



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-309446-21 1st meeting

Case Reference / Description	ABP-309446-21 Uprating of 110kV circuit between Binbane substation and Cathleen's Fall substation, Tully, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st		
Date	25/05/21	Start Time	11 a.m.
Location	N/A	End Time	11.35 a.m.

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Staff Members
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Karla McBride, Senior Planning Inspector
Kieran Somers, Executive Officer
Representing the Prospective Applicant
Brian Wilson, Eirgrid
Tomas Bradley, Eirgrid

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 set out the need for the proposed development and stated that the current network in the north-west region does not have the necessary capacity to accommodate future generation needs and to maintain compliance with the Transmission System Security and Planning Standards (TSSPS). The prospective applicant said that the proposed development is one of several uprates being planned for the north-west region which will aid in the delivery of future renewable generation, as well as alleviating some of the constraints in the region.

The prospective applicant referred to the existing Binbane to Cathaleen's Fall 110kV circuit and said that the principal purpose of the proposed development is to replace older apparatus with more modern fit-for-purpose equipment. The prospective applicant said that a higher capacity conductor to utilise the existing asset constitutes routine works in terms of uprating and serves to replace existing infrastructure which is no longer up to necessary specifications with respect to performance/output.

The prospective applicant set out the nature and extent of proposed works involved in the instant project; constituent elements include the replacement of the existing conductor, the replacement of existing towers at 19 locations, the replacement of existing polesets at 106 locations and other associated and ancillary development.

With respect to the status of the proposed development, the prospective applicant stated its opinion that the proposed development would not comprise strategic infrastructure. The prospective applicant also noted that the proposed uprating works would normally fall within the definition of exempted development under section 4(1)(g) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended; however, it also noted that – as Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment will most likely be required – a planning application to the relevant consenting authority will be necessary. The prospective applicant referred to precedent cases whereby the Board had determined that such proposed works to an existing line would not comprise strategic infrastructure; in particular it referred to the Great Island, Kilkenny case (VC0108) which was deemed to be not SID by the Board.

Board's comments/queries:

In response to the Board's query on the matter, the prospective applicant confirmed that the entirety of the instant project would take place within the functional area of Donegal County Council.

With respect to the matter of Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment, the Board's representatives noted that the proposed works will traverse the area of several European Sites. In response to the Board's query on the matter, the prospective applicant advised that desktop works have commenced and it stated its intention that on-site survey work will commence in the coming weeks. The prospective applicant acknowledged that a substantial amount of work remains to be done in relation to the project and it stated its current intention to lodge a planning application prior to the end of 2021.

With regard to the Lough Eske area and pearlwater mussel, the prospective applicant indicated that the proposed development may impact on this area and it said it would be cognisant of this species.

In relation to consultations with prescribed bodies, the prospective applicant advised that some engagement had taken place in connection with Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment. The Board's representatives also noted the proliferation of flight paths in the general vicinity of the proposed development and recommended consultations with bodies such as Birdwatch Ireland.

With respect to the replacement of existing towers and polesets, the prospective applicant confirmed that some excavation works will be necessary as part of the proposed development. The prospective applicant also confirmed that there may be some minor changes with respect to the heights of existing towers and polesets and those to replace them; it said that a summary of such changes would be provided as part of the planning application.

Conclusion:

The Board's representatives stated their preliminary opinion that the proposed development would not be SID; however, it was emphasised that the final decision on this would rest with the Board.

The record of the instant meeting will issue shortly and it will then be open to the prospective applicant to request formal closure of the pre-application consultation process. The prospective applicant indicated that it would do so and then await the Board's determination.

The meeting concluded at 11.35 a.m.

 27/5/2021

Ciara Kellett

Assistant Director of Planning

