

An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting ABP-320975-24

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	Construction of a 300MW Open Cycle Gas Turbine plant, primarily fuelled by Natural Gas, and ancillary development, including a 220kV Substation and 220kV connection from the substation to the existing Cashla 220kV Substation. Located in Rathmorrissy/Pollnagroagh, Athenry, Co. Galway		
<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>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Meeting		
<b>Date</b>	28/05/2025	<b>Start Time</b>	11:00am
<b>Location</b>	Virtually	<b>End Time</b>	12:00pm

### Representing An Bord Pleanála

Sarah Lynch, Assistant Planning Director

Philip Davis, Senior Planning Inspector

Sinead White, Executive Officer

Raymond Muwaniri, Executive Officer

### Representing the Prospective Applicant

Keith Johnson

Muireann Carroll

Owen Zamboglou

Paula Galvin

Sinead Hickey
Mairi Henderson
Alan Brodie
Cormac Woods
Deirdre Larkin
Gareth O'Hare
Avril Mcollom
Nik Dewhirst

## Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024, requesting pre-application consultations under section 37B of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and advised the prospective applicant that the 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 outlined 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 presentation began by the prospective applicant introducing their team and the nature of the application. They also went through the agenda for the meeting.

The prospective applicant gave a summary of the progress of the application in relation to the proposed development thus far, including that Environmental Impact Assessment consultation is currently underway and that a meeting was held with Galway County Council regarding construction haul routes for the project. Drawings and documents are being prepared for the prospective application, and it is hoped to submit the application in August 2025, if the proposed development is decided by the Board to be Strategic Infrastructure Development.

The prospective applicant discussed the proposed grid connection routes and highlighted that the route option to the east of proposed development following the minor road network is the one they intend to use for the proposed development.

The prospective applicant discussed the proposed layout of the development in detail, how the turbines are fuelled and highlighted that there is no storage of gas onsite, with a direct connection to the national gas grid being used to supply the gas. The locations of the control building and workshop building were also highlighted. Diesel fuel will be stored on the site in accordance with Eirgrid requirements for backup supply in the event of a disruption to gas supplies.

The prospective applicant went on to discuss their stakeholder engagement project and the website launched April 2025. Public Information events were held in a local hotel within the area to maximise attendance and awareness. Leaflets were distributed within a 2km radius and there has been communication with local TD's and community stakeholders as well as newspaper and poster advertising. Feedback was received at the public information events, and it is thought that it is likely there will be a community group that may be opposed to the development.

The prospective applicant went on to discuss the Construction Traffic Management Plan methodology. It was said that data collection and scoping is to be completed for delivery routes, the number and scales of loads for assessment in the EIAR will need to be identified, and a Construction Traffic Management Plan report will also be prepared.

The prospective applicant stated that specifying full details of haul routes will be included in the application and it is proposed that a traffic management plan will be submitted with the application. This will include information on any abnormal load deliveries.

The presentation was concluded by the prospective applicant highlighting an error in 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting record regarding red lining a route, it is confirmed that this was not stated at the meeting and was included in the meeting record in error.

### **Discussion:**

- The prospective applicant stated that they wish to apply for planning permission without a limit on the operational duration period, one reason being that the main plant components have an operational life well in excess of 25 years, due to low annual hours of operation.
- The Board's representatives stated that the application must be consistent with the current Climate Action Plan and advised the prospective applicant to be mindful of the wording of their request. The Board's representatives also advised the prospective applicant to consider the required duration of the permission having regard to the involvement of fossil fuels in the proposed development.
- The prospective applicant stated that they will take this advice on board and a permanent permission is hoped for but if it is more appropriate to define a time, a 40-year permission could be considered.
- The Board's representatives asked if a direct route for the underground cabling to the Cashla Substation along the M6 had been considered. The prospective applicant stated that there had been alternative routes considered including the M6 alignment but initial inquiries indicate that no permission from landowners or statutory authorities would be forthcoming for a more direct route.
- The Board's representatives asked if the construction haul route will follow the proposed new access track to the north. It was confirmed that this is the probable alignment.

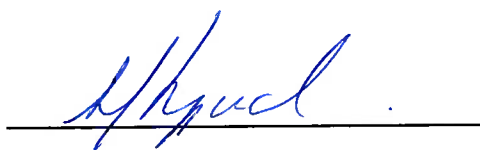
- The applicant confirmed that there would be no storage of natural gas on the site. Only diesel fuel will be stored on the site.
- The Board's representatives asked if the HSA had been engaged with regarding the proposed development. It was also advised that the HSA can get involved in these cases at application stage, however, this can slow down the process so it would be best practice to consult the HSA prior to submitting the application.
- The prospective applicant stated that the HSA have been contacted in relation to consultation. There are further risk assessments to take place, and it is intended that the HSA will be contacted again in relation to this.
- The Board representatives concluded the meeting by advising the prospective applicant that if any karst features such as turloughs or caves have been identified on the lands, these need to be addressed in detail in the Environmental Impact Assessment report.
- The prospective applicant asked about the process of closing the pre-application consultation stage and how long it would take to get a decision. They stated they would be likely to request closure once they received the meeting record for the meeting as they hope to submit the prospective application in early August.
- The Board's representatives advised it could be around 6-8 weeks for a decision.
- The prospective applicant asked who to contact if they had any queries regarding the validation process.

- The Board's representatives concluded the meeting by advising that any questions regarding the application process could be emailed to [SIDS@pleanala.ie](mailto:SIDS@pleanala.ie) for the attention of Sinead White.

**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 12:00pm.



**Sarah Lynch** Assistant Director of Planning