

An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting
ABP-314625-22 1st
meeting

Description	ABP-314625-22 – Replace and upgrade 110kV transformer infrastructure within the existing Booltiagh substation, located to the south of the existing wind farm adjacent to the wind farm access road, Booltiagh, Co. Clare		
Case Type	Pre-application Consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Venue	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
Date	08/12/2022	Time	11:00am -11:25am

Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)		
Máire Daly, Planning Inspector		
Sarah Caulfield, Executive Officer	s.caulfield@pleanala.ie	01-8737287
Representing the Prospective Applicant		
Fiona Maxwell - Ørsted Onshore Ireland Midco Limited (Ørsted)		
Kevin Landers - Ørsted Onshore Ireland Midco Limited (Ørsted)		
Lorraine Meehan – MKO		
Meabhann Crowe - MKO		

Introduction:

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 15th September 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 the replacement and upgrade of 110kV transformer infrastructure within the existing Booltiagh substation, located to the south of the existing wind farm and adjacent to the wind farm access road in Booltiagh, Co. Clare.

The prospective applicant said the key driver for the proposed development is the potential re-powering of the Booltiagh I wind farm. Permission was granted by An Bord Pleanála for the Booltiagh I windfarm in 2001, following a first party appeal (An Bord Pleanála Reference: PL.03.120616). The 110kV electrical substation formed part of this planning application and the prospective applicant referred to three no. subsequent planning applications which were granted to extend and alter the substation from 2011 to 2018.

The prospective applicant provided an overview of the site location, including the substation location, the 110kV grid line and the existing turbines of Booltiagh I and Booltiagh II wind farms. It was noted that the entire Booltiagh site is located within a strategic area and is designated as 'acceptable in principle' for wind energy developments. The prospective applicant said the Clare County Development Plan is currently under review but said the re-powering of Booltiagh I is referenced within the draft plan.

The prospective applicant said a review of the upgrades required to the on-site grid infrastructure has been undertaken in light of the potential repowering of the Booltiagh I wind farm and it was established that the existing 110kV transformer within the substation would have to be replaced to allow the repowering to take place. It was noted that the new equipment required to facilitate this repowering would be solely located within the existing footprint of the substation and enclosed within the site fencing. No off-site grid infrastructure upgrades are therefore required.

The proposed upgrade works include the replacement of the 110kV transformer, replacement of the 20kV switchgear plant, installation of harmonic filter and capacitor bank and associated minor plant works, all located within the confines of the existing substation compound. Additionally, the prospective applicant presented a number of drawings showing the existing and proposed substation layout (copies on file).

The prospective applicant is of the opinion that the proposed development would not constitute strategic infrastructure development as the proposed upgrades to the existing Booltiagh substation comprise electric plant within the substation itself to directly facilitate the proposed repowering of the Booltiagh wind farm. The prospective applicant referred to two precedent cases, namely the upgrades at Cushaling substation in County Offaly (ABP-304856-19) and Dunmanway substation in County Cork (ABP-303838-19), which the Board determined as not SID.

Discussion

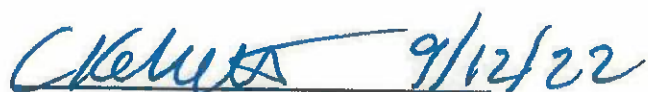
The following matters were discussed:

- The Board's representatives stated their preliminary opinion is that the proposed development would not constitute strategic infrastructure development but noted that the ultimate decision is a matter for the Board.
- In response to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant said work on the re-powering of Booltiagh I wind farm is at an early stage but said site constraints studies and assessments are underway. It said the existing 12 turbines have an output capacity of 1.5MW each (18MW total) and it is their current intention to replace the existing turbines with 5 wind turbines, each with an approximate output capacity of 5MW (25MW total). The prospective applicant said the upgrades proposed within this development are necessary to facilitate the re-powering project and to optimise the capacity of the site.
- The Board's representatives made reference to a 10-turbine wind farm application which is currently on appeal, and in which mentions potentially connecting into the existing 110kV substation on this site (ABP-311044-21). The prospective applicant said they are aware of this application and said the applicant for this development is currently assessing several connection options in the area, one of which is the 110kV Booltiagh substation.

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.

 9/12/22

Ciara Kellett

Assistant Director of Planning