

An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of 1st Meeting ABP-314505-22

Case Reference / Description	ABP-314505-22 - Proposed upgrade of the existing Belcamp 200 kV Electrical Substation in the townland of Belcamp and Clonshagh, Fingal, County Dublin.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Meeting	1 st		
Date	19/10/22	Start Time	12:00 a.m.
Location	Virtually	End Time	12:35 p.m.

Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Staff Members		
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)		
Niall Haverty, Senior Planning Inspector		
Eimear Reilly, Executive Officer	e.reilly@pleanala.ie	01-8737184
Representing the Prospective Applicant		
Tomás Bradley, Senior Lead Planner, EirGrid plc		
Des Cox, Team Lead, EirGrid plc		
Fay Lagan, Senior Associate Director, Jacobs		

Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 31st August 2022, requesting pre-application consultations under section 182E of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended 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 made by the prospective applicant:

The prospective applicant provided an overview on the nature and extent of the proposed development which was stated to be for an upgrade of the existing Belcamp 200kV electrical substation. Located in the townland of Belcamp and Clonshagh, Fingal, County Dublin, the electrical substation is stated to be one of the main electrical substations in the area.

The proposed upgrade is to include a 400kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) 8 Bay Building west of the existing substation, along with a 220kV GIS 16 Bay Building north of the existing station, a +100 MVAR STATCOM transformer, associated outdoor electrical equipment, lightning protection masts, removal/diversion of underground cables, future provision for ducting, associated compound and hardstanding and all temporary construction measures.

The prospective applicant set out the nature and extent of the proposed development in the context of the subject site and wider area. The proposed upgrade is to accommodate the renewable generation, and growing demand, in the North Dublin area and forms part of the *Powering Up Dublin* Programme of grid reinforcement in the Dublin region which involves the upgrading of aging infrastructure in order to accommodate the renewable ambition for the area.

The prospective applicant gave an overview of the need for the proposed development in relation to the overall project and explained that generation is currently not meeting the demand of the area, which could result in blackouts and a wider energy crisis. The demand in the North Dublin area comes from an increase in housing, electrification of heating, electrification of transport, large energy users such as data centres, distribution level and plans for offshore renewable energy.

In relation to congestion of Dublin's transmission grid, the prospective applicant noted that there is a significant risk of overloading on many underground cables.

The prospective applicant noted that the drawing submitted as part of the pre-application request shows the red line to be the existing substation and the green to be the proposed extension. The prospective applicant also noted that the lands to the north of the proposed development are owned by the IDA and that it has been engaging with the IDA in order to come to an agreement in relation to the land.

The prospective applicant also noted that existing infrastructure is located to the south of the site and is illustrated in black on the accompanying drawing. The proposed upgrade to include the 400kV and 220kV substations and STATCOM are to be located to the northeast of the area and are illustrated in red. The drawing also includes an area for potential future expansion.

The prospective applicant gave an overview of its next steps in relation to the proposed development and stated its opinion that the proposed development would not comprise strategic infrastructure development given the nature, scale and function of the development and its relationship to the existing Belcamp substation.

Discussion:

The Board's representatives queried whether the 400kV element of the proposed development was associated with the *Powering Up Dublin* project or the separate *East Meath – North Dublin 400kV* project. The prospective applicant confirmed that it was associated with the East Meath – North Dublin project and had been grouped with the other development in the interests of efficiency and due to the inter-relationship of projects in a meshed transmission network.

The Board's representatives noted the precedents cited by the prospective applicant for works at existing substations, but expressed the preliminary opinion that the proposed development would constitute strategic infrastructure development as a result of the 400kV element of the proposed upgrade, which would result in the 220kV substation moving up the transmission hierarchy and becoming a 400kV

substation. They noted, however, that the determination is ultimately a matter for the Board.


In response to this, a general discussion took place in relation to the greater context of these integrated interconnected *Powering Up Dublin* projects and the *East Meath - North Dublin* project. It was also noted that the 400kV element of the proposed development would be the first of its kind in the Dublin City area and the prospective applicant acknowledged the Board's representative's opinion this this element may constitute strategic infrastructure development. The potential for issues such as project splitting, cumulative impacts and in-combination effects to arise were discussed.

The prospective applicant replied that it may omit the 400kV element from the proposed development, as 220kV element is the most critical in relation to the overall *Powering Up Dublin* grid enhancement project. It stated that the 400kV element could be applied for in the future along with the proposed development of the associated 400kV cable development. The Board's representatives noted that the remaining 220kV element would appear to be similar in scope, nature and scale to a recent case at Maynooth substation (ABP-313964-22), which had been determined not to constitute SID.

The Board's representatives advised that the prospective applicant's proposed omission of the 400kV element should be clarified in writing to the Board following the instant meeting and that an updated site plan and description of development should be included with the clarification. The prospective applicant stated that they may indicate the 400kV element on the site layout plan as 'potential future development' in the interests of clarity.

Conclusion:

The Board's representatives advised that the record of the instant meeting will issue shortly and that the onus is on the prospective applicant to request closure of the pre-application process or to request a further meeting.

 25/10/22

Ciara Kellett

Assistant Director of Planning