

An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting ABP-319395-24

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	Proposed development of a Transformer Compound enclosing a 110kV electricity transformer and an electrical control building, and approximately 30m of underground cables in the townlands of Moatpark, Ballyragget, County Kilkenny.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application consultation		
<b>1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> / 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting		
<b>Date</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	<b>Start Time</b>	11:00am
<b>Location</b>	MS Teams	<b>End Time</b>	11:30am

### Representing An Bord Pleanála

Paul Caprani (Assistant Planning Director) Chair

Laura Finn (Planning Inspector)

Lauren Murphy (Executive Officer)

### Representing the Prospective Applicant

Dineka Maguire (Neoen Renewables Ireland Limited)

Grace Curran (Neoen Renewables Ireland Limited)

Bláithín Rafferty (Galetech Energy Services)

Simon Carleton (Galetech Energy Services)

## Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024, requesting pre-application consultations under section 182E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and advised the prospective applicant that the first 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 began the presentation by providing an overview of Neoen Renewables Ireland Limited. Neoen was founded in 2008 in France and is one of the leading producers in renewable energy worldwide, operating in 16 countries. By the end of year 2023, Neoen had a capacity of more than 8GW in operation or under construction and are aiming to provide 10GW of renewable energy in the course of 2025. The prospective applicant presented a drawing of Ireland and identified the projects which Neoen are responsible for in Ireland.

The prospective applicant introduced the proposed development. The proposed development location is intended to be located 1km North of Ballyragget, 17km north of Kilkenny City and immediately adjacent to existing Ballyragget 110kV electricity substation. The proposed site is a generally flat landscape, and the current land use is for agricultural pasture.

The prospective applicant briefly discussed the project history. They have recently lodged a planning application with Kilkenny County Council for the development of an energy storage facility and ancillary infrastructure, (Ref: 24/60221). The transformer compound will contain electrical equipment to connect the energy storage system to the existing 110kV electricity substation.

The prospective applicant presented a site location drawing. The energy storage system, transformer compound, 110kV electricity substation and the townlands of Ballyragget were clearly identified on the drawing.

The prospective applicant discussed the site selection process and the reasons why they chose this site as the preferred development site. These reasons include its proximity to the point of connection to the national electricity network, ease of access, absence of cultural heritage features and absence of significant ground water vulnerability or flood risk susceptibility.

The prospective applicant presented the description of the proposed development. The proposed development is intended to include a transformer compound (45m x 24m) with a hardcore surface enclosed by security fencing, an electrical control building, and approximately 30 meters of underground electrical cabling to connect the electricity transformer to the existing Ballyragget 110kV substation. The transformer compound will be fed from the energy storage facility proposed in the planning application currently with Kilkenny County Council. The transformer compound will link into the adjacent substation via an 'under the fence' link.

The prospective applicant presented a drawing of the proposed project design. It identified the electricity substation entrance, the site entrance, the Ballyragget 110kV substation and the Ballyragget reserve compound.

The prospective applicant presented a drawing of the 110kV substation. This drawing identified the electrical control building, the 110kV transformer and the under the fence connection to Ballyragget 110kV electricity substation.

The prospective applicant concluded the presentation by providing an opinion that they believe the proposed development does not fall within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and development Act 2000, as amended.

#### **Discussion:**

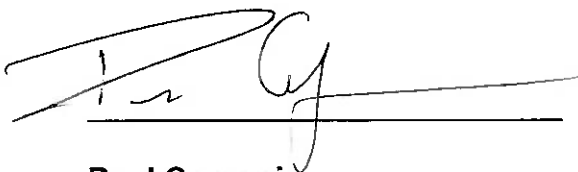
- The Boards representatives began the discussion by enquiring into the source of electricity generation that is feeding the energy storage facility on the adjacent site. The prospective applicant clarified that it is not connected to any project and its main function is to store any excess electricity that's coming off the national grid.
- The Boards representatives questioned if the transformer would be uprating the electricity generation from 38kV to 110kV? The prospective applicant clarified that that is correct.

- The prospective applicant clarified that this project is not connected to any wind or solar farm development but is solely used for the purpose of storing electricity.
- The Boards representatives asked the prospective applicant to clarify the boundary of the substation and whether or not it was contiguous to the transformer compound. The prospective applicant clarified that the boundary of the transformer site and the substation site are contiguous.
- The Boards representatives provided the prospective applicant with their preliminary view that the proposed development does not fall within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), but reminded the prospective applicant that the final decision lies with the Board.
- The prospective applicant provided a reference number (ABP – 316369-23) for a similar development where the Board determined that the development of a generator transformer compound adjacent to a 110 kV substation did not fall within the scope of Section 182A.

**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 pre-application consultation process. The Board's representatives advised that the record of the meeting will be issued and any comments on the record can be submitted or alternatively the prospective applicant may bring any comments for discussion at the time of any further meeting.

The Meeting concluded at 11:30am.



**Paul Caprani**

**Assistant Director of Planning**