



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-315827-23 1st meeting

Case Reference / Description	ABP-315827-23 Step-up transformer and grid connection works at Ardderroo 110kV Substation. Letter (townland), Cnoc Raithni (Knockranny), Co. Galway.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st		
Date	17/04/23	Start Time	14:30 p.m.
Location	MS Teams	End Time	14:55 p.m.

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Paul Caprani, Assistant Director of Planning
Conor McGrath, Senior Planning Inspector
Niamh Thornton, Executive Officer
Niamh Hickey, Executive Officer
Evan McGuigan, Administrative Assistant
Representing the Prospective Applicant
Conor Frehill, HW Planning
William O'Connor, Western Power Developments Ltd.
Rainy Francis, Western Power Developments Ltd.

The meeting commenced at 14.30 p.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 presented a drawing outlining the development site in context with other existing and permitted wind farms in the area. The subject site is located circa 4.5km west of Moycullen. Permission was granted for an 11-turbine windfarm, including 110kV on-site substation by An Bord Pleanála (Galway County Council Ref: 13/829, Board ref: PL07.243094) in 2016. The grid connection was assessed in the EIAR for this application, but consent was not sought as part of this application.

The prospective applicant now proposes to make a new section 34 planning application to Galway County Council for alterations to the permitted development comprising an increase in turbine tip height and omission of the granted substation, connection to the electricity grid through Ardderroo substation and all ancillary works.

The aspect of the proposed development under consideration for the purposes of this pre-application consultation is the proposed 33kV-to-110kV step-up transformer along with necessary control and protection switchgear required to facilitate the connection to Ardderroo 110kV substation.

The prospective applicant stated that the proposed 33kV underground cable connection from the windfarm to the substation is outside the scope of section 182A(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

The prospective applicant held a pre-planning meeting with Galway County Council on 25th January 2023, who were of the opinion that the proposed development does not constitute SID. The prospective applicant referred to precedent cases where similar developments were not considered by the Board to be SID.

Discussion:

It was clarified that the 33kV connection line did not form part of the previously permitted wind energy development.

The prospective applicant clarified that the permitted windfarm had been intended to be connected to Knockranny substation but that it is now more feasible to connect to Ardderroo substation, located approx. 200m further to the west.

It was confirmed that Knockranny substation serves a number of other windfarms in the area.

The prospective applicant confirmed that the proposed development under consideration for the purposes of a SID determination is the step-up transformer within the substation, along with necessary control and protection switchgear. It was also clarified that an extension to the existing IPP control building to receive the 33kV cable is not within the scope of this request.

The prospective applicant confirmed that the only function of the step-up transformer is to step-up power from 33kV to 110kV to allow connection to the substation and that it will have no other function.

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

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 14:55 p.m.



Paul Caprani

Assistant Director of Planning