



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting
ABP-315476-23 1st
meeting

Description	ABP-315476-23 - Proposed 110kV substation to feed into the existing Drumline-Ennis 110kV overhead line (OHL) circuit, within the townland of Coolshamroge, Ennis, Co. Clare.		
Case Type	Pre-application Consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Venue	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
Date	03/03/2023	Time	11:00am -11:25am
Representing An Bord Pleanála			
Ciara Kellett, Director of Planning (Chair)			
Máire Daly, Planning Inspector			
Sarah Caulfield, Executive Officer		s.caulfield@pleanala.ie	01-8737287
Representing the Prospective Applicant			
Colleen Patterson – Neo-Environmental Ltd			
Paul Neary – Neo-Environmental Ltd			
Rachel Buchanan – Renewable Energy Systems (RES) Ltd			
Edel Burke – Renewable Energy Systems (RES) Ltd			

Introduction:

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 6th January 2023, 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 began its presentation by providing a brief introduction to the project team and topics to be discussed during the meeting. Renewable Energy Systems (RES) Limited has been active in Ireland for over 20 years with a portfolio of approximately 400MW in solar development across the country.

The prospective applicant obtained planning permission for Manusmore Solar Farm (Clare County Council Planning Reference: 20562) in November 2020 and Manusmore Solar Farm Extension (Clare County Council Planning Reference: 21915) in November 2021. The Coolshamrock Solar Farm (Clare County Council Planning Reference: 22586) is currently being assessed and a decision is expected imminently. The proposed 110kV loop-in loop-out substation is to facilitate both solar farms and the solar farm extension.

The proposed substation is located within the townland of Coolshamroge, Co. Clare, which lies approximately 7 kilometres southeast of Ennis and 4.2 kilometres east of Clarecastle. The substation is proposed to be located within the boundary of the Coolshamrock Solar Farm which is awaiting a planning decision and comprises of 3 fields which are relatively flat in nature. Landowner agreements have been obtained.

The proposed site does not fall within any designated areas.

The prospective applicant said access to the proposed substation would be via a private lane, which is the same access used in the Coolshamrock Solar Farm application.

The prospective applicant presented several slides which illustrated the substation layout. It was noted that the substation design would be in line with EirGrid's 110kV substation requirements.

The proposed substation consists of the following elements, an EirGrid HV substation compound, customer transformer compound, customer MV compound, 2 number new overhead line towers, 2 number control buildings and palisade and concrete post and rail fencing. The proposed method will be a loop in loop out connection to feed into the existing Drumline – Ennis 110kV circuit.

A loop in loop out grid connection offer was provided by Eirgrid on the 31st October 2022 and the prospective applicant accepted this offer on the 2nd March 2023. It was noted that the proposed location and design are compliant with EirGrid's specifications.

Surveys relating to ecology, archaeology, noise, and transport have been carried out and further surveys are anticipated prior to submission.

The prospective applicant is of the opinion that the proposed infrastructure will not constitute EIA Development.

Discussion

The following matters were discussed:

- In response to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant highlighted the location of the existing overhead line and the new towers which would facilitate the connection into this existing line. It was noted that the connection would be via underground cables from the new towers into the substation.
- The prospective applicant confirmed that a Natura Impact Statement would be submitted as part of the planning application.
- Given the archaeological heritage of the area and the presence of monuments in the vicinity of the site, the Board's representatives said a robust archaeological impact assessment would be required for the site.
- The Board's representatives reminded the prospective applicant to be cognisant of existing residential dwellings in the area and to allow appropriate separation distances. Possible screening around the site should also be considered.
- The Board's representatives said based on the information provided, it is unlikely that the proposed development would require an EIA as it is not a class of development under the EIA Directive.

- The prospective applicant said supporting documentation would include a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Archaeological Assessment, Ecological Appraisal, Natura Impact Statement, Construction Traffic Management Plan, Planning Statement, among others.

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.

 22/3/23

Ciara Kellett

Director of Planning

