



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-311904-21 1st meeting

Case Reference / Description	ABP-311904-21 Proposed new tail-fed 110kV substation and associated works in the townlands of Paddock, Co. Meath.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st		
Date	22/11/21	Start Time	11.45 a.m.
Location	N/A	End Time	12 p.m.

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Staff Members
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Niall Haverty, Senior Planning Inspector
Kieran Somers, Executive Officer
Representing the Prospective Applicant
Caroline Martins, Energia
Fiona Somers, Energia
Richard Green, Energia
David Lyons, Energia
Paul Cash, Energia
Shauna Woods, Aecom

Dean Atwell, Energia
Darren Fagan, Energia
Shaban Awili, Aecom
Oisin Burke, Aecom
Niamh O'Connell, Aecom

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 provided an overview of the proposed development which is for a 110kV AIS tail-fed substation with 110kV underground cable and associated works. The 110kV underground cable component of the proposed development will connect the new substation to an existing substation at Barnageeragh. The total compound area will be circa 8,640 square metres. The prospective applicant provided a layout of the proposed substation and also a site context for the subject site (directly adjacent to a proposed solar farm). The subject site is located approximately four kilometres from Ashbourne.

With regard to the subject site and proposed development, the prospective applicant referred to relevant solar farm planning applications in the vicinity which include planning register reference number 211918 (a current live planning application which is due for a decision by Meath County Council in November 2021), planning register reference number AA201054 (which was granted permission by Meath County Council in February 2021) and planning register reference number 21180 (currently the subject of a third party appeal to the Board and due for a decision before the end of 2021).

With regard to the pertinent class of development under section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the prospective applicant stated its opinion that the proposed development would not constitute strategic infrastructure development. The prospective applicant added that the proposed substation would not form a new node on the transmission network and referred to previous determinations by the Board with respect to this type of proposed development.

With regard to next steps for the project, the prospective applicant outlined its intended approach which includes the production of an Environmental Considerations Report and Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

Board's comments/queries:

The Board's representatives stated the preliminary opinion that the proposed development would comprise strategic infrastructure given the nature of the proposed development and with particular regard to section 182A(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the definition of 'transmission' contained in the Electricity Regulation Act 1999, as amended, the proposal to transfer the 110kV substation and cable to EirGrid, and also in relation to the potential future use of the proposed substation. This position and opinion was noted by the prospective applicant, but it reiterated its opinion that the proposed development would not comprise SID.

With regard to Appropriate Assessment, the Board's representatives noted that an NIS had been submitted for the adjacent solar farm application and recommended that potential in-combination effects should be carefully considered with regard to screening.

With regard to other permitted solar developments in the area, the Board noted potential cumulative effects particularly during the construction phase which should be considered. The prospective applicant noted this and said that it would have to consider such cumulative effects with regard to overhead lines and underground cables.

The Board's representatives noted the presence of a 110kV overhead line a short distance to the west, and queried if connection to that line was a feasible option. The prospective applicant advised that this had been considered but it did not have capacity.

In response to the Board's query on the matter, the prospective applicant said that it did not believe the proposed cable would have any adverse effects on routes to Fairyhouse Racecourse. The prospective applicant said that it has submitted a proposed route to the local authority and is awaiting consultations with the local authority on this.

The Board also recommended that potential effects on residential amenity should be considered as part of the planning application. The Board's representatives noted that the site appeared to be within The Ward Lowlands LCA under the County Development Plan, a Low Value, High Sensitivity LCA with a Low capacity for substations, and advised that this matter should be addressed in the landscape and visual impact assessment.

The Board emphasised that robust assessments should be conducted with regard to cumulative effects and in-combination effects.

Conclusion:

The record of the instant meeting will issue shortly and it will then be open to the prospective applicant to request a further meeting or 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 12 p.m.

Ciara Kellett

Assistant Director of Planning