



**An  
Bord  
Pleanála**

## **Record of Meeting ABP-320362-24**

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	Proposed development of a 110kV High Voltage (HV) Compound at Grange Castle Business Park South, in the townlands of Aungierstown, Ballybane and Kilbride, Dublin 22		
<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>	7 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	<b>Start Time</b>	2:30pm
<b>Location</b>	MS Teams	<b>End Time</b>	4:25pm

<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>
Una Crosse (Assistant Planning Director) Chair
Colm McLoughlin (Senior Planning Inspector)
Ellen Moss (Executive Officer)

<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>
Ed Healy – Google
Kevin O'Brien – Google
Tom Quinn – Google
James Morris – Google
Sinead Whyte – Arup
Bernard Farrell – Arup
Alan Roberts – A&L Goodbody

## Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 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.

- The Board advised that discussion of the merits or otherwise of the related data-centre case (ABP-320852-24) would not form part of this consultation meeting.

#### **Presentation made by the prospective applicant:**

The prospective applicant began their presentation with reference to the wider development context, including 'DC1' and 'DC2' which are existing data centre developments within the Google Ireland campus. South Dublin County Council (SDCC) Ref SD24A/0164W relates to the development of a third data centre; 'DC3', which was appealed to the Board (ABP-320852-24) on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2024, following a decision to refuse permission.

The prospective applicant provided details of the proposed electricity compound noting that DC1 and DC2 are supplied from an existing EirGrid high-voltage (HV) electricity substation. It is intended to install two electrical transformers in a compound to the east side of the existing EirGrid substation to facilitate the proposed DC3 facility. The proposed HV compound would comprise two underground 110kV feeders from the existing substation to two transformers and an MV switchgear building. It was stated that the existing EirGrid substation has spare circuit breakers in place which would supply the proposed transformers.

#### **Discussion:**

The Board's representatives queried if the substation and transformers are solely intended to serve the 'DC3' facility, and if the other transformers and substations would solely serve the 'DC1' and 'DC2' data centres. The prospective applicant advised that the two proposed transformers would solely serve 'DC3' and that the existing transformers have some capacity and could also be utilised to serve 'DC3'.

The Board's representatives queried whether the proposed electrical infrastructure and the existing EirGrid compound would function as a single compound if developed. The prospective applicant advised that it is proposed to install two new transformers to the east of the existing EirGrid building, which would be supplied under the fence from the existing EirGrid HV 110kV substation, with the existing EirGrid building securely segregated.

The Board's representatives noted that a ten-year permission is sought in relation to the data centre project (ABP-320852-24) and advised that clarity should be provided for the permission sought for the subject proposal. The prospective applicant expects that a ten-year permission would be sought to align the project with the proposed data-centre project. It was clarified that the electrical infrastructure would not proceed should the data centre not receive planning permission. The prospective applicant noted that, if developed, all infrastructure outside of the EirGrid building would remain in the control of the prospective applicant and would not form part of the network.

The Board's representatives noted that SDCC had refused permission for the data-centre project (ABP-320852-24) and that it would be advisable for any relevant reasons for refusal to be addressed in respect of an adjoining, related development.

The Board's representatives queried whether a drain traversed the subject site area, including the drainage channel referenced by SDCC as being proposed for culverting in the data centre development. The prospective applicant advised that a watercourse runs south to north through the subject area and that as part of the data centre project it is proposed to culvert and daylight sections of same. A robust assessment of flood risk and potential impacts on biodiversity with respect to this element of the project was advised.

In respect of a preliminary view as to the SID status of the proposal, the Board's representatives noted that on the basis of the location of the proposed development and the information provided as part of the request that it may be considered by the Board, on the basis of previous determinations, to form an extension of the existing electricity infrastructure adjoining the subject site. The Board's representatives referred the prospective applicant to relevant Board determinations and in particular to the Board's determination in respect of the proposed electrical infrastructure project at a proximate site (ABP-320205-24), wherein it was determined that the project would entail an extension to an existing substation and, therefore, it was not deemed to constitute SID. The prospective applicant outlined their definitive view that the proposal would comprise SID, having regard to the provisions of Section 182A and outlined their interpretation of what should be considered to inform the Inspector's recommendation and the Board's determination. The Board's representatives acknowledged the prospective applicant's view in this regard, while also referring to the recent determinations made by the Board on similar types of development.

The Board's representatives advised that the prescribed bodies to be notified of the proposed development would be issued as part of the final determination.

The prospective applicant queried if the documentation submitted for the proposed data-centre project (ABP-320205-24) would be sufficient for any future application to the Board under Section 182A. The Board's representatives advised that while they have not reviewed all the documentation submitted to the Planning Authority with the data-centre project, from a preliminary review the information provided as part of the data-centre application would appear to provide a reasonable starting point for an electrical infrastructure application, albeit that the information, including drawings and any accompanying reports, should be refined to specifically address the proposed electrical infrastructure proposal.

The prospective applicant queried if the Board would be likely to attach a condition tying commencement of the proposed development to the proposed data-centre project (ABP-320852-24), with the Board's representatives advising that this would not be standard practice. The prospective applicant queried whether the Board would determine the application without reference to the ongoing appeal and if either project would be delayed as a result. The Board's representatives advised in respect of the potential consideration of related developments if the timing was feasible.

The prospective applicant queried the next steps that would arise following this first consultation meeting and the Board's representatives advised of the process following same.

**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 16:45.



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**Una Crosse**

**Assistant Director of Planning**