

An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-308005-20 1st meeting

Description	Proposed extension to an existing 110kV substation at Slievecallan substation, Knockalassa, Co. Clare		
Case Type	Pre-application Consultation under Section 182E of the P&D Act 2000 as amended		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Venue	Microsoft Teams		
Date	5/10/20	Time	11:30am – 12:00pm

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Patricia Calleary, Senior Planning Inspector
Sarah Kerley, Executive Officer
Representing the prospective Applicant
Jimmy Green, MKO
Eoin O'Sullivan, MKO
Meabhann Crowe, MKO
Thomas Scanlan, Slieveacurry Limited
William O'Connor, Slieveacurry Limited

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 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 in any legal proceedings.

Presentation by the prospective applicant:

The prospective applicant provided an overview of the project by way of a PowerPoint presentation which covered the following areas:

- Overview of Proposed Development
- Planning History and Background
- Site Location and Layout
- Strategic Infrastructure Development Criteria

Overview of proposed development: The proposed development constitutes the provision of an extension to the existing substation on the site of the Slievecallan wind farm (granted permission under Ref: P10/9 and ABP-237524). The proposed works will consist of a new IPP control building with associated electrical plant, equipment and security fencing. The subject proposal represents the provision of additional 110kV infrastructure to extend and expand the existing substation to accommodate the connection of an additional wind farm (Slieveacurry wind farm) which is being proposed by a sister company of the prospective applicant, to the national grid.

Planning History and Background: The proposed site has been the subject to three previous planning applications:

1. Clare County Council reference 10/9 – Construction of a wind farm comprising 31 wind turbines was granted permission in August 2011 following a third party appeal to An Bord Pleanála. The development did not constitute Strategic Infrastructure within the meaning of the Act as it was below the then threshold of 50 turbines or 100 MW.

A pre-application consultation was subsequently held in 2013 between the Board and the applicant in relation to alterations to the existing substation serving Slievecallan wind farm.

The Board determined that the proposed development was not Strategic Infrastructure and recommended that the planning application should be made to Clare County Council in the first instance (ABP-PC0161).

2. Clare County Council reference 13/558 – Construction of a revised electricity substation was granted permission in December 2013. An amendment to the substation was already granted permission under P10/9.
3. Clare County Council reference 18/223 - Construction of a battery storage compound adjacent to an existing 110kV electricity substation was granted permission in June 2018.

Site Location and Layout: The existing Slievecallan substation comprises a three-bay 110kV AIS substation and is located approximately 8.5km to the east of Miltown Malbay in the townland of Knockalassa, Co. Clare. The proposed substation extension is located immediately adjacent to the existing substation which in turn will benefit from the access and service infrastructure that is already in place on the site. The works proposed will not change the current character of the existing area.

Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) Criteria: It is submitted that the proposed development does not constitute SID, within the meaning of Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, for the following reasons:

1. The works constitute the provision of an additional 110kV infrastructure to extend an existing substation compound and will not require any works beyond the general compound area.
2. The works proposed will improve and extend the capacity of the existing substation to cater for the proposed Slieveacurry wind farm.
3. The works proposed will not create a new node or stand-alone substation.

Due to the electrical nature of the proposed development, the prospective applicant wished to clarify this with the Board. The prospective applicant also highlighted similar developments that were previously deemed not SID, including ABP-304856, ABP-303838, ABP-VC0104 and ABP-VC0097.

Discussion


The following matters were discussed:

- The Board's representatives stated that on the basis of the information presented the project would appear to not constitute strategic infrastructure, however, the final decision is a matter for the Board.
- The Board's representatives enquired if the site was readily accessible if they decided to carry out a site inspection. The prospective applicant stated that it can be easily arranged and will forward contact details, address and an induction form in order to facilitate same.
- The prospective applicant stated their intention to complete the consultation process as quickly as possible as it was their intention to lodge a planning application for the windfarm to Clare County Council and to include the proposed development (extension to existing substation) as part of that application.

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. It is not envisaged that further meetings will be required for this proposed development.

If the prospective applicant wishes to close the pre-application consultation, it is required to do so in writing. If closure of the pre-application is requested, the reporting inspector will complete the report and recommendation, which will then 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.

 14/10/2020

Ciara Kellett

Assistant Director of Planning