



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of 1st Meeting

ABP-307256-20

Development	Provision of a 110kV gas insulated switchgear (GIS) substation, double circuit 110kV underground transmission line and associated site works		
Location	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st		
Date	21/07/2020	Time	11:20a.m. – 12:30p.m.

Attendees		
Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Rachel Kenny, Director of Planning (Chair)		
Mairead Kenny, Senior Planning Inspector		
Jennifer Sherry, Executive Officer	j.sherry@pleanala.ie	01-8737266
Representing the Prospective Applicant		
Simon McCormick, Crag Digital Avoca Ltd		
Patrick Denton, H&MV		
Teri Hayes, AWN Consulting		
Enda Baker, FTSquared		

Paul Turley, John Spain Associates
Luke Wymer, John Spain Associates

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 that it wished to receive 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 prospective applicant said the proposed development is located on a brownfield site in an industrial estate, north to the River Avoca within the townland of Shelton Abbey. The rationale for the proposed development is to feed a data storage facility which was granted permission in July, 2019 (Ref: 18940) and the existing Arklow Substation which serves the industrial estate.

The prospective applicant gave an overview of the proposed development the subject of this pre-application consultation which comprises a 110kV Gas Insulated Switchgear Substation, GIS building, MV building, four transformer bays, high voltage busbars and associated electrical plant and equipment.

There are two connection methods being considered by the prospective applicant, an overhead transmission line which was the original thinking of the project to be undertaken by EirGrid on a non-contestable basis, and the preferred connection method via an underground transmission line to be delivered on a contestable basis by the prospective applicant. The prospective applicant is in discussion with EirGrid over the feasibility of both methods of connection.

The proposed development was further elaborated upon with regard to the connection method via underground electricity transmission lines to serve the proposed 110kV substation. It is proposed to include a double circuit 110kV underground transmission line to connect the proposed 110kV GIS substation with the existing substation at Arklow and also, to connect the proposed GIS substation with the adjoining Shelton Abbey 110kV substation. The transmission line routes are as follows:

- Route A – follows an existing roadway eastward crossing below the M11 motorway via horizontal directional drilling and at this point can take one of two options (A1 and A2). A1 proceeds northwards to reach Beech Road and A2 proceeds southeast along Monument Lane through a housing development.
- Route B – proceeds northwards and eastward from the proposed substation before branching northward along an existing country road, following that roadway to a junction with Beech Road.

- Route C – proceeds eastward crossing the M11 by way of an existing underpass, turning north through agricultural lands, before following the same route as option A for the remainder of the route.

The prospective applicant states the proposed development would fall under a category of development set out under Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.

The prospective applicant outlined there are no significant environmental constraints associated with the proposed development site and noted extensive environmental information and constraints are available from the information already submitted within the EIAR for the data storage facility.

Discussion

The following matters were discussed:

- **Proposed Development** – the prospective applicant enquired if it would be possible to split the proposed development into two separate applications for the substation and grid connection following a SID determination by the Board, to ensure high level delivery. The prospective applicant indicated there may be a delay on which grid connection method will be pursued as they are in discussion with EirGrid. The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to bottom out the project design as close as possible. The Board's representatives noted that it is proposed to submit an EIAR. The entire project would have to be assessed in order to avoid project splitting. The grid route should be clarified as much as possible prior to making an application.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment** – the Board's representatives queried the need for EIA. The prospective applicant noted that the permission for the data storage facility was subject to EIA, The prospective applicant said from a legal perspective the proposed grid connection and substation is an integral part of the permitted data storage facility and therefore that EIA would apply. The prospective applicant further stated there are no significant environmental sensitivities for the proposed development that in of itself require an EIAR. The Board's representatives stated it is important to consider the cumulative effects of

the EIAR for the data storage facility and the proposed grid connection and substation.

- **Future Capacity** – the prospective applicant stated the proposed development will have a dual role by supporting the permitted data storage facility, industrial estate and surrounding areas. The proposed substation will have additional capacity for future developments in the area.
- **Appropriate Assessment** – the Board’s representatives advised the importance of fully assessing if a stage 2 appropriate assessment is required. The Board also noted that a Stage 1 Screening report should be provided. The prospective applicant outlined they will be cognizant to the hydrological link to the Avoca River.
- **Consultations** – the prospective applicant has undertaken consultation with EirGrid, prescribed bodies and the local authority.
- **Legislation & Policy Context** – the Board’s representatives stressed a robust justification for the proposed development as a strategic infrastructure development should be set out in national, regional and local policy and the prospective applicant should set out cases for strategy in that context. The prospective applicant advised they are satisfied the proposed development comes under section 182.
- **Nature of development** – the Board’s representatives queried whether the development would be classified as a new node or a replacement node on the network. The Board noted that this might have implications for whether the development is a SID
- **Further discussion** – the Board’s representatives indicated there may be value in having a second meeting. The prospective applicant discussed if a written submission and a detailed grid connection method was submitted to the Board, this may provide sufficient clarification instead of having a further meeting.

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

or at the time of a further meeting. It will be a matter for the prospective applicant to revert to the Board when it requires a further meeting.

Rachel Kenny

Director of Planning