

An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting
ABP-315128-22 1st
meeting

| | | | |
|---|---|-------------|-------------------|
| Description | ABP-315128-22 – Proposed development of 110kV electrical substation and grid connection at Trascaun & Clondoolusk, Portarlinton, County Offaly and the provision of passing bays in the public road within the townlands of Clondoolusk, Trascaun, Bishopswood, Tinacrannagh and Droughil, Co. Offaly and Co. Laois | | |
| Case Type | Pre-application Consultation | | |
| 1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting | 1 st Meeting | | |
| Venue | Virtually by Microsoft Teams | | |
| Date | 02/03/2023 | Time | 11:00am – 11:30am |

| | | |
|--|-------------------------|------------|
| Representing An Bord Pleanála | | |
| Brendan Wyse, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair) | | |
| Paul Caprani, Senior Planning Inspector | | |
| Sarah Caulfield, Executive Officer | s.caulfield@pleanala.ie | 01-8737287 |
| Representing the Prospective Applicant | | |
| Louise Byrne – Tobin Consulting Engineers | | |
| Fernanda Ayala – Elgin Energy Limited | | |
| Grainne Loghlen – Elgin Energy Limited | | |

Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 17th November, 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 prospective applicant provided a brief company overview and a background to the proposed development. Elgin Energy is a leading global solar energy company based in Dublin and has received full planning permission for 23 solar developments throughout Ireland since 2015.

The prospective applicant said the proposed development was the subject of a previous pre-application consultation with the Board (An Bord Pleanála Reference: ABP-304101-19), which was determined as SID. The prospective applicant said it commenced this new consultation as the scope of the project has been extended to include a number of passing bays in the public road, located across the administrative areas of County Offaly and County Laois, and a temporary construction compound.

The proposed development remains similar to that previously determined. Slight adjustments have been made to the internal layout within the substation compound. The current proposal seeks to include 18 permanent passing bays and the temporary construction compound within the project scope.

The prospective applicant said high level consultations have been held with Offaly County Council in relation to the proposed development and further engagement is anticipated with both Offaly County Council and Laois County Council soon. In relation to the passing bays, the prospective applicant said indicative locations have been identified, with 3 located in County Laois and the remaining 15 within County Offaly.

It was submitted that the proposed substation development is required in order to connect two solar farms to the national grid (Trascan Solar Farm and Bishopswood Solar Farm). Trascan Solar Farm received planning permission in October 2021 following an appeal to An Bord Pleanála (Offaly County Council Reference: 21/123/ An Bord Pleanála Reference: ABP-310367-21) and Bishopswood Solar Farm is currently at a further information stage with Offaly County Council (Reference: 22/390). The prospective applicant said a response to this request is anticipated in

March/April 2023 but said this timeframe is dependent on seasonal bird surveys and archaeological test trenching.

The prospective applicant said the deadline for EirGrid's Enduring Connection Policy is September 2023 and, therefore, it anticipates lodging the substation application in February 2023.

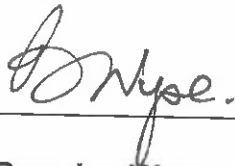
Discussion

- In response to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant confirmed the site remains the same as previously submitted and the passing bays and construction compound were not included in the previous pre-application consultation (An Bord Pleanála Reference: ABP-304101-19).
- The prospective applicant said the main purpose of this pre-application consultation request is to highlight that the proposed development falls within the administrative area of two planning authorities and for the inclusion of the passing bays and construction compound within the red line boundary.
- In relation to the further information requested by Offaly County Council in relation to the Bishopswood Solar Farm, the prospective applicant said the planning authority, as part of the further information request, are seeking information in relation to the passing bays. The prospective applicant said it is regretted that the substation application will be submitted ahead of the further information response to Offaly County Council but said this cannot be avoided in order to meet the September 2023 deadline for EirGrid's electricity competition.

- The prospective applicant said a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) was submitted with the planning applications for Trascaun Solar Farm and Bishopswood Solar Farms and therefore an NIS will also accompany the substation application.

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.



Brendan Wyse

Assistant Director of Planning

8th February 2023

