



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-308436-20

Development	Proposed 110 kV substation at Shantallow Solar Farm, County Galway		
Location	Shantallow, County Galway.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
Meeting	1 st meeting	01/12/2020	11:00 – 11.30

Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)		
Mairead Kenny, Senior Planning Inspector		
Rob Mac Giollarnáth, Executive Officer	r.macgiollarnath@pleanala.ie	01-8737247

Representing the Prospective Applicant		
Brendan Allen, ESB – Planning Team Leader		
Andrew Morrow ESB - Planner		
Brian Perry ESB – Electrical Team Leader		
Conor Sheridan ESB – ESB Asset Development		
Szabolc Lakatos, ESB - Electrical Engineer		

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

This was the first meeting for the project. There was a brief presentation which was then followed by a discussion.

Proposed Development

The prospective applicant intended to build a solar farm and also a substation to service it. The entire development had received planning permission from Galway County Council (planning register reference 17/1544). This meeting is being held in respect of the substation element as there are revisions proposed to the original plans which include:

- Relocation of Eirgrid control building.
- Slight enlargement of the Eirgrid compound.
- Relocation of diesel generator plinth and diesel tank bund structure.
- Alteration to the original busbar flyover coupler bay proposed.
- Re-arrangement of bay connections to the busbars.

Discussion

The prospective applicant submitted that changes to the proposed substation are required in order to comply with current Eirgrid standards. ESB wishes to re-consent the substation based on the revised design. It is submitted that the new arrangements will provide greater flexibility for Eirgrid for future potential development. It was submitted by the prospective applicant that the proposed development in their opinion did not constitute strategic infrastructure development as it would not:

- be of strategic economic or social importance to the State or the region,
- contribute substantially to the fulfilment of any objectives of the National Planning Framework or the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, or
- have an effect on any area outside of the Galway County Council administrative area.

The Board's representatives raised the issue of transmission and whether the proposed arrangement was a loop in/loop out connection. The Board's representatives noted that such development was generally deemed to be transmission infrastructure and therefore strategic infrastructure. In this regard the prospective applicant submitted that although there would be a loop in/loop out type arrangement the solar farm could be bypassed if the need arose (without affecting the national grid). The sole purpose of the substation as is known at present is to serve the permitted solar energy development. The substation will be operated by Eirgrid but has not been planned by Eirgrid as part of the transmission network. The prospective applicant noted that the layout included possible expansion, which was highlighted in red. In addition, adjacent lands would be available for further expansion.

The Board's representatives stated that they would need to consider this matter in the context of making a recommendation to the Board and would take an approach that would be consistent with other similar type cases.

The Board's representatives noted that the site had been inspected with respect to planning and environmental matters. The prospective applicant did not raise any areas for which they sought advice from the Board.

Conclusion

The record of the meeting will issue to the prospective applicant in due course 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 further meeting with the Board or as indicated may request closure of the pre-application process.

If closure of 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

3/12/2020

