

An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting ABP-314595-22 1<sup>st</sup> meeting

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	ABP-314595-22 110kV 'Loop-in/Loop-out' substation. Within the townland of Clonardis, Co. Westmeath.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application consultation		
<b>1st / 2nd / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>		
<b>Date</b>	02/11/22	<b>Start Time</b>	11:00 a.m.
<b>Location</b>	MS Teams	<b>End Time</b>	11:25 a.m.

<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning
Máire Daly, Planning Inspector
Niamh Thornton, Executive Officer
Doina Chiforescu, Executive Officer
<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>
Fred Tottenham, Harmony Solar
Steve McCarthy, Fehily Timony and Company
Brian Cronin, Fehily Timony and Company
Jack O'Donovan, Fehily Timony and Company

The meeting commenced at 11.00 a.m.

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 opened its presentation with a brief introduction to the prospective applicant company, Harmony Solar Mullingar Limited, a company owned by Harmony Solar Ireland Ltd and ESB Solar (Ireland) Ltd.

The prospective applicant has consent for a solar farm, including a 38kV electrical substation under Westmeath County Council planning reference 17/6239 and appeal reference ABP-301116-18. The consented solar farm is situated approximately 5km west of Mullingar.

Eirgrid have a requirement for a 110kV substation node in the area. The prospective applicant now proposes to develop a 110kV substation within the Clonardis solar farm site and to loop in to the existing Mullingar-Lanesborough 110kV overhead line. The proposed substation has a grid connection agreement with Eirgrid.

The prospective applicant presented a drawing of the proposed 110kV substation within the solar farm site.

The prospective applicant stated that various assessments, including archaeological, ecological, and drainage and flooding assessments had been carried out and submitted as part of the planning application for the permitted solar farm and 38kV substation. A Planning and Environmental Report is nearing completion for this 110kV substation project. It was stated that no notable constraints have been identified.

Regarding the SID status of the proposed 110kV substation, the prospective applicant stated that it considers the proposed development is SID as it will form a node to the national transmission network.

### **Discussion:**

The Board's representatives noted the proximity of the proposed development to Lough Owel designated high amenity area and advised that the landscape and visual effects be assessed adequately, regarding the construction of any pylons or endmasts etc.

The presence of a number of field drains to the North, which connect to the Mill River were also noted. The Board's representatives advised that any potential connections to designated sites should be addressed in the Environmental Report.

It was also stated that cumulative impacts should be considered in the Planning and Environmental Report.

A discussion was had regarding a farm complex in close proximity to the site and public consultation to date. The prospective applicant clarified that public consultation has been carried out for a number of previous planning applications on site but not specifically for this proposed development. It was stated that three landowners are working with the applicant in relation to the solar farm.

Regarding connection to the overhead line, it was clarified that the line would be split with endmasts and would connect to the substation via an underground cable.

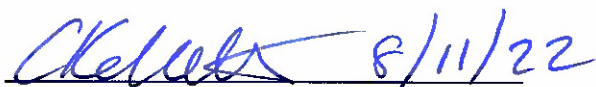
The Board's representatives shared their opinion that the proposed development is Strategic Infrastructure Development. The final decision however is for the Board to make.

**Conclusion:**

The onus is on the prospective applicant to either request a further meeting or formal closure of the instant pre-application consultation process.

The record of the instant meeting will issue in the meantime and the prospective applicant can submit any comments it may have in writing or alternatively bring any comments for discussion at the time of any further meeting.

The meeting concluded at 11:25 a.m.

 8/11/22

**Ciara Kellett**

**Assistant Director of Planning**