



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-311176-21 1st meeting

Description	ABP-311176-21 – Proposed construction of two new 110kV substations and 110kV underground cable connecting both substations, located in lands at Broughal and Mullanafawnia, Co. Offaly.		
Case Type	Pre-application Consultation.		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Venue	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
Date	27/10/2021	Time	11:00am – 11:43am

Representing An Bord Pleanála

Brendan Wyse, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)

Sarah Lynch, Senior Planning Inspector

Sarah Caulfield, Executive Officer

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Representing the Prospective Applicant

Kevin O Regan – Malone O'Regan

Kathryn Broderick – Malone O'Regan

Carlos Galvan – PCS Consulting

Zack Halley – Summit Solar

John Campbell – Summit Solar

Introduction:

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 16th August 2021, 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 supplied the Board with 6 additional drawings ahead of this meeting (copied on file).

The proposed development consists of the construction of a new 110KV loop-in substation, breaking of existing 110kV overhead line, construction of a new 110kV Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) substation, and a 110kV underground cable connecting both substations.

The prospective applicant, Summit Solar are an Irish based renewable energy company, based in Dublin. They have approximately 450mW of solar projects in the planning system throughout Ireland. The prospective applicant said they have been working in the local area of County Offaly for 2 years and have approximately 90mW of solar projects in the planning system in the region.

The prospective applicant said consent has been received from some landowners in the area and a community engagement project was held approximately 18 months ago in a local community centre. All residents in the area were invited to attend and were provided with extensive details of the proposed development and the prospective applicant were contactable to answer any further questions.

The prospective applicant presented a map detailing the proposed and permitted solar projects in the area. The most notable of which is the proposed solar farm currently at planning stage (Offaly County Council Planning Reference: 21/622) which is on the site of the proposed 110kV looped-in substation and the permitted solar development (Offaly County Council Planning Reference: 20/476) which is adjacent to the proposed 110kV AIS substation.

It was noted that the existing Lumcloon substation in the area has limited space for expansion and therefore highlights the critical need for the proposed development. It was submitted that this development would constitute a new node on the transmission network and said it would be of considerable benefit to both Eirgrid and other future renewable energy projects in the area.

The prospective applicant said the overall proposed development consists of a 110kV looped-in substation to the north in the townland of Broughal, a 110kV AIS substation to the south in the townland of Mullanafawnia and a 110kV underground cable of approximately 8.5km, connecting both substations. It was noted that the entire grid connection would follow the public road network.

It is the prospective applicant's opinion that the proposed development would constitute Strategic Infrastructure Development as it consists of 110kV infrastructure and has the ability to serve multiple projects in the area and the counties nearby.

The prospective applicant presented a drawing which detailed the main components of the proposed AIS substation and highlighted the expansion potentials in the future.

It was noted that careful consideration has been given to cumulative impacts and said the proposed application currently under consideration with Offaly County Council has assessed the cumulative impacts associated with this substation development. It noted that an overall cumulative assessment would be undertaken and submitted as part of any future planning application.

The prospective applicant said the other applications in the area have been considered in relation to hydrological connections and said there would be no direct impact on any Natura 2000 sites but are taking a precautionary approach due to indirect potential hydrological connection impacts and said a Natura Impact Statement would be submitted as part of any future planning application.

It was said that the proposed development was screened out for EIA, however, the prospective applicant said a comprehensive environmental report would be submitted with any future planning application.

Discussion

The following matters were discussed:

- In relation to the delivery, the Board's representatives queried whether any works would be required on the adjoining road network and if there would be any abnormal loads. The prospective applicant said there would be no works

required. It said they have actively engaged with the Road Engineers in Offaly County Council in terms of haulage routes from Dublin Port to the proposed site. In relation to a narrow stretch of road adjacent to the Broughal site, the prospective applicant said a holding bay has been identified and it is proposed that the haulage vehicles would converge at this location and proceed to the site via a convoy system. The prospective applicant said careful consideration will be given to traffic and delivery during construction.

- In relation to the Broughal site, the prospective applicant said the closest residential receptor is approximately 700metres. It was said that discussions are ongoing with landowners in the area.
- The prospective applicant said the solar farm was set back from the road and a buffer of between 50 and 100metres applied. The substation proposed would be located to the rear of the solar farm so as not to encroach on existing properties.
- In relation to surface water drainage, the Board's representatives advised on including a standalone section in the environmental report listing all mitigation measures adopted to ensure the protection of water quality in the watercourses nearby.
- The Board sought clarity in relation to the type of substation proposed at the Mullanafawnia site and referred to the documentation submitted as part of this consultation process, which states that the substation would be tail-fed. The prospective applicant said the additional drawings submitted prior to today's meeting would supersede documentation submitted previously. It said the proposed substation at Mullanafawnia would not be tail-fed and would in fact be an AIS substation.
- The prospective applicant confirmed that, upon completion, the entire development would become an Eirgrid asset.

- The Board's representatives gave a preliminary view that the proposed development would appear to fall within Strategic Infrastructure Development. However, it emphasised that the final decision would be a matter for the Board.

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 anticipated that further meetings will be required however, it will be a matter for the prospective applicant to revert to the Board if it requires a further meeting or if it wishes to close the pre-application consultation process.

pp. Sarah Caulfield

Brendan Wyse

Assistant Director of Planning