive Officer r.macgiollarnath@pleanala.ie
Representing the prospective Applicant
John Brennan, High Field Energy
Dónal Keogh, High Field Energy

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 the following general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process:

- 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.

Presentation by the prospective applicant:

The proposed development is for the construction of 110kV infrastructure (substation) to facilitate the connection of Gaskinstown Solar Farm to the transmission network at Duleek, County Meath. The sub-station would be connected to the 110kV line by way of a looped in/out connection. The prospective applicant gave an overview of the project under the following headings:

- Introduction and description – It comprises a substation which will facilitate the connection of a solar farm (which comprises of solar photovoltaic panels on ground mounted steel frames, on a site area of approximately 81 hectares).
- Site Location – Located on unzoned land approximately 1.6 km southwest of Duleek, County Meath.
- Policy Context – Climate Action Plan (published June 2019, target of 70% renewable energy by 2030). Under RESS (renewable electricity support scheme) there is a target to procure up to 13,500 GWhrs. Support is allocated by an auction structure – to ensure value to consumer. RESS-1 is currently open and first auction will be held in June 2020.
- EIA – not intending to do an EIAR as Board has previously determined that large scale ground mounted solar PV does not require EIA and does not fall into Schedule 5 of the Planning & Development Act.
- Public Consultation – applicant intends to hold a public information day in the coming weeks to inform locals of the details of the development. Community Benefit will be provided as part of the solar farm project in compliance with RESS; annual benefit of €2/MWh generated and approximately €140,000-170,000 annually.
- Strategic Infrastructure Development Criteria – it is the applicant's understanding that the proposed works would be deemed Strategic Infrastructure by the Board.

Discussion:

The following matters were discussed:

- Road work network (any flooding/drainage issues), size of the road to be used and material composition (compressed hardcore). Prospective applicant will be doing a flood risk assessment.
- The use of an existing farm access is utilised with potential for it to be widened/improved re sitelines/visibility.
- Prospective applicant has spoken with local authority – no issues raised as such (flooding had been raised – there is a small stream on the site).
- Prospective applicant proposes to meet nearby residents in the following days.
- It is not proposed to do a Natura Impact Statement.
- While there are no protected structures nearby there are some culturally significant houses.
- As part of any subsequent application photomontages should be submitted.

Conclusion:

The record of the instant meeting will issue. The preliminary view is that the project would constitute strategic infrastructure.

When the prospective applicant wishes to request formal closure to the pre-application consultation, a request must be made in writing and, upon receipt, the reporting inspector will complete his/her report and recommendation and the file will be forwarded to the Board for SID determination. The Board advised the prospective applicant that this final stage of the process might take approximately four weeks.

pp Rob Mac Giollarnáth

Anne Marie O'Connor
Assistant Director of Planning