



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

**Record of Meeting
ABP-314112-21 2nd
meeting**

Case Reference / Description	ABP-314112-22 Development of a 400 kV underground cable between Dunstown 400 kV substation in the townland of Dunstown, Co. Kildare and Woodland 400 kV substation in the townland of Woodland, Co. Meath known as the 'Kildare-Meath Grid Upgrade'		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	2nd		
Date	15/12/22	Start Time	11:07
Location	N/A	End Time	12:20

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Staff Members
Stephen Kay, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Conor McGrath, Planning Inspector
Doina Chiforescu, Executive Officer
Representing the Prospective Applicant
Tomas Bradley, Eirgrid
Kevin Dolan, Eirgrid
Fay Lagan, Jacobs

Introduction

The Board referred to its previous meeting with the prospective applicant of the 15th September 2022 and the record of this meeting. The Board asked if the prospective applicant had any comments it wished to make on the record of this meeting. The prospective applicant confirmed that it had no comments to make.

Presentation by the prospective applicant

The prospective applicant opened its presentation with a brief introduction and identification of some of the issues to be discussed during the meeting.

The prospective applicant presented some images with examples of typical arrangements for an UGC in public roadway, including a joint bay for pulling cables, a passing bay installation and a horizontal direction drilling (HDD) receiving pit with a 220kV cable being pulled through a trenchless duct.

The prospective applicant referred to the route options and the overall design and routing principles which were outlined in the first pre-application consultation meeting. Since that meeting, the prospective applicant said the routing had been refined somewhat and that they have engaged with landowners along the route and identified some areas of constraints. The route broadly remains the same except in one particular location at Millicent Bridge, in respect of which alternative re-routing options were described.

The proposed development consists of various elements including installation of the underground cable (fibre optic cables, joint bays, passing bays, off-road joint bays, reinstatement of road surfacing, etc.), upgrade to the existing Dunstown Station and Woodland Station (additional electrical equipment, renewal, alteration and removal of associated electrical equipment, etc.) and all ancillary site development works (site preparation works, vegetation clearance and reinstatement, landscaping, etc.). A slide illustrating the site layout plan of a separate current planning application at Woodland Station in Co. Meath (under ref. MCC 22/1550) was presented.

In relation to traffic management, the prospective applicant presented details on routing principles and road widths and noted that a traffic management plan will be submitted with application. Approximately 80% of the 52.8 km cable route is

proposed to be in-road. Stated by the prospective applicant that construction working hours and work schedules will avoid peak hours in sensitive locations.

The prospective applicant gave details of cable trench works and joint bays works and all associated works. Maps and tables will be provided for every in-road section. There are 70 no. proposed joint bays along the cable route, of which 11 no. are off-road and 59 no. are in-road. Of those 59 no. on road joint bays: 3 no. are located in a footpath, 18 no. are located in a verge and 38 no. are located in the carriageway. 12 no. of the 70 no. joint bays will be within the 1-in-100 floodplain (modelled by OPW) and 10 no. of the 12 no. are in-road. All joint bays will be made watertight and finished to existing ground level. Of the 70 no. joint bays 34 no. will have a passing bay. Some of the data on the traffic management for the cable trench works are at draft stage and subject to change in the final planning application.

Considerable design and assessment work has been undertaken and detailed traffic management measures have been identified, with still more work to be done. Road closure applications and road opening licenses through the Meath and Kildare County Council will be required.

The prospective applicant advised that investigations and design work is on-going, along with landowner and community consultations. A construction traffic management plan will be part of the planning application.

The prospective applicant stated its current intention to lodge the subsequent planning application circa Quarter 1 2023, likely March 2023. Next request for meeting with ABP is likely to be in February 2023 to discuss any final issues arising and it is expected a third meeting would be sufficient to close file.

Discussion/Queries

- The Board's representatives enquired whether construction of the joint bays is undertaken first, with cable trenching undertaken afterwards or whether works are concurrent. The prospective applicant said this was done with the other grid projects but that the sequencing for this project needs to be finalised.

- The Board's representatives enquired about the passing bays and required road closures. The prospective applicants advised that assessments are being made with regard to which roads would require full closures or a passing bay, or just a lane being closed. It was stated that not every jointing bay will require a passing bay or be suitable for a passing bay. Considerations include avoidance of mature tree lines, access points / entrances, existing utilities, road junction etc. The passing bays are temporary mitigation measures to facilitate works. It was also stated that more road closures would be required at the northern end of the route as the roads in this area are narrower than at the southern end.
- The prospective applicant noted that road closures are probably the key impact of this project, and would be detailed and included in the planning documentation. The Board's representative highlighted that the sequencing / phasing of works should also be clearly set out in any application.
- The Board's representatives raised the issue of environmental impacts, taking into consideration the length of the project and passing bays and highlighted that this should be given sufficient consideration as part of the documentation. Each scenario should have detailed information of the impact and be fully assessed. The prospective applicants indicated that approx. 12km of hedgerow loss would be required which will be mostly reinstated. The exact amount of reinstatement is being worked up. The prospective applicant stated that passing bays will be in place for c. 2.5 - 3 years in response to which the Board representatives highlighted the importance that the potential impact of these bays as ecological barriers needs consideration.
- The Board's representative said that it would be a matter for the prospective applicant to prepare details of the duration of the ecological impact and address broader ecological effects. The prospective applicant stated that the majority of ecological surveys were completed and that surveys of permanent access tracks to joint bays located off road were being undertaken.
- In response to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant gave details of the number and location of watercourse crossing. Larger watercourses will

require horizontal directional drilling (estimated at 5 no. locations), while smaller watercourses will utilise open trenches (estimated at 25 no. locations). The Board's representative advised addressing specific construction management requirements for these areas. The prospective applicant said that some of topics have already been addressed and that consultations with IFI and NPWS were underway.

- The prospective applicant advised that a Natura Impact Statement is currently at draft stage. The prospective applicant stated that the main potential significant effects identified related to watercourse crossings and that the Rye Water / Carton SAC site was proposed to be screened in for appropriate assessment.
- The Board's representatives advised that consultations with the Roads Authorities should be progressed to a satisfactory level before the application is lodged. The prospective applicant said that road opening licences are needed, and broad principles are to be agreed and resolved. The Board's representatives noted that full details of each / all road closures and passing bays, including duration, should be provided.
- The Board's representatives noted the layout presented showing the current application for permission for works at Woodland substation. The Board's representative advised that clarity should be provided in respect of the relationship between the subject project and the current planning application for development at Woodlands Station in County Meath and any dependencies arising between them. The prospective applicant noted that clarification in respect to the two separate projects would be submitted. It was agreed that the prospective applicant would provide the Board with further information in relation to this matter.
- It is the prospective applicant's intention to seek an additional meeting in the future to discuss further planning considerations before the application is lodged.
- The Board's representatives gave their preliminary opinion that the proposed development is SID. The final decision, however, is for the Board to make.

Conclusions

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 request a further meeting.

Stephen Kay.

Stephen Kay

Assistant Director of Planning