



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of 1st Meeting ABP-317654-23

Case Reference / Description	ABP-317654-23 - Proposed development of 110kV/MV distribution station. Fosterstown, approximately 3 km south of Trim, County Meath.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Meeting	1 st		
Date	14/09/2023	Start Time	14:30 p.m.
Location	Virtually	End Time	15:00 p.m.

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Paul Caprani, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Barry O'Donnell, Planning Inspector
Niamh Hickey, Executive Officer

Representing the Prospective Applicant
Heather McMeel, ESB
Brendan Allen, ESB
Jeffrey Dunney, ESB
James Brennan, ESB
Colin Walshe, ESB

Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 26th July 2023, requesting pre-application consultations under section 182E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, 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's representatives 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 earlier stage in the process on the matter. It may inform the applicant of this preliminary view, however it was stressed that the ultimate decision was a matter for the Board and not the inspector.
- 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 made by the prospective applicant:

The prospective applicant provided a brief overview of the proposed development and showed an indicative plan of the site location, which is proposed to be located along the R160, southwest of Trim town. The prospective applicant stated the land use in the surrounding area is mainly agricultural with some single rural dwellings. The prospective applicant stated that the Trim 38kV/MV station is currently overloaded with no additional capacity for any new demand. The purpose of the proposed development is to relieve the overloaded Trim station and support and reinforce the distribution network in the area and provide additional capacity.

The prospective applicant demonstrated the existing network around Trim on the on a map presented at the meeting.

The prospective applicant stated its opinion that due to the nature and function of the proposed development it would not fall within the scope of section 182A and thus would not likely constitute strategic infrastructure development, as it is a distribution network rather than a transmission network.

Discussion:

- The Board's representatives queried if there were any key differences between a distribution station and a substation. The prospective applicant stated that a distribution station would be on the medium voltage side and would feed out to commercial domestic customers.
- The prospective applicant stated it intends to temporarily divert the line to enable construction. Once the proposed development is built, the intention is to then divert the line through the station. The prospective applicant stated the power going into the station will be retained at 110kV and then transformed to 20kV going northward from the station, to Trim. The source of the power will be from the overhead 110kV line, transformers will be used to take power down to

the 20kV line. The prospective applicant confirmed the line remains unaffected apart from the section going into the station that will be spliced. The prospective applicant also confirmed it would be an underground cable going into and out of the station.

- The prospective applicant confirmed the access points have changed due to discussions with landowners.
- The Board's representatives advised a desktop assessment should be carried out to address any archaeological issues.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to quantify the amount of hedgerow removal that will be required and promoted the idea of retaining hedgerow where possible. The applicant was also requested to take into consideration whether or not some access points may require more hedgerow removal than necessary.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to carry out a bat survey.
- The Board's representatives advised of the existence of an open drain routeing through the site, that appears to flow into the River Boyne and that one of the qualifying interests of the River Boyne Special Area of Conservation is salmon, which is particularly vulnerable to surface water quality impacts, and that the prospective applicant should address the potential for significant effects on this qualifying interest in the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.
- The Board's representatives advised that the site is in landscape location identified by the development plan as having medium capacity to accommodate development of the nature proposed. The Board's representatives recommended that CGI's and a landscape and visual assessment should form part of the application.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to engage with the planning authority to ascertain if they require 90m or 120m of visibility, in view of the 80km/h speed limit and high vehicle speeds observed on the road.

- The prospective applicant stated that as the proposed development is not taking in any power from a generated source it believes it would not constitute strategic infrastructure development.
- The Board's representatives advised that they did not have a strong preliminary opinion as to whether the application would constitute strategic infrastructure development, given the specific circumstances of the proposal and the very limited extent of 110kV overhead line proposed, and that the Board would have to form a view, based on the provisions of the legislation.

Conclusion:

The Board's representatives advised that the onus is on the prospective applicant to either request a further meeting or formal closure of the instant pre-application consultation process. The Board's representatives advised that the record of the instant meeting will be issued in the meantime and that 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.



Paul Caprani

Assistant Director of Planning

