



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of 1st Meeting

ABP-310201-21

Development	Proposed upgrade of an existing waste water treatment plant at Castletroy, Co. Limerick		
Location	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1 st / 2 nd / 3 rd Meeting	1 st		
Date	28/06/2021	Time	11:00a.m. – 11:45p.m.
Attendees			
Representing An Bord Pleanála			
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)			
Patricia Calleary, Senior Planning Inspector			
Jennifer Sherry, Executive Officer		j.sherry@pleanala.ie	01-8737266
Representing the Prospective Applicant			
Majella Keating, Project Planning Specialist, Irish Water			
Seamus Glynn, Wastewater Programme Regional Lead, Irish Water			
Conor Delaney, Project Manager, Irish Water			
Paul Judge, Senior Engineer JB Barry’s & Associates			
Julie O’Sullivan, Ecologist, MKO & Associates			

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 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 any legal proceedings.

Presentation

The prospective applicant outlined the purpose of this pre-application consultation meeting is to determine if the proposed upgrades constitute strategic infrastructure

development as set out in the Seventh Schedule. The prospective applicant gave a presentation on the following topics:

Background and need – the existing WwTP has 39,000 P.E. capacity and it proposed to increase this capacity to 77,500 P.E., to provide for domestic and commercial growth, and provide capacity for significant industrial customers. There is no compulsory purchase of land required and neither is a foreshore license required. A review of the WwDL will be necessary and such an application will be submitted to the EPA.

Site location - the proposed development site is in Limerick City and County Council with the outfall pipe discharging in the River Shannon boundary with County Clare. The WwTP is in Castletroy 3km east of Limerick City with the ruins of Plassey Mills to the east and is located in flood zone A. A site location map and Castletroy Agglomeration drawing were included in the presentation. The prospective applicant stated this is an urban area which has experienced significant growth in recent years.

Existing infrastructure – Castletroy WwTP is an existing piece of infrastructure which is a valuable asset that was built in 1986. In 2010 upgrade works took place. A desktop study has been undertaken to assess the water usage in the area for commercial, domestic and institutional population in the locality. Castleconnell and Annacotty pump into Castletroy WwTP. The infrastructure on site includes an administration building, inlet works, aeration tanks, clarifiers, sludge building and outfall to the River Shannon. There is currently an asset deficit with no storm water storage tank on site.

Description of development – the prospective applicant included a list of proposed development works in the presentation which includes increased capacity storm and foul pumps; new storm water tank, installation of additional screens to cater for increased capacity; upgrading existing equipment; replacement of existing chemical dosing system and sludge dewatering; and, the installation of final effluent pump station.

Engagement with Local Authorities – the prospective applicant stated it has consulted with Limerick City and County Council and Clare County Council in March/April 2021 in which they provided an overview and outline of the proposed development.

Environmental Considerations – the prospective applicant stated that the preparation of an EIAR is in progress and the EIAR is expected to be completed in Q1 2022. Also, appropriate assessment screening / Stage 2 NIS is to be undertaken taking into account the pathway with the Lower Shannon SAC and River Shannon SPA. A flood risk assessment report will also be prepared.

Section 37A (2): SID Criteria – the prospective applicant advised of its preliminary opinion that the proposed upgrade works of the WwTP is a strategic infrastructure development in accordance with Section 37A(2)(a), (b) and (c).

Discussion

The following matters were discussed as part of the meeting:

- The Board's representatives said the proposed development fits within the Seventh Schedule and stated it's preliminary view is that the proposed development is a strategic infrastructure development but ultimately, that is a decision for the Board to make.
- The Board's representatives advised appropriate assessment is an important topic for the proposed development and said the prospective applicant should screen in all relevant Sites and should not rely on mitigation measures when screening out any European sites. The Board also highlighted it is not advisable to screen out qualifying interests of specific sites at stage 1 screening and that where a site is to be brought forward for appropriate assessment, all qualifying interests should also be brought forward to stage 2.
- In response to the Board's representatives query the prospective applicant said it is currently at the early stages of preparing the EIAR with a view to having it complete in Q1 2022. The Board's representative suggested another pre-application consultation meeting should be held to discuss the environmental constraints after the EIAR has progressed further.
- The Board's representatives recommended a clear statement of what is driving the need for the proposed upgrade works should be included in the planning statement.

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. The Board's representatives have advised a second meeting would be beneficial.

Ciara Kellett

Assistant Director of Planning