



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Record of 1st Meeting
ACP-323045-25

Case Reference / Description	Proposed Development of a 110kV Substation and Grid Connection within the townlands of Dysart, Coolnacarrick, Greatheath, Cremorgan, Money Upper and others Co. Laois		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Date	01/10/2025	Start Time	11:00am
Location	Virtually	End Time	11:40am

Representing An Coimisiun Pleanála

Una Crosse, Assistant Director of Planning, Chair

Enda Duignan, Senior Planning Inspector

Stephen Rhys Thomas, Assistant Director of Planning

Sinead White, Executive Officer

Representing the Prospective Applicant

Jim Hughes, Fehily Timoney and Company

Anthony Ryan, Fehily Timoney and Company

Jack O'Donovan, Orsted

Introduction

The Commission referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 11th July 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 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 Board.

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.
- 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 presentation began by the prospective applicant introducing their team and giving an introduction to the development and its background.

The prospective applicant referred to site context and why they selected the chosen site before discussing the proposed development in more detail, including site access information.

The prospective applicant briefly discussed the associated solar farm before highlighting precedent cases similar to the proposed development.

The presentation was concluded with the prospective applicant stating that they consider that the development does fall within the scope of strategic infrastructure development.

Discussion:

- The Commission's representatives began the discussion by raising a query with the prospective applicant in relation to the approach they intend to undertake with regard to Environmental Impact Assessment Screening for the proposed development, noting the development is not a class for the purposes of EIA. The prospective applicant outlined that they intend undertaking a screening report to accompany the application.
- On the issue of visual impact and the proposed landscaping rationale, the Commission's representatives queried why they had only proposed to screen one side of the development. It was advised that the prospective applicant may wish to consider preparing a number of verified photomontages of the development particularly from locations with scenic designations. The Commission's representatives advised the prospective applicant to ensure that the application is supported by a comprehensive suite of landscaping proposals.

- Following a question from the Commission's representatives, the prospective applicant confirmed that a Natura Impact Statement would form part of the application documentation.
- In terms of the proposed grid connection route, the Commission's representatives noted that the Natura Impact Statement should have regard to any drainage ditches and watercourses along the route and ensure that full details are provided regarding any proposed crossings. Similar points were raised regarding the need to consider whether ecological surveys along the route were required. The prospective applicant confirmed that appropriate surveys would be undertaken and would form part of the application.
- The Commission's representatives noted that the proposed grid connection route is located in close proximity to a number of NHAs and pNHAs which should be given due consideration in the application documentation.
- In terms of traffic and transportation, the Commission's representatives outlined to the prospective applicant that details should be provided within the application regarding any potential road closures/road diversions required for the proposed works. Potential noise impacts associated with the proposed grid connection works should also be considered by the Applicant in the application. Furthermore, cumulative impacts associated with traffic should also be addressed.
- The Commission's representatives advised that the application should be supported by an updated Flood Risk Assessment.
- Following a query from the Commission's representatives regarding the drainage proposals for the proposed substation, the prospective applicant stated that

detailed drainage proposals for this portion of the site will accompany the application.

- Based on the information presented, the Commission's representatives noted that it was their preliminary opinion that the proposed development falls within the scope of Section 182A of the 2000 Act (as amended) and would therefore constitute strategic infrastructure, whereby an application would be made directly to the Commission. However, it was indicated that the final determination was a matter for the Commission.
- The prospective applicant concluded the meeting by asking for confirmation that this case type doesn't currently have any additional procedures required by the transposition of the REDIII Directive. The Commission's representatives stated that the recent Regulations transposing the RED III Directive had not amended s.182A of the Act

Conclusion:

The Commission'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 Commission'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 on this record in writing or alternatively bring any comments for discussion at the time of any further meeting.

The Meeting concluded at 11:40am.



Una Crosse

Assistant Director of Planning