



An  
Coimisiún  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting ABP-322298-25 (VC)

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	Proposed development of grid connection and extension to existing Drybridge 110kV substation and all associated development within the townland of Tullyallen, County Louth.		
<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>	13/06/2025	<b>Start Time</b>	2:30pm
<b>Location</b>	MS Teams	<b>End Time</b>	3:20pm

<b>Representing An Coimisiún Pleanála</b>
Stephen Kay, Assistant Director of Planning, Chair
Alan Di Lucia, Senior Planning Inspector
Lauren Murphy, Executive Officer

<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>
David Kiely, Jennings O'Donovan
Evan Concar, Jennings O'Donovan
Tom Bruton, BioXL
Richard Walshe, Woodsmane Limited, Applicant

## Introduction

The Commission referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025, requesting pre-application consultations under section 182A 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 Commission; 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 Commission. The Commission's representatives mentioned the following general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process:

- The Commission 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 Commission once finalised, but the prospective applicant may submit comments on the record which will form part of the case file.
- It is not permitted to record this meeting in any way. The only record of this meeting will be the record you will receive from the Board following this meeting.
- The Commission 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 Commission and public consultations may also be directed by the Commission.
- The Commission may hold consultations in respect of the proposed development with other bodies.

- The holding of consultations does not prejudice the Commission 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 the presentation by providing a background on the prospective applicant and their work to date.

The prospective discussed the proposed development site characteristics which is relatively flat land located 1.9km Northwest of Drogheda, County Louth. The proposed development site will be accessed via the Slane Road.

The prospective applicant discussed the need for the proposed development and noted that the Commission for Regulation of Utilities are supportive of this development.

The prospective applicant discussed the overall proposed development discussing the aspects of the proposed development which will be submitted as part of a separate planning application directly to Louth County Council. This comprises a 120MW gas powered peaking plant with 2 no. Open cycle gas turbine generators.

The prospective applicant presented site location drawings and site location images to show the proposed development in detail.

The prospective applicant also presented a drawing of the proposed substation and grid connection works outlining the Open Cycle Gas Turbine (OCGT) development boundary, the grid connection works development boundary and the existing Gas Networks Ireland distribution main.

The prospective applicant further presented a drawing of the indicative layout of the proposed development outlining the existing Drybridge AIS substation, the IPP Control Building, a double circuit 3x1 cable crossing, the power transformer and the site entrance.

The prospective applicant discussed the aspects of the proposed development works the subject of this pre application consultation request including a 110kV power transformer unit and ancillary development.

The prospective applicant discussed the proposed development in terms of legislative and policy context focusing on relevant EU, National, Local and Regional policies.

The prospective applicant presented constraints mapping based on site studies and surveys which have been carried out to date and presented a drawing to discuss further. The prospective applicant also noted the location of Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation which are in the general environs of the site. The prospective applicant also discussed biodiversity in relation to the proposed development site.

The prospective applicant concluded the presentation by discussing the proposed development in a legislative context, stating that the proposed development may fall within the scope of Strategic Infrastructure.

#### **Discussion:**

- The Commission's representatives began the discussion by asking the prospective applicant to clarify what the proposed development would entail, the prospective applicant clarified that the final layout plan is intended to be similar to the drawings presented today but may be slightly amended.
- Following on a query raised by the representatives of the Commission, the prospective applicant clarified that once the proposed development is operational ownership will be handed to EirGrid with the exception of the IPP building which will remain in the applicant's ownership.
- With regard to the planning status of the OCGT element of the overall project, the prospective applicants stated that the number of turbines was subject to ongoing assessment and that this element of the project was not considered to constitute SID on the basis of its overall output being below the limit set out in

the Seventh Schedule of the Act. In response to a question from the Commission's representatives, the prospective applicant confirmed that they had not undertaken a pre application consultation with the Commission in respect of the OCGT element of the project.

- The Commission's representatives sought clarity on the total output of the grid connection; the prospective applicant advised that the connection between the OCGT development and the proposed substation would be at 33kv and that the transformer on the substation site would increase the output from 33kV to 110kV.
- Following a query from the Commission's representatives regarding some apparent inconsistencies in extent of the site the subject of the subject pre application consultation between what is indicated on the Site Location Map slide and subsequent layouts in the presentation, the prospective applicant clarified that the grid connection within the green line boundary on the slide titled Substation and Grid Connection Works is 33kV and that the pre application consultation relates to the development within the area outlined in this slide and the existing substation.
- The prospective applicant advised that they do not have final layout plans as they are still awaiting feedback from EirGrid on their exact requirements. The prospective applicant stated that two new bays were required by Eirgrid.
- The prospective applicant also advised that they have been in touch with the NPWS regarding the proximity of the overall development to Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, the potential hydrological connectivity between the proposed development and these sites and the potential implications of the development on these sites.
- Following a query raised from the Commission's representatives the prospective applicant clarified that the peaking power plant aspect of the proposed development would not be able to operate without the existing substation infrastructure.

- The Commission's representatives concluded the discussion by advising the prospective applicant that they will consider the issues discussed further, however that the preliminary view is that the works to the proposed substation would not constitute strategic infrastructure. It was also stated that a copy of the record of the meeting would issue to the prospective applicants and that comments on the record could then be submitted. A request for closure of the pre application consultation could be made by the prospective applicant since the record has issued.
- The commissions representatives stated that on receipt of a request for closure of the consultation a recommendation will be made to the Planning Commission regarding the strategic infrastructure status of the proposed development and that the final decision on this question rests with the commission.

The Meeting concluded at 3.20pm.



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**Stephen Kay**

**Assistant Director of Planning**