



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting ABP-321356-24

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	Proposed Development of a new downstream underground gas pipeline connection between existing Dublin to Galway high pressure gas pipeline and an existing peaking plant generation station at Edenderry Power Station at Ballykilleen, County Offaly.		
<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>	30 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	<b>Start Time</b>	11:00am
<b>Location</b>	MS Teams	<b>End Time</b>	11:45am

### Representing An Bord Pleanála

Sarah Lynch (Assistant Planning Director) Chair

Tomas Bradley (Senior Planning Inspector)

Ellen Moss (Executive Officer)

### Representing the Prospective Applicant

Jeff Murphy (Gas Networks Ireland)

Brendan O'Sullivan (Gas Networks Ireland)

Luke Wymer (John Spain Associates)

Shane McCormack (John Spain Associates)

Scott Western (Fingleton White)

Johnny Fingleton (Fingleton White)

Mark Conroy (Fingleton White)

Jonathan Gauntlett (Awn Consulting)

## Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 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 their presentation by briefly providing information in relation to the applicant, which is Gas Networks Ireland, the operator of the natural gas network in Ireland.

The prospective applicant provided a brief overview of the proposed development which is the proposed development of a new 22-23km pipeline to the existing Bord Na Mona Edenderry power plant. The pipeline would connect to the existing Dublin to Galway transmission pipeline. It would be designed and operated at 80 to 85 bar, dropping to 40 bar at the customer site. The pipeline would include two above-ground installations, one at the connection point to the Dublin-Galway pipeline and one at the termination point at the Edenderry Power Station. The application would include the connection points and AGI compounds

The prospective applicant provided a brief overview of the definition of strategic gas infrastructure development and the strategic nature of the proposed development. The prospective applicant advised that it considers the proposed development to be of economic and social importance. The power plant is currently run on oil, and therefore, this proposed development would reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality, and it would be in compliance with the provisions of CAP24. The prospective applicant made reference to the supporting policies and objectives in the National Planning Framework and in the regional spatial economic strategy that would facilitate the expansion of the private network for both electricity and gas.

The prospective applicant noted that an EIAR is currently being prepared, however, there would not be a significant impact as it would be an underground pipeline.

The prospective applicant provided a brief overview of the proposed infrastructure. The Kilwarden Offtake Installation would include a 25m by 15m fenced-off above-

ground compound with an above-ground pipeline to facilitate future cleaning and inspection of the proposed pipeline. It would be an unmanned site. The Ballykilleen AGI at the Bord Na Mona Edenderry site would include a 40m by 50m installation with a number of kiosks and the inlet pipeline. The largest kiosk would include a fabricated pressure reduction to filter the meters and reduce the pressure of the gas from 85 bar to 40 bar. An ENI control kiosk and a boiler house would also be included to preheat the gas.

The prospective applicant provided a slide with the entire route at a scale of 1:50,000. It was noted that a number of regional and local road crossings. The proposed route includes 2 main road crossings, the M6 crossing marked in green on the OS Map, as well as a crossing on the R147. Two potential river crossings have been identified, the Kilwarden River and the Yellow River. A large section of the route would run parallel to the River Boyne. Flood risk in these areas would be taken into consideration and assessed. A crossing of the Grand Canal is also being proposed. It is proposed that the installation of the proposed pipeline would be by open-cut and trenchless methods. The route is predominantly in agricultural lands.

The prospective applicant provided an update on the surveys and reports. The EIAR is currently being prepared, AA Screening is to be undertaken to determine if an NIS is required. The Mount Hevey Bog SAC is located to the north of the proposed Killwarden Offtake installation. Further work is required on the design. Surveys being undertaken include bats, otters, badger sets, and breeding birds. Environmental impacts would be centred around the construction phase, once operational the proposed development would not generate noise or visual impacts.

**Discussion:**

The Boards representatives began the discussion by mentioning that three options were noted in the submission to the Board and queried if these are still being considered or if this has been narrowed down. The prospective applicant advised that as the design progressed, it was narrowed down to the preferred route (within the corridor) as illustrated the presentation.

The Boards representatives queried the distance of the pipeline, the prospective applicant advised it would be approximately 23km and in any case is unlikely to fall below 20km due to the distance between end points of the pipeline.

The Boards representatives requested clarification on the counties the pipeline would cross, the prospective applicant advised the pipeline would cross the county borders of Offaly, Meath and Westmeath. Kildare has now been omitted as the proposed development will no longer cross the county boundary.

The Boards representatives sought clarity on the methodology for river and road crossings. The prospective applicant advised that HDD would be the most direct route; however, depending on the ground conditions, microtunnel methods may be required on the M6 crossing. The Boards representatives queried the depth the pipeline would be buried at; the prospective applicant advised that the pipeline would be buried at a minimum of 1.2m.

The Boards representatives requested that when preparing the EIAR to clear in the presentation of the most significant impacts to facilitate the ease of reading and understanding of the most critical impacts. The prospective applicant advised that it would keep this in mind.

The prospective applicant advised that they intend to submit the application in Q3 or Q4 of 2025.

The Boards representatives made reference to the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and advised that a screening for WFD and Stage 2 WFD would be required as the proposed development would cross areas of flooding. The prospective applicant advised they are unsure if Stage 2 would be required, however they are aware of the WFD. The Boards representatives advised that under the new Planning and Development Act 2024, as amended, it may require a full WFD assessment for any application accompanied by an EIAR. However, this has not been confirmed.

A brief discussion regarding the new Planning and Development Act 2024 was held and the prospective applicant was advised to be alert to the commencement of certain strategic infrastructure provisions.

The Boards representatives reminded the prospective applicant that it is possible to request design flexibility while the pre-application consultation is still active. The prospective applicant advised that they may request this.

A discussion in terms of procedures was held. The prospective applicant queried whether there is a procedures document for gas infrastructure. The Boards representatives noted that a procedures document was not yet available, but it would consider this. The prospective applicant queried whether the Board would be in a position to check the dates on the public notices and whether a standalone project website would be required; the Boards representatives advised that the checking of dates could be accommodated, and a standalone project website would be required.

The Boards representatives queried whether consultations had been held with TII or public consultations. The prospective applicant advised they have not yet formally consulted TII as the proposed development design would need to be progressed to a point in which the route has been decided. In terms of public engagement, local landowners, local councillors, planning authorities and TDs have been consulted.

The prospective applicant advised that consultations with IFI and the NPWS would also be required on the basis of the river crossings.

The Boards representatives queried whether there would be any interference with the Royal Canal Greenway and advised that consultation should also occur with Inland Waterways Ireland; the prospective applicant advised the proposed development is not at that level of detail; however, it will be kept in mind.

The Boards representatives gave their preliminary opinion that the proposed development falls within the scope of strategic infrastructure but reminded the prospective applicant that the final decision lies with 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 11:45.



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**Sarah Lynch**

**Assistant Director of Planning**