



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting

ABP-306723-20

Development	Proposed strategic infrastructure development of a data centre on undeveloped lands linked to existing Huntstown power stations, new GIS substation and associated site works		
Location	Townland of Huntstown, North road, Finglas, Dublin 11		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
Meeting	1 st meeting		
Date	12/06/2020	Time	11:00 -12:00

Attendees		
Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)		
Úna Crosse, Senior Planning Inspector		
Jennifer Sherry, Executive Officer	j.sherry@pleanala.ie	01-8737266
Representing the Prospective Applicant		
Colin Alexander, Energia Group		
Garrett Donnellan, Energia Group		
Suzanne McClure, Brock McClure		

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.

Presentation by the prospective applicant

The prospective applicant provided a brief overview of the Energia Group and stressed the strategic importance of the current proposed development. The prospective applicant outlined that the existing power stations, namely Huntstown 1 and Huntstown 2, are subject to closure notices which expire in 2022 and as such they are seeking to find an economically viable solution to ensure future operation.

The main elements of the proposed development comprise:

- Data centre development on undeveloped land linked to existing power stations Huntstown 1 and Huntstown 2. The data centre is expected to comprise of 3 large buildings approx. 25 -28 meters in height with mechanical equipment on the roof, plant rooms, generator compounds, air circulation, administration and IT space.
- The two existing Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) substations which connect into the National Grid are to be replaced with a 220kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) substation which would facilitate the proposed data centre development and continue the connection of the power stations into the National Grid.
- The proposal also includes high voltage switchgear, standby diesel generators and mechanical cooling systems.
- It was noted there are existing overhead lines with a capacity of 110kV and 38kV. It is proposed in the future to re-route those lines underground in consultation with ESB Networks.

The prospective applicant referenced a Data Centre Connection Policy Paper developed by EirGrid which they contend suggests that future data centre proposals are required to provide their own power generation. The Board's representatives will seek clarification on this matter and will revert to the prospective applicant on same at a future meeting. Furthermore, the prospective applicant offered its opinion that

the cumulative effect of the proposed development would meet the threshold set out in section 37A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

Discussion

The following matters were discussed as part of the meeting:

- The Board's representatives expressed the principal consideration for the proposed development at this initial stage is to determine the relevant legislation within which the proposal might be considered.
- Reference was made to the *Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018* (16/2018), s. 49 which inserted a fifth section to the Seventh Schedule entitled *Communications and Data Infrastructure which comprises 'a facility consisting of one or more than one structure, the combined gross floor space of which exceeds 10,000 square metres, used primarily for the storage, management and dissemination of data, and the provision of associated electricity connections infrastructure'*
- To date this section has not been commenced and therefore the Board's representatives advised that under the current enacted provisions of the Seventh Schedule the current proposed development, in its entirety would not constitute Strategic Infrastructure development under section 37A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).
- The Board noted that as it stands any application for the data centre element of the proposed development should be made directly to Fingal County Council. The Board advised that an application under section 182A of the Planning and

Development Act, 2000 (as amended) could be made to the Board for the GIS substation and ancillary elements of the proposed development related to same.

- The Board's representatives indicated to the prospective applicant that a further meeting can take place in the pre-application process to discuss the proposed development in more detail.

Conclusion

The record of the meeting will issue to the prospective applicant and it will then be a matter for the prospective applicant to submit any comments on this if it wishes to do so. Following this, the prospective applicant may seek a second meeting with the Board or request closure to the pre-application process.

If closure to the pre-application process is requested, the reporting inspector will complete the report and recommendation which will be forwarded to the Board for determination. A decision will then issue to the prospective applicant.

Ciara Kellett

Assistant Director of Planning