



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of 1st Meeting ABP-319470-24

Case Reference / Description	Proposed 110kV substation and 110kV underground cable connecting the substation to the existing ESB 220kV Kellistown substation located at Grangeford, Co. Carlow.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Date	13 th August 2024	Start Time	11:00am
Location	MS Teams	End Time	11:30am

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Una Crosse (Assistant Planning Director) Chair
Robert Speer (Senior Planning Inspector)
Lauren Murphy (Executive Officer)

Representing the Prospective Applicant
Marc Lamphiere, Aer Soléir
Fernanda Ayala, Aer Soléir
Conor Forde, Aer Soléir
Kevin O'Regan, Malone O Regan Environmental
Kathryn Broderick, Malone O Regan Environmental

Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 5th April, 2024, 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 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 giving a brief introduction to the company Aer Soléir.

The prospective applicant presented a drawing of the site location for the proposed development. The proposed 110kV substation site is located within the townlands of Grangeford and Friarstown, County Carlow. The site is located approximately 5.6km east of Carlow town.

The prospective applicant discussed the need for the proposed development and referred to the EU Solar Energy Strategy, the REPower EU plan, the Climate and Energy Policy Framework 2030 and the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020.

The prospective applicant discussed the current planning status of the proposed development site. It stated that planning permission for a solar PV development had previously been refused by Carlow County Council in 2016 although that decision had been granted on appeal by the Board but expired in 2022. The prospective applicant currently has a further planning application lodged with Carlow County Council (PA Ref: PR 2360297) for a solar PV development with a decision due to be made by the 25th August, 2024.

The prospective applicant presented a site location drawing which outlined other proposed and permitted solar PV developments in the immediate area.

The prospective applicant discussed the components of the proposed development. These include the construction of a new 110kV substation and a 110kV underground cable to connect to the existing ESB 220kV Kellistown Substation. The intended purpose of the proposed 110kV substation is to connect the proposed solar farm to the national grid.

The prospective applicant discussed the proposed substation and mentioned that it had been in consultation with EirGrid regarding connections to the national grid. EirGrid confirmed that there was no available capacity to connect to the Carlow 110kV substation via overhead lines resulting in the subject proposal to connect to the existing 220kV Kellistown substation via underground cabling.

The prospective applicant presented a drawing outlining the proposed grid connection route.

The prospective applicant discussed the proposed site access route for the proposed development and advised that consultations had been held with Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

Baseline environmental surveys, to include a robust Natura Impact Statement and an environmental report, were briefly discussed. The prospective applicant gave a breakdown of the contents of the proposed planning application documentation.

The prospective applicant closed off the presentation by giving its preliminary view that the proposed development would fall within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.

The prospective applicant intends to lodge an application to An Bord Pleanála in Q4 of 2024.

Discussion:

- The Board's representatives began the discussion by seeking clarification on the prospective applicant's company name. The prospective applicant clarified the relationship between PRT Solar and Aer Soléir.
- The Board's representatives clarified with the prospective applicant that the previously proposed connection to the overhead line to connect to the existing Carlow 110kV substation was to be superseded by the proposed development. The prospective applicant confirmed this.
- The prospective applicant clarified that while it was initially intended to seek planning permission for a 38kV substation from Carlow County Council, EirGrid identified the need for a 110kV substation instead.
- The prospective applicant clarified that the purpose of the proposed 110kV substation is also to facilitate connection to the grid by one or more renewable energy projects.

- The Board's representatives recommended that the prospective applicant liaise with the developers of other proposed connections to the 220kV Kellistown substation in order to coordinate traffic management and construction schedules etc.
- The Board's representatives raised a query regarding noise assessment reports. It was advised that the assessments should consider the extendable nature of the proposed substation and any future developments. The prospective applicant clarified that this would be the case.
- The Board's representatives recommended that the prospective applicant ensure it has robust reports and surveys completed as part of the planning application to include an appropriate assessment screening report, traffic management surveys, and archaeological surveys etc.
- Reference was made by the Board representatives to the recent Treascon Supreme Court judgement in respect of EIA screening.
- The Board's representatives gave their preliminary opinion that the proposed application would fall within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, and thus would likely amount to strategic infrastructure necessitating that a planning application be made directly to the Board. However, the prospective applicant was further advised that a final determination on the matter would be a decision for the Board.

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.

The Meeting concluded at 11:30am.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Una Crosse', is written over a horizontal line.

Una Crosse

Assistant Director of Planning