



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-317173-23 1st Meeting

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| Case Reference / Description | Proposed development of 110kV Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) loop-in substation and associated grid connection in the townland of Rathcoursey East, Co. Cork. | | |
| Case Type | Pre-Application Consultation | | |
| 1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting | 1 st | | |
| Date | 18 th July 2023 | Start Time | 2:00PM |
| Location | Virtually by Microsoft Teams | End Time | 2:25PM |

Representing An Bord Pleanála

Paul Caprani, Assistant Director of Planning

Robert Speer, Planning Inspector

Ashling Doherty, Executive Officer

Representing the Prospective Applicant

Mark McCarthy, Terra Solar

The meeting commenced at 2:00pm

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 salient matters raised in the presentation are summarised as follows:

Rathcoursey Solar Farm Limited is a special purpose vehicle (SPV) company set up by Terra Solar II which was established in 2015 to develop, finance, construct and operate solar farms in Ireland. To date they have consented approximately 30 No. solar farms and over 1,000MW of renewable electricity in Ireland.

The prospective applicant is proposing to develop a loop-in substation and associated grid connection in the townland of Rathcoursey East near Middleton in Co.

Cork. The purpose of the development is to transport the electricity generated at the proposed Rathcoursey Solar Farm to the national electricity grid via the existing 110kV Whitegate – Cow's Cross overhead line. The solar farm is currently the subject of a planning application to Cork County Council.

The proposed development site is located within unzoned agricultural land with the wider rural area characterised by a mix of linear and one-off residential development. The nearest settlement is the village of Saleen which is located approximately 1.7km to the southeast of the proposed development. The Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA) is located approximately 1km from the proposed development. Road infrastructure and access to the proposed development includes the R630 Regional Road and Local Road L7657 in its immediate environs and the N25 approximately 4km to the north. The proposed substation is a 110 kV Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) substation. The substation will consist of both EirGrid and Independent Power Producer (IPP) including IPP Control Room buildings, HV electrical equipment and associated infrastructure including palisade fences and concrete post and rail fences. The substation will include a 'loop-in / loop-out' underground 110kV cable grid connection which will connect into the existing 110kV Whitegate – Cow's Cross overhead line via 2 No. new Interface Towers.

The prospective applicant highlighted a number of policy documents which included the National Planning Framework, the Climate Action Plan 2023, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region, and the Cork County Development Plan, 2022-2028.

The prospective applicant also highlighted a number of reports they propose to submit with the proposed application, which include an Archaeological Impact Assessment, Ecological Impact Assessment and Screening for Appropriate Assessment. There is no requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment.

Discussion:

The Board's representative initial opinion is that the proposed application is a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID), but it is at the Boards discretion to issue a final decision.

The Board's representative noted an overlapping of the site boundary for the subject works with those shown in the planning application for the proposed solar farm (as lodged with Cork County Council) to which the prospective applicant stated that there was an overlapping of the red lines, but they will cover this in their proposed application.

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 2.25PM



Paul Caprani

Assistant Director of Planning