



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting
ABP- 316205-23
1st meeting

Case Reference / Description	ABP-316205-23 - Proposed new line bay and associated underground cabling to be located within the existing Kellis 220kV substation at lands in the townland of Kellistown East, Co. Carlow		
Case Type	Pre-Application Consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Date	25 th May 2023	Start Time	11:00am
Location	Virtually by Microsoft Teams	End Time	11:20am

Representing An Bord Pleanála

Paul Caprini, Assistant Director of Planning

Robert Speer, Planning Inspector

Ashling Doherty, Executive Officer

Sarah Caufield, Executive Officer

Representing the Prospective Applicant

Conor Frehill – HW Planning

Richard Coughlan – HW Planning

Emer Sexton - Orsted

Sean Lordon - Orsted
Barry Marshall - Orsted

The meeting commenced at 11:00am

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. The Board may at any time conclude the consultation where it considers appropriate to do so.
- 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 began its presentation by providing a brief introduction to the project team and topics to be discussed during the meeting. The prospective applicant is Garreenleen Solar Farm Ltd, a subsidiary of Ørsted Onshore Ireland Midco Ltd with a vision that the world runs entirely on green energy. They are one of the world's most sustainable energy companies and are recognised as a global leader on climate action. In Ireland and Northern Ireland, they have a portfolio of 332 MW of onshore wind farms which was acquired from Brookfield Renewable in 2021. Their ambition is to increase this by more than 600MW in the coming decade which will include solar and battery storage plants. As part of this ambition, they also acquired the rights to Garreenleen Solar Farm from Terrasolar in 2022.

The prospective applicant highlighted the site and development context for the proposed site and stated that planning permission was granted for a solar farm on 28th September 2021 by An Bord Pleanála under case reference ABP-307891-21 which was identified on the map in blue as Solar Farm Phase 1.

Further planning permission was obtained from An Bord Pleanála on the 2nd November 2022 under section 182A of the PDA (as amended) for a 110kV substation in the townland of Bendinstown which was highlighted on the map and located north of the Phase 1 Solar Farm. This included a 110kV underground cable connection north and east tying into the Kellis 220kV substation. Subsequent to this application, Carlow County Council granted planning permission for a second phase of a solar farm which was highlighted in yellow on the map. There were no 3rd party appeals on the application and the prospective applicant received the final grant on the 22nd March 2023.

The prospective applicant stated that the substation is located down a cul-de-sac of a local road (LR125) and benefits from mature planting. In terms of context, it is located approximately 160 metres from the nearest residential property.

Planning permission was obtained to the point at which the underground cabling terminates in the public road at the boundary of the Kellis 220kV substation.

The prospective applicant now seeks the opinion of An Bord Pleanála as to whether the remaining works within the Kellis 220kV substation meet the definition of 'strategic infrastructure' under governing legislative provisions.

Having regard to the description of the works, the proposed underground 110kV cabling will extend from the public road to the north and be trenched to the line-bay assigned by EirGrid. The final location of the line bay is yet to be confirmed with different options existing in respect of this. The path and length of the cabling will be finalised by way of agreement with EirGrid as part of the detailed design process. Based on the prepared plans, the cable run could range in length from between circa 66 and 195 metres. The line bay will include the installation of outdoor air insulated equipment including, circuit breaker, disconnects and instrument transformers mounted on concrete plinths and all ancillary site works.

The prospective applicant is of the opinion that, based on its assessment, the proposed development does not constitute a Strategic Infrastructure Development. The main reasons being the majority of the works will take place within the existing Kellis 220kV Substation; the works are small in nature; the works and associated equipment are equivalent to that already installed within the substation; and the works are ancillary only to the main works relating to electricity generation in this case, namely, completing the connection of the Garreenleen Solar Farm and Bendinstown 110kV substation to the transmission network. The Bendinstown 110kV substation and the associated 110kV underground cable connection to the Kellis 220kV Substation have already received consent under SID provisions. The works do not reasonably meet the scale of strategic infrastructure developments and associated tests, as set out in section 37A(2) of the Act.

The prospective applicant referred to 2 similar precedent cases, An Bord Pleanála case references VC0097 and VC0031 which the Board determined as not comprising SID. Based on these precedents, the prospective applicant believes the proposed development does not fall within the meaning of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Discussion:

Clarification was sought from the Board's representatives in relation to the depths of trenching and trunking crossing the drainage system along the north-western boundary at the foot of the proposed site and queried whether it follows the same construction methodology as the previously granted SID application. The prospective applicant stated that as part of the cable run there were standard details included for the different methods that were required which included standard trenching in the road, along with details submitted in terms of interactions with culverts, water courses and infrastructure. Similar methods in line with standard environmental controls will be applied. With regards to trenching depth it will be typically 1.1 or 1.2 metres. The prospective applicant said all details will be included as part of the Construction and Environmental Management Plan.

Clarification was sought from the Board's representatives if a preferred route had been finalised yet and if Phase 2 would be connecting under the N80 through Phase 1. The prospective applicant referred to its site context map and, in particular, the yellow line which shows a cable run that ties into a transformer to the north of Phase 1 with the blue line being an interconnector into the substation which pulls the infrastructure together. The prospective applicant said 4 separate planning applications were approved for this site.

The Board's representatives stated their preliminary opinion is that the proposed development would not constitute strategic infrastructure development but noted that the ultimate decision is a matter for the Board.

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 request a further meeting.

The meeting concluded at 11:20am

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Caprani', is written over a solid horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Paul Caprani

Assistant Director of Planning