



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting 07.HC0004 1<sup>st</sup> meeting

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	07.HC0004  M6 (M17/M18) Motorway Service Area, Athenry to Oranmore, Co. Galway.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application consultation		
<b>1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>		
<b>Date</b>	30/01/17	<b>Start Time</b>	11 a.m.
<b>Location</b>	Meeting Room 1	<b>End Time</b>	12.20 p.m.
<b>Chairperson</b>	Philip Green	<b>Executive Officer</b>	Kieran Somers

<b>Attendees</b>		
<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>		
<b>Staff Member</b>	<b>Email Address</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Philip Green, Assistant Director of Planning		
Kevin Moore, Senior Planning Inspector		
Marcella Doyle, Senior Executive Officer		
Kieran Somers, Executive Officer	k.somers@pleanala.ie	01-8737107

<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>		
Peter Walsh, Director of Capital Programme Management, TII		
Geraldine Fitzpatrick, Head of Capital Programme Management, TII		
Jansi George, Assistant Engineering Inspector, TII		
Ambrose Clarke, Senior Executive Engineer, Westmeath NRO		
Peter Morehan, Tranche 4 MSA Project Manager, Halcrow Barry		
Clare DeWar, M6 MSA Team Leader, Halcrow Barry		
Cliona Ryan, Planning Specialist, Halcrow Barry		
John Fallon, EIS Coordinator, Halcrow Barry		

The meeting commenced at 11a.m.

**Introduction:**

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant dated the 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2016 formally requesting pre-application consultations with the Board.

The Board 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 road development and to highlight any matters it wished to receive advice on from the Board.

The Board mentioned general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process as follows:

- 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.
- A further meeting or meetings may be held in respect of the proposed development.
- The Board may give advice on the proposed application and in particular the procedures in making and considering the application and what considerations relating to the effects of the road development on the environment or an area referred to in section 50(1)(d) or proper planning and sustainable development that may have a bearing on its decision
- The Board may consult with any person who may have information relevant for the purposes of the consultations.
- The holding of consultations does not prejudice the Board in any way and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or any legal proceedings.

#### **Presentation by the prospective applicant:**

The prospective applicant gave an outline of a typical motorway service area. Constituent elements include an amenity building, parking areas, refuelling points, picnic area and other ancillary elements.

The policy and planning context for a motorway service area was set out by the prospective applicant. The prospective applicant referred to relevant European policies such as the TEN-T Policy, the Trans-European Transport Networks Regulations, the Driving Time and Rest Periods Regulations, the Road Infrastructure Safety Management Directive and the Intelligent Transport Systems Directive. Relevant Irish policies referred to were the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines, the Road Safety Authority's Road Safety Strategy and the NRA Service Area Policy of August 2014. The prospective applicant also mentioned Objective T17 of the current Galway County Development Plan which supports the provision of service and rest area facilities.

The prospective applicant elaborated further on the NRA Service Area Policy in terms of comparing motorway service areas generally to offline private facilities. With reference to the instant proposed development, the prospective applicant said that it represents an optimum location at the junction of the M6/M17/M18 and would be appropriate also with respect to its accessibility to both M6 and M17/M18 traffic.

With regard to an overall programme for the proposed development, the prospective applicant said that a site selection process had been undertaken between August 2015 and January 2016. Public consultations are currently on-going and a project

website has been launched. The prospective applicant added that EIA Scoping and various environmental assessments including screening for appropriate assessment are currently being conducted. Its intention is to lodge a formal planning application with the Board circa Quarter 2, 2017.

The prospective applicant outlined the nature of consultations to date. These have consisted of letters to statutory consultees, meetings with landowners, a public information evening and a dedicated project website.

With respect to alternatives considered, the prospective applicant reported that a total of six sites were considered as part of the site selection process. It said that the preferred site (site 2B) emerged as the preferred option following assessments under various criteria including engineering, environmental and economic. As regards the proposed site, the prospective applicant set out the main characteristics of this. It said it consists of 16 hectares of agricultural land with the nearest sensitive receptor being some 200 metres. Surface water will be discharged to ground water via an infiltration pond and water connections have been agreed in principle with Irish Water. The prospective applicant commented that on-going Appropriate Assessment screening is considering any possible indirect effects surface water discharge might have on the Galway Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC). An indicative layout of the site was given which included surface water management proposals.

The prospective applicant gave an outline of the proposed structure for the EIS to be produced with respect to the proposed development. It said that this will be based on draft guidelines from the EPA.

#### **Board's comments/queries:**

Having regard to the prospective applicant's query in relation to the implications of requirements in the new EIA Directive in its Briefing Document of December, 2016, the Board said that it has received no formal advice in relation to this at this point in time. It added that the prospective applicant's approach should be to have regard to whatever Directive, associated legislation and policy document in operation at the time of lodging the formal planning application.

In relation to alternatives considered, as part of the site selection process, the Board said that clear justification would need to be provided as to the proposed location for the motorway service area and why it was decided not to locate it at the existing Rathmorrissy Junction which is in close proximity. The Board invited the prospective applicant to provide some key rationale for this decision. The prospective applicant replied that some of the criteria it employed in the site selection included matters such as geometric constraints, road safety considerations and water connections. It said that there was a concern that the location of the proposed motorway service area at a complex junction might act as a deterrent for its use. The prospective applicant also said that part of its reason for the proposed location was premised on the fact that there were fewer effects on dwellings and on equine facilities in the area. In response to the Board's query, it said that ground conditions were not a significant determining factor for the chosen site. Noting this, the Board remarked that it would be important for it to have a clear understanding of how the proposed motorway service area would operate. It said that justification would have to be

provided for the two-kilometre detour which would be involved and how this might potentially affect usage. The prospective applicant responded that the proposed development would serve three national roads and, notwithstanding the detour, it would expect significant uptake particularly from HGVs. It added that it is envisaged the proposed development would serve both traffic streams (i.e. North-South and East-West). The Board said that it would seek to understand the criteria for the selection of the site, as well as the practical functionality of the proposed motorway service area. It added that there should be further elucidation with respect to the proximity to the existing Rathmorrissy Interchange and any existing services. It advised the prospective applicant to provide a clear justification for the location of the MSA and its facilities within a planning and policy context. The Board said such an understanding of the proposed development's benefits for road-users and related services would be of assistance.

The Board noted the existence of the Galway Plaza motorway service area at the M6/Loughrea Junction (Junction 16). The Board said that due consideration should be given to this existing facility in any planning application lodged and the relevance of the Motorway Service Area Policy generally in this regard. The prospective applicant noted this.

In relation to Appropriate Assessment, the prospective applicant said that on-going screening is having particular regard to any possible indirect effects on the Galway Bay SAC which is approximately 3.5 kilometres away. It said that its preliminary findings do not suggest any likely significant effects and that there is a presumption that only Stage 1 (screening) assessment will be required. There are no other European Sites proximate to the proposed development site it added.

In response to the Board's query, the prospective applicant said that the height of buildings in the proposed MSA would be eight metres approximately; it added that the design of all buildings/structures on site would be typical of such a service area.

With regard to consultations with prescribed bodies, the prospective applicant reported that these are on-going. It said it had received a response from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) which had raised a hydrological concern in relation to the Galway Bay SAC. The prospective applicant said that there are no other priority habitats in close proximity to the proposed development.

Having regard to other proposed road developments, particularly the proposed N6 Galway City Transport Project, the Board advised the prospective applicant that it should have due consideration to in-combination effects on the environment and in an overall policy context.

In regard to whether the proposed development would be implemented by way of PPP, the Board emphasised that in order to carry out an EIA and/or AA the proposed development must be fully and accurately described along with its associated impacts in the application and associated documentation and drawings. This would allow for such assessments to be properly completed in accordance with legislative requirements.

**Conclusion:**

The Board's representatives said they would be meeting with the SID division of the Board shortly with respect to the proposed development. The prospective applicant said that any feedback that could be provided by the Board would be welcome.

The Board said that a further meeting with the prospective applicant would be of benefit in terms of a project update. It was agreed that the prospective applicant will request such a meeting following receipt of the record of the instant meeting and that this further meeting might take place in approximately one month. Procedures in relation to the making of a formal planning application will be provided by the Board at this further meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12.20 p.m.

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**Philip Green**  
**Assistant Director of Planning**