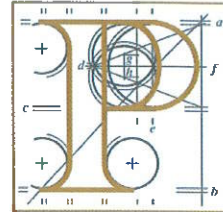


**Our Case Number:** ABP-310026-21

**Your Reference:** ESB Solar Ireland Ltd & Harmony Solar  
Dennistown Ltd



**An  
Bord  
Pleanála**

Fehily Timoney  
Core House  
Pouladuff Road  
Cork  
Co. Cork

**Date:** 20th September 2021

**Re:** Proposed development of a 110kV substation at Dennistown Solar Energy Development and a 110kV underground cable connecting it to Wexford substation  
In the townlands of Dennistown, Sallystown, Milltown and Murntown Lower Co. Wexford

Dear Sir / Madam,

I have been asked by An Bord Pleanála to refer further to the above-mentioned pre-application consultation request.

Please find enclosed a copy of the written record of the second meeting of the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

If you have any queries in relation to the matter please contact the undersigned officer of the Board.

Please quote the above-mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

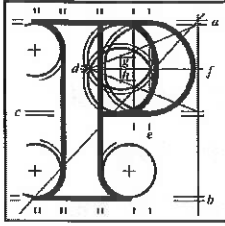
Sarah Caulfield  
Executive Officer  
Direct Line: 01-8737287

PC07

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64 Sráid Maoilbhríde	64 Marlborough Street
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D01 V902	D01 V902





**An  
Bord  
Pleanála**

**Record of Meeting**

**ABP-310026-21 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting**

<b>Description</b>	ABP-310026-21 Proposed development of a 110kV substation at Dennistown Solar Energy Development and a 110kV underground cable connecting it to Wexford substation.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application Consultation		
<b>1st / 2nd / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Meeting		
<b>Venue</b>	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
<b>Date</b>	14/09/2021	<b>Time</b>	11:00am – 11:40am

**Representing An Bord Pleanála**

Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)

Mairead Kenny, Senior Planning Inspector

Sarah Caulfield, Executive Officer	s.caulfield@pleanala.ie	01-8737287
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**Representing the Prospective Applicant**

John Swan - Harmony Solar

Brendan Allen - ESB

Barry Linehan - ESB

Jim Hughes – Fehily Timoney

## **Introduction**

The Board referred to its previous meeting with the prospective applicant of the 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2021 and the record of this meeting. The Board asked if the prospective applicants had any comments it wished to make on the record of this meeting; the prospective applicant replied that it had no comments to make.

## **Presentation by the Prospective Applicant**

The prospective applicant gave a brief introduction to the project team and an overview of the matters to be discussed during the meeting.

The prospective applicant recapped on the proposed development which is to develop a 110kV substation within the site of the consented Dennistown Solar Farm which is located approximately 800m south-east of Murntown village, 800m south-west of Piercetown village and 6.5 km from Wexford Town. It currently has consent for a solar farm development with an on-site substation (38kV). The prospective applicant outlined the need for the development and highlighted that ESB currently have five solar farm projects in South Wexford with consent but no consent in place for grid connections. It is intended that these five projects would connect into the proposed Dennistown Substation and then connect into the national electricity grid at Wexford substation.

The prospective applicant stated that the proposed Dennistown 110kV substation would be designed to function as a “collection hub” for electricity generated in these solar energy developments in the area for its onward transmission to the national grid at Wexford substation. The current consent of a 38 kV substation needs to be amended to accommodate the proposed 110kV structure. It is anticipated that the proposed 110kV substation would remain generally in the same location as the permitted 38kV substation.

In response to the Board’s representatives preliminary view that the proposal is strategic infrastructure development (notwithstanding that the decision rests with the Board), the prospective applicant accepted this and confirmed the substation is a node to facilitate future transmission from the solar projects in the area to the national electricity grid. The prospective applicant said it is important to note that the future intentions of Eirgrid are unknown and it is not unusual for lands to be identified

for future expansion as a contingency plan. Usually, these lands would be identified and sterilised from development for the future.

The prospective applicant also noted the precedent case previously mentioned (ABP- 308120-20 in Rhode, Co. Offaly) which comprised a looped-in connection. The proposed Dennistown development is a tail-fed project.

The prospective applicant provided an overview in relation to EIA screening. It highlighted the fact that a substation is not an EIA Development under Schedule 5, Part I & Part II, however for robustness, a screening assessment including submission of Schedule 7A information would be undertaken as part of any subsequent application. The prospective applicant stated that each grid route for solar farms connecting at Dennistown would have individual EIA screening once the route is known, with all known interactions assessed. The prospective applicant made reference to the Ratheniska High Court Judgement in relation to future developments and assessing the unknown.

## **Discussion**


- With regard to the five individual solar farms to be connected at Dennistown, the Board's representatives noted that this would emphasise the strategic nature of the proposed development and reinforces the preliminary view expressed at the first meeting. The prospective applicant accepted that the project could be interpreted as falling within the remit of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.
- The Board's representatives agreed with the prospective applicant's approach to include EIA Screening including Schedule 7A information as part of any subsequent application.
- In response to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant stated that discussions were had with Eirgrid in relation to the five individual solar projects and the potential for another project in the locality to connect into the substation at Dennistown. However, in terms of using the future expansion area, this has not been discussed. The prospective applicant stated that the

reservation of an area for future expansion is a standard requirement for Eirgrid for a development of this nature.

- The Board's representatives queried whether any part of the proposed development would be contestable. The prospective applicant said there would be a contestable element to this project and these areas would be clearly highlighted in any subsequent application.
- The prospective applicant stated that the original development at Dennistown was screened out for Appropriate Assessment but that this matter will be revisited in the context of the proposed development.
- The Board's representatives agreed that any proposed application would supersede the permission for the 38kV substation. The prospective applicant made reference to a similar application currently with the Board under reference ABP-310141-21 in Shantallow, Co. Galway.

## **Conclusion**

The record of the instant meeting will issue. The prospective applicant can then respond with their own comments on issues raised in the record. It is not anticipated that further meetings will be required, however this is a matter for the prospective applicant to decide. It is up to the prospective applicant to notify the Board if they require additional meetings or if they wish to conclude the pre-application consultation process.

 17/9/21

**Ciara Kellett**

**Assistant Director of Planning**