

An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting
ABP-315213-22
1st meeting

Case Reference / Description	ABP-315213-22 Open Cycle Gas Turbine power plant and ancillary buildings. Derryfrench, Tynagh, Loughrea, Co. Galway.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st		
Date	18/01/23	Start Time	11.00 a.m.
Location	N/A	End Time	12.00 p.m.

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Stephen Kay, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Jimmy Green, Senior Planning Inspector
Niamh Thornton, Executive Officer
Representing the Prospective Applicant
Ed Barrett, Gravis Planning
Carl Wessels, Gravis Planning
Peter O'Connor, Aecom
Aaron McClean, EP Energy Developments Limited
Hannah Eisenberg, Fichtner Consulting Engineers

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 proposed development will consist of an Open Cycle Gas Turbine ('OCGT') 'Peaking Plant', secondary fuel storage, demineralised water tank and firewater tank, and subsurface gas and electricity connection infrastructure (although the gas and electricity connections will be subject to separate design and consenting processes). The prospective applicant presented a layout of the proposed development to the north of the existing power station and stated it would be accessed via the internal road network within the existing power plant which currently culminates to the east of the existing substation. It was noted that there is currently an appeal before the Board (ABP-313538-22) for another OCGT peaking plant to the south west of the current proposal, adjacent to the existing Power Station proposed by the same applicant. It is intended that both peaking plants would be provided in the event of favourable planning decisions. .

The prospective applicant stated that additional flexible generation capacity is urgently required to support the transition to a more renewables-based energy grid. The prospective applicant mentioned the current risk to security of supply, and the need to ensure supply is maintained when there is a gap between renewable generation and demand. The prospective applicant referenced the Departmental Circular (PL12/2021) which issued in December 2021, which stated that new conventional generation including gas-fired generation is a national priority and should be supported as much as possible.

The proposed development will be located circa 1.5km north of the village of Tynagh. It was noted that the site is located on a former mine complex and was previously used as the construction compound for the existing power station. There is an existing shed structure within the red line boundary which will be removed. Other than this the site is currently vacant and is characterised by some relatively significant variations in levels.

Regarding the timeline for making an application, the prospective applicant stated that it aims to target the upcoming capacity auction in Q1 of 2023. To qualify for same evidence of the lodgement of an application for planning consent has to be provided by 14th February 2023.

The prospective applicant presented a number of slides detailing the different elements of the proposed development and depicting the elevations of same.

The prospective applicant stated that the proposed development is supported by national, regional and local policy, referencing the National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, Climate Action Plan 2023, and the County Development Plan in addition to the previously referenced Circular 12/2021.

Regarding the SID status of the proposed development the prospective applicant stated that the proposed development exceeds the threshold listed in the Seventh Schedule of 'A thermal power station or other combustion installation with a total energy output of 300 megawatts or more' and stated that the proposed development meets all three of the criteria set out under section 37(A)(2) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended ("the Act").

It was stated that the application will be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) which will also consider the proposed development cumulatively with the existing power station to the south of the site and the application currently under appeal with An Bord Pleanála.

Board's comments/queries:

A discussion was had regarding the prospective applicant's timeline to submit an application for planning. The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to make a submission in writing regarding timelines and the urgency for determination of the case having particular regard to the relevant requirements of the upcoming capacity auction.

Regarding connections to the substation and gas supply, the prospective applicant clarified that while these are not proposed within this application (and will be subject to a separate consenting process) that consideration of the relevant infrastructure will be included in all the relevant EIAR assessments.

On the basis of the information presented, the Board's representatives gave their preliminary opinion that the proposed development constitutes SID, however the final decision will be for the Board to make.

The Board's representatives noted that the site is undulating in nature and advised that a detailed topographical survey should be undertaken with all relevant levels incorporated in any future layout mapping.

It was noted that there will not be a need for a new substation. It was clarified that a new bay will be required within the existing Tynagh sub station and that connection from the proposed development to this substation will be via a 220KV cable. The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to keep updated on Board decisions in relation to 182E cases and the definitions of transmission to inform the most appropriate method of seeking permission for these connections.

The Board's representatives stated that whilst the EIAR for the adjoining OCGT plant currently the subject of appeal to the Board can inform the EIAR for this application, the EIAR should be as up to date as possible, and in particular ensure that all sensitive receptors in the vicinity are considered.

Regarding engagement with the local authority and public the prospective applicant stated that it has not engaged with these parties in relation to this application. Engagement has been ongoing with the EPA and Gas Networks Ireland.

The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to consult with the HSA during the pre-planning stage.

The Board advised that the prospective applicant to include details of the emissions licence the power station is currently operating under and to address any audit issues, if there have been any as part of any future application.

In response to a query from the Board's representatives, the prospective applicant stated that no issues have been found on site regarding flooding or drainage.

The Board's representatives asked if there are any issues on site with contaminated soil, or similar legacy issues arising from the previous on-site mine use. In response, the prospective applicant clarified that there will be minimal cut and fill used to level

the site. Also stated that it is intended to bring in a small amount of clean material to fill in and even ground levels and there will be no export of soil from the site.

Regarding the Visual Impact Assessment, the Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to make it clear in any visual assessments such as photomontages or wireframes what is currently existing on site and what forms part of different applications.

The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to include details on the impacts on water quality. The Board also advised that any application, including the EIAR non-technical summary set out, as clearly as possible for the public, details of emissions from the proposed stacks.

The Board's representatives advised that in closing the current pre-application discussions, and in any future application, the prospective applicant should provide a clear statement in terms of total energy output having regard to the language used in the seventh schedule of the Act. . Noted that the stated total energy output of 350MW is such that the 7th schedule threshold of 300MW appears certain to be met.

Regarding ecology it was clarified that nothing of particular sensitivity was identified in the on-site surveys, including in the galvanised shed which is proposed to be removed.

The Board's representatives acknowledged that the site is relatively well screened but opined that the applicant could consider including some soft landscaping features along the site boundaries if practicable.

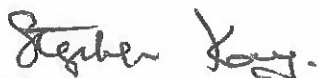
It was clarified by the prospective applicant that the operational period/lifespan of the plant will be 25 years.

Conclusion:

The record of the instant meeting will issue in due course 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 onus is on the

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

The meeting concluded at 12.00 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Kay", written over a horizontal line.

Stephen Kay

Assistant Director of Planning