



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting

**ABP-311204-21**

<b>Development</b>	Proposed 110kV substation to feed into the existing Aughinish – Kilpaddoge 110kV overhead Line (OHL) in the townland of Ballinknockane, Co. Limerick		
<b>Location</b>	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application consultation		
<b>1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>		
<b>Date</b>	01/12/2021	<b>Time</b>	11:00a.m. – 11:30a.m.
<b>Attendees</b>			
<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>			
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)			
Breda Gannon, Senior Planning Inspector			
Jennifer Sherry, Executive Officer	j.sherry@pleanala.ie	01-8737266	
<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>			
Rory Bateman, Lead Electrical Engineer			
Cliona Gormley, Business Development Director, Neoen			
Eilísann McCann, Planning Consultant, Neo Environmental			
Paul Neary, Director, Neo Environmental			

## **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 by the prospective applicant**

The prospective applicant gave an overview of the proposed development under the following headings:

- **Project Background and Site Location** – the proposed development of a 110kV loop-in-loop-out substation is to facilitate the two permitted solar farm developments granted planning permission from Limerick City and County Council as follows:
  - i. Ballinknockane and Ellaha Solar Farm Planning Register Reference Number: 17/1220 granted on 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2018, and
  - ii. Deelish and Mullagh Solar Farm Planning Register Reference Number: 19/18 granted on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2019.

The proposed development is to be located within the townland of Ballinknockane, Co. Limerick approx. 5km southeast of the town of Foynes and 5.6km southwest of the town of Askeaton. The 110kV substation is proposed to be located within the boundary of the consented Ballinknockane and Ellaha Solar Farm with landowner agreements secured. It is proposed to access the site from a private lane off the L1222 local road to the west.

- **Substation Details** – the substation area will be approx. 0.83 hectares and will consist of 2 no. control buildings, transformer compound, HV switchgear compound, 2 no. overhead line towers with palisade and concrete post and rail fencing. A drawing of the substation layout and substation elevation view was included in the presentation provided by the prospective applicant.
- **Characteristics of the Proposed Infrastructure** – the proposed 110kV substation lies within the boundary of County Limerick and does not lie within any designated areas. Once the proposed development has been completed ownership will be handed over to EirGrid. It is anticipated that the proposed development will not require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

## Discussion

The following matters were discussed as part of the meeting:

- In response to the prospective applicants query the Board’s representatives provided a preliminary view that the proposed development would constitute a strategic infrastructure development but that it is ultimately up to the Board to make

a determination if the proposed development is strategic infrastructure development or not.

- The Board's representatives referred to a river on the east side of the site that might connect to the River Shannon. The prospective applicant agreed there is a watercourse tributary that would connect to the River Shannon at some point. In terms of connectivity the prospective applicant said it will be looked at with the possibility of a Natura Impact Statement being prepared. The Board's representatives suggested that a robust screening for Natura 2000 sites for the River Shannon be carried out.
- Furthermore, the Board's representatives highlighted the Shannon Coastal Area as sensitive landscape irrespective of the distance from the proposed development site and stated landscape assessment and photomontages from the scenic areas surrounding the site would be necessary. The prospective applicant said they intend to submit the following reports with the planning application:
  - i. Ecology Survey Impact Assessment Report,
  - ii. Landscape Assessment Report,
  - iii. Construction Management Plan including Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment,
  - iv. Flood Risk Assessment,
  - v. Planning Statement, and
  - vi. Archaeological and Heritage Assessment.
- The prospective applicant in response to the Board's representatives query clarified that access to the proposed development is at the same entry point for Ballinknockane and Ellaha solar farm on the west of the site with the 110kV substation located to the east. The other solar farm Deelish and Mullagh is approx. 1km from the site and will be connected to the substation by underground cables travelling under a main road.
- The Board's representatives agreed with the prospective applicant that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is not automatically required.

## **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 either seek a second meeting with the Board or request closure to the pre-application process in writing. If closure to the pre-application is requested, the reporting inspector will complete the report and recommendation which will be forwarded to the Board for determination. A copy of the procedures will be attached, and the decision will then issue to the prospective applicant.

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Ciara Kellett

Assistant Director of Planning