



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of 1st Meeting ABP-322112-25

Case Reference / Description	Proposed development of a 'Under the Fence' (UTF) Transformer Compound located at Bracklone, Portarlinton, Co Laois.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Date	03/06/2025	Start Time	11:00am
Location	Virtually	End Time	11:25am

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Una Crosse, Assistant Planning Director
Heidi Thorsdalen, Senior Planning Inspector
Sinead White, Executive Officer
Sue Morel, Executive Officer

Representing the Prospective Applicant
Ursula Daly, Malone O'Regan Environmental
Shane Power, Neoen Renewable Ireland Ltd

Introduction

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 18th March 2025, 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 set out their presentation (on the file) which referenced the attendees, introduction to their company, the site location, which is within the townland of Bracklone, County Laois and is 2 kilometres to the southeast of Portarlinton town centre.

The prospective applicant outlined the permitted Battery Energy Storage System, granted by Laois County Council which is also located on the site, the need for the development serving as an Independent Power Producer, making reference to the Climate Action Plan 2025.

The prospective applicant is of the opinion that the proposed development is not Strategic Infrastructure Development highlighting that the proposed development is intended solely to serve the permitted Battery Energy Storage System only. The presentation was concluded by the prospective applicant discussing the next steps in relation to the proposed development and their hopes to lodge an application to Laois County Council following a determination by the Board.

Discussion:

- The Board's representatives asked the prospective applicant to clarify if the facility is suitable to operate independently from the adjoining substation and noted that the submitted drawing refers to the proposed as a substation.
- The prospective applicant stated that the facility would not be able to operate independently and was required to connect the Battery Energy Storage System to the national grid via Bracklone 110kV substation, noted to be under construction.

- Following a question from the Board's representatives, the prospective applicant clarified the location of the control building on site.
- The Board's representatives queries whether the proposed development would become part of EirGrid or ESB's network before the prospective applicant stated it would remain in the applicant's ownership.
- The prospective applicant asked about any initial feedback as to whether they considered the proposed development would be considered SID and the Board's representatives provided a preliminary view, that it would appear that the proposed development would not be considered SID but, ultimately this will be for the Board to determine.
- Following a question from the prospective applicant regarding the timeline for a decision, the Board's representatives informed them that the cases were being determined in an expeditious manner but a decision date could not be specified at this stage.

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 11:25am.



Una Crosse

Assistant Director of Planning