



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

**Record of Meeting  
ABP-307437-20  
1<sup>st</sup> Meeting**

<b>Case Reference/ Description</b>	ABP-307347-20 110kV GIS Substation, 4 no. transformers and client control building within a fenced compound, a 49KVA electrical supply to 110kV GIS substation, 2 no. dropdown 110kV transmission lines connecting to existing 110kV overhead transmission lines traversing the subject site and all associated and ancillary development. Lands at Drogheda IDA Business and Technology Park, Donore Road, Drogheda, Co. Meath.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application Consultation		
<b>Meeting</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting		
<b>Chairperson</b>	Ciara Kellett		
<b>Date</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> August, 2020	<b>Time</b>	11.00a.m – 11.45a.m.

<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Donal Donnelly, Senior Planning Inspector
Nichola Meehan, Executive Officer

<b>Representing Prospective Applicant</b>
Saul Rugero – Applicant
Cormac Murphy – Applicant
Jack Collen – Collen Construction
Pauraic Matthews – CSEA Consulting Engineers
Laurene McCrudden – CSEA Consulting Engineers

Ivan O'Keefe – MCA Architects
Paul Turley – John Spain and Associates
Luke Wymer – John Spain and Associates
Elaine Neary – AWN Consulting

## **Introduction:**

Following introductions, the representatives of the Board referred to the request received from the prospective applicant to enter into pre-application consultations.

The Board advised the prospective applicant that the instant meeting essentially constituted an information-gathering exercise for the Board to determine whether the proposed development was strategic infrastructure development or not and if so, what the key considerations may be. 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 in writing which will form part of the case file.
- The Board will serve formal notice at the conclusion of the process as to whether or not the proposed development is SID. It may form a preliminary view at an early stage in the process as to whether the proposed development would likely constitute strategic infrastructure.
- 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 relates to a 110kV GIS Substation, 4 no. transformers and client control building within a fenced compound, a 49KVA electrical supply to 110kV GIS substation, 2 no. dropdown 110kV transmission lines connecting to existing 110kV overhead transmission lines traversing the subject site and all associated and ancillary development. Lands at Drogheda IDA Business and

Technology Park, Donore Road, Drogheda, Co. Meath. The prospective applicant gave an overview of the project under the following headings:

- **Site Location and Context:** The site is an existing IDA Business and Technology Park off the Donore Road in Drogheda. There is an extant permission being implemented on site for a data storage facility building.
- **Planning Context:** The site is zoned E1 with a stated objective to “facilitate opportunities for high technology and major campus style office-based employment within high quality and accessible locations.”
- Public services are permissible under this zoning.
- This zoning remains unaltered under the draft County Development Plan (likely to be adopted during Q1 2021).
- **Permitted Data Storage Facility – Reg.Ref: LB/191735:** The final grant was issued on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2020. Site works have commenced, and works are advancing on the main data storage facility. Potential for a future substation was outlined in the permission. The substation was considered in the environmental impact assessment report for the data storage facility.
  
- **The Proposed Development:** The proposed development is a 110kV gas insulated substation and associated connections.
  - It is considered that the proposed development will have the purpose of electricity ‘transmission’ as defined under Section 182A(9) of the planning and development act and the applicant is of the opinion that the proposal constitutes Strategic Development.
  - The proposed development will be transferred to EirGrid on completion. The scheme will not be part of the distribution network. There will be capacity for other developments in the area based on the proposal. There will be 8 bays in total including 2 which will serve future development subject to other planning applications.
  - The development will be part of the transmission system (i.e. it has not been identified as distribution) and will comprise a new node on the grid. A masterplan was submitted with the original application which indicatively sets out sites for possibly two further buildings.
  
- **Pre-application Drawings:** The prospective applicant provided an overview of the drawings submitted with the pre-application request (copies on file)

## Discussion:

The following matters were discussed:

- The Board’s representatives noted that there is a cluster of pylons and a line continuing east to west, and from the drawings it is unclear how close the mast being proposed is to the existing pylons in the area. The prospective applicant was advised when submitting an application that from a visual perspective all pylons should be labelled clearly and shown on sections and contextual elevations.

- The Board's representatives queried if the proposed masts on the western part of the site are within the F1 open space zoning. The prospective applicant stated that they are likely to be on the border. The prospective applicant also stated that they will have an exact overlay of the zoning map and will take on board if pylons are within the F1 area.
- The prospective applicant advised that there are no pathways or tracks through the mature boundary on the western part of the site. It forms part of the buffer between the IDA Business Park and the motorway. The proposed dropdown mast will be within the curtilage of the data storage development and no track or access would be obstructed.
- The Board's representatives advised that from a visual point of view, the prospective applicant should be aware of any implications of the location of the tower structures with regard to the zoning objective and to the recently granted strategic housing development for 600 dwellings and a neighbourhood centre, which included 6 ha of landscaped open space adjacent to the River Boyne and motorway frontages. It was pointed out that there may be potential for future connections from housing developments and the Drogheda Retail Park to the south of the site.
- The prospective applicant informed the Board's representatives that there is potential for future linkages to the north and in terms of connectivity and permeability it more likely will be via the estate road. It also stated that in terms of the landscaping on the northern boundary they are aware of how sensitive the area is in relation to the River Boyne. It was stated that images were submitted from the motorway crossover bridges as part of the data centre development application. The existing tree lines are being left in place and are being reinforced from behind with additional mounding and landscaping to enhance the views from the northern side.
- The Board's representatives queried the large over burden storage to the west of the site boundary. The prospective applicant stated that there is mounding and temporary storage relating to the data centre development. It is currently being cleared and is due to be completed in the next couple of weeks.
- The prospective applicants informed the Board's representatives that surveys were carried out for the data storage facility application for the EIAR. An initial bat survey was completed as part of the application and it is intended to carry out further bat surveys to provide more up to date information. The prospective applicant advised that very limited potential for bat roosting was found in the initial surveys. Nonetheless, mitigation measures in terms of bat sensitive lighting will be put in place.
- The Board's representatives queried if any discussion has taken place with Eirgrid regarding a loop in loop out arrangement on the transmission network. The prospective applicant stated that as part of the agreement Eirgrid have requested an 8 bay GIS system, 6 of which are linked to the 2 in and 4 out for

the data centre and two to be included as part of any future developments, possibly lands to the north and the south.

- The prospective applicant informed the Board that AA screening was carried out as part of the data centre application and a NIS was not required. The prospective applicant stated that it is its intention to carry out AA screening in this instance. The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to be very clear to the exact reasons why it can be screened out and to ensure that a robust screening report is submitted.

## **Conclusion:**

The record of the meeting will issue to the prospective applicant and it will be a matter for the prospective applicant to submit any comments on this if it wishes to do so. Following this, the prospective applicant should seek a second meeting with the Board or request closure to the pre-application process in writing. If closure to the pre-application is requested, the reporting inspector will complete the report and recommendation which will be forwarded to the Board for determination. A copy of the procedures will be attached, and the decision will then issue to the prospective applicant.

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**Ciara Kellett**

**Assistant Director of Planning**