



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-315693-23 1st meeting

Case Reference / Description	ABP-315693-23 Upgrading of 4 no. existing 110 kV circuits and 1 no. existing 220 kV circuit. Lanesboro-Mullingar, Co. Longford; Lanesboro-Sliabh Bawn, Co. Longford and Co. Roscommon; Cahir-Knockraha, Co. Tipperary and Co. Cork; Bandon - Dunmanway, Co. Cork; Louth-Woodland, Co. Louth and Co. Meath.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st		
Date	29/05/23	Start Time	11:00 a.m.
Location	MS Teams	End Time	11:35 a.m.

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Paul Caprani, Assistant Director of Planning
Máire Daly, Senior Planning Inspector
Auriol Considine, Senior Planning Inspector
Niamh Thornton, Executive Officer
Representing the Prospective Applicant
Des Cox, Planning and Environment, Eirgrid
Daniel Nestor, Senior Planner, Eirgrid
Owen Zamboglou, Project Manager, EirGrid

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 explained that the projects included in this consultation are part of a wider National Grid upgrading which is being undertaken. The Government has asked Eirgrid to prepare the grid so that up to 80% of Ireland's electricity can come from renewable sources by 2030. It was stated that the grid needs to carry at least 10GW more renewable electricity by 2030, double 2020 levels. It was noted that renewable energy is typically generated far away from where it is used and will therefore have to travel further on the national grid.

To facilitate this, Eirgrid have 294 projects ongoing. 24 of these are upgrades to existing circuits.

The works included in the upgrading of a circuit were presented. These include the replacement of existing cable with higher density cable, replacement of structures, if necessary (wooden polesets and pylons), and refurbishment of existing substations. The prospective applicant clarified that upgrading is different to upvolting. The voltage of the lines will remain the same, with the replacement of the overhead conductors.

It was stated that the works required to upgrade a circuit normally fall under exempted development. Section 4(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended de-exempts the upgrading of the circuits in question in this consultation however, as screening for appropriate assessment has concluded that Natura Impact Statements are required. It was stated that stage two appropriate assessment is required in these instances, primarily as access will be required through sensitive habitats.

The prospective applicant presented maps showing the 5 lines under consideration in this consultation.

Discussion:

The prospective applicant clarified, when asked, that the entire Lanesboro to Mullingar route is not under consideration here, as part of the upgrading of that line will be exempted development and will not require planning permission. The information submitted on that line as part of the consultation request, starting at Lanesboro and

ending at structure 139, east of Abbeyshrule, is what is to be considered as part of this consultation.

It was clarified that Eirgrid carry out their own internal screening for appropriate assessment when screening for exempted development.

The prospective applicant clarified that wooden polesets would not need to be replaced with pylons. Works to structures could include work to the foundations and any replacement of structures will be like for like.

It was clarified that ESB will undertake the development after permission is received. In most instances ESB will use their own established compounds for works. If temporary site compounds are required these will be identified by ESB and details of deals with landowners will be included in any application for planning.

The Board's representatives shared their preliminary view that the proposed development does not constitute SID, however the final decision is for the Board to make.

The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to consider cultural heritage, visual impacts, railway crossings and the impact, if any, of disturbance to structures near rivers in any future application.

Conclusion:

The onus is on the prospective applicant to either request a further meeting or formal closure of the 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 11:35 a.m.



Paul Caprani
Assistant Director of Planning