

An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-313767-22 1st meeting

Description	ABP-313767-22 - Proposed development of a 110kV substation at Coolderry, Co. Clare and associated 110kV underground cabling to Ardnacrusha 110kV substation Within the townland of Coolderry, Co. Clare		
Case Type	Pre-application Consultation.		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Venue	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
Date	25/08/2022	Time	11:00am –11:30am

Representing An Bord Pleanála			
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)			
Conor McGrath, Senior Planning Inspector			
Sarah Caulfield, Executive Officer	s.caulfield@pleanala.ie	01-8737287	
Representing the Prospective Applicant			
William O'Connor - Reeve Wave Limited			
Niall Galvin - Reeve Wave Limited			
Conor Frehill - HW Planning			
Richard Coughlan - HW Planning			

Introduction:

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 8th June 2022, 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 proposed development consists of a 110kV substation and associated grid connection at Coolderry, Co. Clare. The prospective applicant said the purpose of this development is to serve a proposed solar farm which was submitted to Clare County Council in July 2022 (Clare County Council planning reference: 22591). A decision on this application is expected imminently. It is expected that the proposed 110kV substation would connect the solar array to the national grid via the existing 110kV Ardnacrusha substation.

The prospective applicant said the site is located approximately 2 kilometres northeast of the existing Ardnacrusha substation and Limerick City is located approximately 10 kilometres southwest of the site.

It was submitted that the proposed development also includes the provision of a new entrance and access track from the L3046 to the proposed substation location. The prospective applicant said the proposed development has a setback distance of approximately 130 metres from the road.

It was submitted that the substation will comprise two compounds: an Eirgrid compound, and an Independent Power Producer (customer owned compound). The prospective applicant said the substation will be designed in accordance with Eirgrid's standards and specifications.

In relation to the proposed grid connection route, the prospective applicant said they are currently assessing two options and the final route has not yet been finalised, having regard to commercial as well as technical requirements. Both proposed routes involve an underground cable on private and public lands and within the existing road carriageway.

The prospective applicant is of the opinion that the proposed 110kV substation constitutes electrical plant as defined within the Electricity Regulation Act, 1999. Additionally, it is their opinion that the proposal meets the definition of electricity transmission under section 2(1) of same Act. The prospective applicant listed two precedent cases that were determined as SID, which they believe supports their opinion that the proposed development does qualify as SID.

Discussion

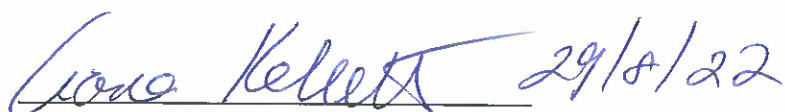
The following matters were discussed:

- The Board's representatives gave their preliminary view that the proposed development would constitute a strategic infrastructure development in accordance with the definition of transmission under section 182A(9) Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006 but said the final decision would be a matter for the Board.
- In response to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant said the second grid connection route has been identified as a potential route and it would be the preferred option; however it is subject to obtaining landowner agreements. The prospective applicant said the reason for the alternative route is focused around commercial and technical requirements rather than environmental considerations. It noted that, regardless of which route is selected the voltage of the cable remains the same, at 110kV. The prospective applicant said environmental consultants are currently assessing both options and it is anticipated that both options would involve a bridge crossing over the River Blackwater, possibly using horizontal directional drilling (HDD) under the watercourse.
- In relation to the solar farm planning application currently under assessment by Clare County Council, the prospective applicant said a number of observations on the development were received from the public. Shannon Airport stated in its submission that further assessment on glint and glare should be provided, however, the submission of the Irish Aviation Authority stated that they had no comments to make on the application. A decision is expected imminently from Clare County Council.
- The prospective applicant confirmed that a Natura Impact Statement was submitted to Clare County Council as part of the solar farm application.

- The prospective applicant said neither the proposed development or the solar array are a project type for the purposes of EIAR but said an environmental report would be submitted.
- Regarding the presentation of documentation, the Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to be clear in terms of the scope of the projects for which permission is sought under both section 34 and section 182, to ensure there is no ambiguity.

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 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.



Ciara Kellett

Assistant Director of Planning