



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of 1st Meeting ABP-319385-24

Case Reference / Description	ABP-319385-24 - Proposed 400kV GIS Substation, HV Lines, Electric Plant, and associated site works. Located in the townlands of Coolpowra, Ballynaheskeragh, Coolnageeragh and Gortlusky, Co. Galway.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Meeting	1 st		
Date	18/04/2024	Start Time	11:00 a.m.
Location	Virtually	End Time	11:50 a.m.

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Staff Members
Stephen Kay, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Jimmy Green, Senior Planning Inspector
Raymond Muwaniri, Executive Officer

Representing the Prospective Applicant
Colm Staunton, Halston
Stephen Kelly, Halston
Nigel Reams, Lumcloon Energy / Coolpowra Flex Gen Limited.

Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 25th March 2024, requesting pre-application consultations under section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, ('the Act') 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 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 in any legal proceedings.

Presentation made by the prospective applicant:

The prospective applicant gave an overview of the proposed development which is a 400kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation that comprises a two-storey building, overhead line gantry, high voltage electrical cabling and telecommunications tower. The proposed GIS substation will upgrade an existing Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) substation, and facilitate connection of the proposed adjoining projects, a Reserve Gas Fired Generator (under concurrent Section 37B pre-application consultations with the Board - ABP-319073-24), and an Energy Storage System Facility with a synchronous condenser facility which, it is proposed, will form a separate planning application under Section 34 of the Act to Galway County Council.

The prospective applicant presented the proposed site location and site layout and discussed the overall site context. The location of the site is agricultural land north of Portumna and south of Killimor, close to the N65 road. The prospective applicant stated that the site is a key strategic location due to its proximity to the Moneypoint to Woodland 400kV overhead line and an existing node on the transmission network and that the proposed development would support the integration of low carbon alternatives, though facilitating the connection of infrastructure (reserve gas fired generator, energy storage system and synchronous condenser) designed to mitigate the intermittency issues arising from the provision of more renewable energy sources of generation onto the network.

The prospective applicant stated that, subsequent to the pre-application request being lodged with the Board, a clinic/meeting had been held with Eirgrid. Eirgrid confirmed that no part of the existing AIS (Oldstreet) substation should be contained within the red line application boundary of the proposed development and, furthermore, that in the event of favourable consideration of the current proposal that they (Eirgrid/ESB) would apply for planning permission for any ancillary works on adjoining lands to facilitate the connection of the proposed GIS substation to the

network (including any required overhead gantries from the existing compound and/or overhead lines). The prospective applicant also noted that the proposed development includes works to divert the stream on site and that they are in discussions with Office of Public Works (OPW) regarding this. The prospective applicant discussed the context of the project at National, Regional and Local level and noted that there is support for the proposed development across all relevant energy policies and plans.

The prospective applicant concluded the presentation by giving an overview of the proposed development, setting out its importance and confirming their position that the subject works constitute section 182A development under the definitions in the Act.

Discussion:

- The Board's representatives gave their preliminary view that the proposed development may be considered strategic infrastructure development but noted that the final decision would be a matter for the Board.
- The Board's representatives noted that while the various proposed elements (GIS substation, Reserve Gas-Fired Generator, Energy Storage and Synchronous Condenser) may require three separate consenting processes, it seems appropriate that the red line boundary of the current proposal would extend to the entire site boundary at this location so that any future application could incorporate any common elements such as access roads, drainage, landscaping etc.
- The Board's representatives queried whether the connecting elements of the Gas Fired Generator, Energy Storage System, and synchronous condenser would be called transformer/substation compounds. The prospective applicant stated that these elements would be considered AIS equipment, and in response to further queries from the Boards representatives, it was confirmed that the connections between these facilities and the GIS substation would be

at 110kV and that these lines and associated electrical plant and equipment were also included within the S182A application consultations. The prospective applicant undertook to ensure any application documentation and drawings will clearly set out what is being applied for in the application.

- In response to a query from the Board Representatives the prospective applicant noted that a firewater retention tank shown on drawings will likely form part of the proposed section 37A application and not the S182A application as it is a requirement for the gas-fired generator and not the GIS substation.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to include an updated plan and drawings when closing out the pre-application process which should incorporate the amendment to the red line boundary requested by Eirgrid (to exclude the existing AIS substation which had been included in the red line in the initial submission made as part of this pre application consultation). The prospective applicant was also advised that each component of the overall project should incorporate an overall Landscape Plan while also ensuring that each future application is capable of providing its own individual landscaping.
- The prospective applicant clarified that a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) will be carried out for the overall development as the infrastructure items are interlinked but noted that the developments can stand alone also and there are no conflicts of interest. In this regard each application will be supported by the relevant application assessments and documentation as necessary (including EIAR and NIS) and each will clearly delineate the extent of works included within each application, while acknowledging and noting the extent of the overall works proposed so that each consenting authority has an awareness of the entirety of the project.
- The prospective applicant mentioned that it has had consultations with Galway County Council, and they required any future application(s) to comply with the relevant objectives and policies of the County Development Plan.

- Following queries, the prospective applicant confirmed that the GIS substation will ultimately be transferred as an asset to Eirgrid/ESB networks and therefore become part of the transmission system.
- When asked by the Boards representatives in relation to the existing farmhouse and buildings on site the prospective applicant confirmed that it was still intended to demolish these structures and that these works would form part of the application for the gas-fired generator. The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to ensure adequate provision is made for these works under whichever application it is proposed to carry them out.
- When questioned about the construction of the overall project the prospective applicant stated that it was intended that the same temporary construction compound would largely be used and that upon completion of construction the area would be included in the Landscaping Plan proposals.
- The Board's representatives queried if there was a lifespan for the various elements within the overall project. The prospective applicant noted that operational periods of around 30 years were standard for the reserve gas fired generator and the energy storage system and clarified that the GIS substation and any associated electrical lines, plant and equipment would be permanent works. The Board's representatives advised that an appropriate decommissioning plan should be included within all relevant application documents and assessments for any elements with a specified operational period/lifespan.
- The Board's representative advised that the prospective applicant should not consider themselves to be limited in terms of engagement with other bodies to any future list of prescribed bodies that may issue from the Board and should liaise with any bodies beyond those specified as necessary to ensure comprehensive applications can be made.

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephen Kay", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Stephen Kay

Assistant Director of Planning