



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-320756-24 (OC)

Case Reference / Description	Proposed Dublin Array offshore wind farm located approximately 10km off the coast of counties Dublin and Wicklow, at the Kish and Bray banks		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Date	23 rd October 2024	Start Time	14:30pm
Location	MS Teams	End Time	16:00pm

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Stephen Kay (Assistant Planning Director) Chair
Conor McGrath (Assistant Director of Planning)
Conor Donnelly (Marine Ecologist)
Ellen Moss (Executive Officer)

Representing the Prospective Applicant
Aoife Reynolds, RWE
Paul Kelly, RWE
Vanessa O'Connell, RWE
Ciara Conboy Fischer, RWE
John Lowry, RWE
Grainne O'Callaghan, RWE
Grainne Reid, Mott MacDonald

Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 4th of September 2024, requesting pre-application consultations under section 287 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.
- A further meeting or meetings may be held in respect of the proposed development.
- Further information may be requested by the Board.
- The Board may hold consultations in respect of the proposed development with other bodies.
- In accordance with section 287(3) of the Act, the decision to close a consultation rests with the Board. At the conclusion of the pre-application process the case file including the record of meetings held and the report of the reporting inspector detailing the issues arising in the consultation, will be forwarded to the Board. The Board will issue a Direction/Order clarifying that the consultation has closed and that the prospective applicant may make an application for permission under section 291.
- 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 set out the background to the new pre application consultation request. Specifically, the works in Dun Laoghaire at the operations and maintenance base and the decision to seek a MAC extension meant that there was an opportunity to incorporate the whole project (onshore and offshore) into a single application. The prospective applicant stated that this approach was considered to be more comprehensive as well as being clearer for the public.

The prospective applicant advised that the proposed offshore component of the development is presented is similar to that discussed previously under pre-application reference ABP-318500-23. The prospective applicant advised that they have received an extension to the MAC and aim to submit their application in December 2024.

The prospective applicant presented the onshore electrical component of the development. This onshore part of the proposed development is proposed to comprise three main components: the TJB at the landfall, an onshore export cable connecting and a new onshore substation located in the townland of Jamestown.

The proposed onshore substation would be the only component of the proposed development above ground. It would be located in a site compound approximately 500 metres from the existing Carrickmines substation and contain a number of buildings and electrical equipment. The compound would include one GIS building of approximately 15 meters in height, two buildings of approximately 7.5 metres in height, two shunt reactor compounds, two harmonic filters and additional electrical equipment. Other infrastructure would be completely underground and are proposed to comprise approximately 8 kilometres of an onshore export cable route between the Carrickmines substation and the landfall location. The cables would comprise two 220-kilovolt transmission circuits. The application will request permission for the use of a site adjacent to the M50 as a temporary construction compound to support the construction of the proposed development. The prospective applicant noted that the onshore electrical system would be delivered on behalf of Eirgrid and Eirgrid would be the ultimate asset owner.

The prospective applicant presented an ariel view of the proposed site location at the onshore substation. The existing Carrickmines substation would be to the west, and the Ballyogan recycling centre would be to the north of the proposed new substation site. The prospective applicant stated that surveys and ground investigations have

been undertaken as part of the environmental assessments to confirm the extent of the former landfill site to ensure the proposed development site for the substation is outside of the waste site. The proposed substation would have a final footprint of 1.7 hectares. The prospective applicant noted the separate site within the application boundary line at Junction 15. This is proposed to be utilised as a temporary construction compound to support the onshore aspects of the development.

The onshore electrical system would include 8 kilometres of cable. As seen on slide 11 of the presentation made by the prospective applicants, the cable route would cross two main road networks, the M50 and N11, and the Dart line as well as four watercourses. The prospective applicant is proposing to utilize horizontal directional drilling at these crossings. The prospective applicant presented a drawing of the extent of the cable set in the trenches. The route selection process involved consultation with DLR Co. Co., Eirgrid and utility providers.

The prospective applicant provided information in terms of the offshore component of the proposed development, which was previously discussed under pre-application reference ABP-318500-23. The prospective applicant advised that the proposed offshore component of the proposed development has not changed from that discussed previously.

The prospective applicant provided information in terms of the proposed Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Base. The O&M Base is proposed to be constructed at Dun Laoghaire Harbour and is dependent on the issuing of two additional MAC applications from MARA to facilitate the carpark and the pontoon.

The O&M Base would comprise office space, a control room, a storage warehouse for spare equipment and welfare facilities. The O&M building would be approximately 82 metres long, 16 metres wide with a maximum height of 12.3 metres above existing pavement level. The proposed pontoon is 60 metre long and located adjacent to Berth number 5 with an access gangway for CTVs. There is no change to the layout that was previously discussed under pre-application reference ABP-318500-23.

The prospective applicant provided an update on the Environmental Impact Assessment and Natura Impact Statement. Both the EIAR and NIS are in an

advanced stage. These have been prepared in line with statutory requirements, EPA guidelines and other relevant and appropriate standards.

Discussion:

- The Boards representatives queried if the proposed construction compound land at Junction 15 is under the ownership of Horse Racing Ireland or Transport Infrastructure Ireland. The prospective applicant advised that the land is owned by Horse Racing Ireland. However, they are separate from lands subject of proposals by the Land Development Agency.
- The Boards representatives queried the feedback received from consultations with EirGrid, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and Iarnrod Eireann on the crossings and construction access. The prospective applicant advised that they have been unable to engage with Transport Infrastructure Ireland in detail regarding the proposed route. In relation to the temporary construction compound, they have been engaging with Horse Racing Ireland and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council to ensure the proposed uses would not conflict with future uses of the land. In 2022 the proposed applicant consulted with Transport Infrastructure Ireland regarding the M50 crossing and at that point Transport Infrastructure Ireland indicated that they wished to engage through the formal planning process. Iarnrod Eireann has engaged in relation to the railway crossing and has provided a letter of acceptance in terms of crossing underneath the railway line.
- The Boards representatives noted that Transport Infrastructure Ireland may raise concerns with construction traffic access arrangements and advised that engagement would be undertaken with TII on this issue if possible. The Boards representatives queried whether an alternative construction compound had been identified. The prospective applicant advised that three compounds had been identified and included in the environmental impact assessment and planning application documents. The prospective applicant stated that there have been extensive consultations with the Roads section of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council on the proposed development including construction access arrangements.
- The Boards representatives queried whether any further on-shore survey work had been undertaken since the 2020 scoping report. The prospective applicant advised that extensive survey work has been conducted, as seven different route options have been assessed. The environmental assessments are in the final stages. The majority of the onshore cable route runs along

existing road infrastructure, public park spaces, and some agricultural areas. Extensive ground investigations have been undertaken at the proposed substation site along the cable route and the landfall area. Traffic surveys have been completed recently.

- The Boards representatives advised that a robust construction management description would be required and should include the duration of the works and disruption and how to minimise unavoidable impacts on the local community, residents and traffic. The Boards representatives further advised that the construction management schedule for the onshore grid connection works should be as tight as possible and should include more detail than a normal construction management plan. The prospective applicant advised that due to the urban nature of the development, extensive geophysical survey work and radar work have been undertaken to understand where the utilities are located, and therefore, the proposed development is at an advanced stage.
- The Boards representatives advised the prospective applicant to consult with Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and ensure that there is consistency across all Co. Co. departments with regard to the proposed development, including any necessary consents. The Board's representatives also advised that as much clarity as possible would be presented in the application regarding the management of the Shangannagh Cliffs area.
- The Boards representatives queried when the prospective applicant envisages receiving the final decision on the MAC applications in respect of the O&M base. The prospective applicant advised that the applications were granted recently and that they are currently proceeding with procedural elements with MARA in terms of company guarantees and execution. Therefore, the final decision is expected within weeks.
- The prospective applicant noted that Dun Laoghaire Harbour is currently in the early stages of developing a non-statutory master plan for future uses. The economic plan recognises the importance of operations and maintenance services for offshore developments. The non-statutory master plan is unlikely to be available in draft format until quarter 3 of 2025. The prospective applicant stated that significant consultations had been undertaken with Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.

- The Boards representatives stated that there had not been any significant policy changes impacting on the preparation of the EIAR since the previous pre application consultation meeting on the project. The prospective applicant was however advised that any planning application lodged should consider and demonstrate compliance with the National Biodiversity Action Plan.
- The Boards representatives queried any further consultations carried out. The prospective applicant advised that a detailed brochure was provided to the immediate community along the proposed cable route outlining the associated schedule programme and the potential route. Further engagement was sought from the Coast Guard in terms of the access routes.
- The Boards representatives noted that further survey work was ongoing when the consultation closed under ABP-318500-23 and queried if the results had changed the design layout or approach to the development. The prospective applicant advised that further surveys have been conducted to inform the overall input and mitigation. The results of these surveys have not altered the design layout or approach.
- The Boards representatives advised the prospective applicant to clearly outline any limitations encountered while conducting surveys and modelling presented in the application. The prospective applicant advised they have undertaken a number of assessments, including underwater noise modelling, marine mammal biological modelling, ornithological collision risk modelling, sediment deposition modelling and coastal modelling. The prospective applicant queried if any of the assessments undertaken to date are of particular interest in terms of the proposed development. The Boards representatives advised that coastal modelling, sediment deposition modelling, ornithology impacts and marine mammal mitigation would be of particular interest.
- The Boards representatives advised the prospective applicant to provide information on the approach taken if deviating from guidelines and provide a clear justification for the reason for deviating from the guidelines in terms of mitigation and surveys.
- The Boards representatives advised that potential impacts on bats has arisen as a relatively new issue, for which there is limited guidance available. The prospective applicant advised that they deployed a bat detector at the Kish lighthouse and other locations, and they have been able to conduct a bat survey, which is consistent with currently recognised good practice.

- The Boards representatives queried whether there would be any change to the visual impacts or cultural heritage. The prospective applicant advised that, similar to the other offshore developments, there is always a risk of encountering archaeological remains due to the mobile nature of the seabed (sand) environment. The prospective applicant advised that one reason for entering the design flexibility process is to ensure that if an undocumented wreck is uncovered, they would be in a position to relocate the turbine.
- The Boards representatives sought clarification on an inconsistency in the consultation documentation regarding the OSP and queried whether one OSP is being sought as previously proposed. The prospective applicant advised that one OSP is being sought.
- The Boards representatives noted that the cumulative impact assessment was discussed under ABP-318500-23 and queried if there has been any update to the proposed methodology. The prospective applicant advised that they are following the procedure previously discussed.
- The Boards representatives reminded the prospective applicant that the observation period for the first three offshore projects, NISA, Arklow Bank and Oriel, had closed and asked if the applicant had viewed these submissions. The prospective applicant advised that they had not viewed all the submissions. The Board representatives advised that the Board would be in a position to issue a copy of the submissions on these other projects to the prospective applicant if that was requested.

Conclusion:

The Board's representatives advised that the record of the instant meeting will be issued in due course and the prospective applicant can submit any comments it may have in writing. Following this, the Board will revert to the prospective applicant in relation to the scheduling of a further meeting or the closure of the pre application consultation process as appropriate.

The Meeting concluded at 4:00pm.

 8-11-2024.

Stephen Kay

Assistant Director of Planning