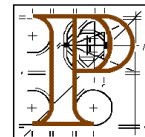


# Record Of Meeting

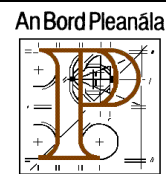
An Bord Pleanála



<b>Case Reference/</b>	29S.PC0203		
<b>Description</b>	Expansion and upgrading of the existing Ringsend Waste Water Treatment Plant, Dublin.		
<b>Case Type:</b>	Pre-app consultation		
<b>Meeting:</b>	EPA meeting		
<b>Date:</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> February, 2016	11a.m.	
<b>Location:</b>	Offices of An Bord Pleanala		
<b>Chairperson:</b>	Anne Marie O'Connor		

<b>Attendees:</b>
<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>
Anne Marie O'Connor – Assistant Director of Planning
Paul Caprani – Senior Planning Inspector
Kieran Somers – Executive Officer
<b>Representing EPA</b>
Frank Clinton, Programme Manager, Environmental Licensing Programme, Office of Environmental Sustainability
Yvonne English, Inspector, Environmental Licensing Programme, Office of Environmental Sustainability
Suzanne Wylde, Inspector, Environmental Licensing Programme, Office of Environmental Sustainability

## Record Of Meeting



The meeting commenced at 11a.m.

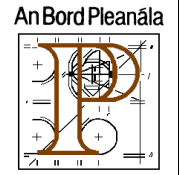
The Board said that the meeting was being convened mainly as an information-gathering exercise from its point of view and also to seek comments from the EPA on issues it sees as relevant to the proposed development. In relation to the pre-application request, the Board advised the local authority that there have been two meetings with the prospective applicant to date, and also a meeting with the local authority (Dublin City Council). The Board's representatives have also had a site visit of the existing facility. It said that much of the focus thus far had been on the appropriate application mechanism which might be pursued by the prospective applicant (a section 37 planning application or a 146B request for an alteration to the existing planning permission). The Board said it had concluded, and advised the prospective applicant, that a section 37 planning application would appear to be the more appropriate application mechanism given the nature of the proposed change to the discharge location and the treatment technology/process.

With regard to a formal section 37 planning application, the Board reminded the EPA of the criteria it has to consider under the provisions of Section 37A(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The Board's remit ultimately is to determine whether or not the proposed development would constitute strategic infrastructure. The Board also advises on matters relating to proper planning and sustainable development or the likely effects on the environment, which may have a bearing on the Board's consideration of a future application.

The Board referred to the previous permission granted (for an extension to the Ringsend wastewater treatment works (reference number 29N.YA0012). The principal changes to that permission were identified as:

- Introduction of Aerobic Granular Sludge technology
- Omission of the Long Sea Outfall Tunnel
- Use of existing outfall at the Liffey Estuary
- Ancillary and Sundry Works

## Record Of Meeting



With regard to the instant project, the Board noted that the proposed omission of the Long Sea Outfall Tunnel will have a number of implications as the discharge would now take place at the Poolbeg Peninsula and will be subject to the requirements of the Surface Water Regulations. Also, with respect to the proposed new technology, the Board noted that there will be a greater degree of nutrient removal on site. It said it would welcome the Agency's comments, if any, on a number of matters including:

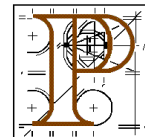
- General matters
- Comments on the proposed new technology
- Comments on the assimilative capacity of receiving waters and whether or not the EPA would assess any licence review under the concept of 'notionally clean waters'
- Comments in relation to impacts on benthic ecology in the vicinity of the outfall
- Comments in relation to appropriate assessment

The Agency referred to both the Tolka Estuary and the River Liffey Estuary, and that it will examine the impacts of the development on both these environments. This is particularly relevant it said in respect of nutrient discharge. The EPA noted that the River Tolka was a significant contributor to nutrient concentrations within the Bay area caused, in part by storm overflows. It remarked that the originally proposed Long Sea Outfall Tunnel would not have had any direct benefits for the Tolka Estuary.

With respect to the concept of 'notionally clean waters' being employed in assessing the assimilative capacity of the receiving waters in any licence review, the Agency stated that this concept is generally only employed in the case of discharges to freshwaters. As the outfall in this instance is discharging into transitional waters, the assimilative capacity of the receiving waters is most likely to be assessed in the context of background pollution levels in the River Liffey for the purposes of any licence review.

The Agency said that it has on-going contact with the prospective applicant with regard to the project and has had a number of presentations from the prospective applicant in relation to the new technology being proposed. The Agency is shortly due to conduct a site visit of a plant in Holland which would be a useful comparator to Ringsend.

## Record Of Meeting



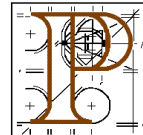
The Board enquired as to when the existing licence for the facility is due to expire or be reviewed. The Agency said that a licence review can be conducted after six years. With respect to wastewater discharge licences, it signalled to the Board that there are likely to be changes to existing legislation. The Agency also referred to ongoing discussions which are taking place between Ireland and the EU Commission with regard to the Water Framework Directive. Responding to the Board's query, the Agency said that a review of the licence for the Ringsend facility is a certainty if, as expected, the Long Sea Outfall Tunnel is omitted. A review in any case would also be required in respect of changes on-site and also potential changes to the volume of effluent to be treated at the plant. The Agency said its current expectation is that any licence review application would be likely made in the third quarter of 2017.

The Board enquired as to why the new technology being proposed by the prospective applicant is not being more universally implemented. The Agency stated that the activated sludge treatment technology historically tended to be favoured above other treatment options as it was a tried and tested and universally produced good results. The Agency hopes to have more information on the matter following its site visit to the facility in Holland. It remarked that the Aerobic Granular Sludge technology appears to work very well with SBRs. The Board asked the Agency if it knew what type of designated receiving waters the plant in Holland discharges to. The Agency said it will have such information following its site visit to the plant. The Board commented that one of the key issues regarding the proposed development is headroom in the receiving waters. It added that it would be of interest to it to know what pollution parameters the plant in Holland was required to adhere to. The Agency indicated that its site visit to this plant has been arranged for mid-February, 2016.

The Board mentioned that Dublin City Council had raised the matter of compliance with Bathing Water Regulations, and had expressed concerns in relation to cumulative effects in Dublin Bay.

With respect to Appropriate Assessment, the Agency said it has not had an opportunity to give this much consideration to date as the proposed development is still at a relatively early stage. It noted that there are new designations in the vicinity of the proposed development since the time of the previous licence application, particularly the Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC. The Agency said that it has seen some modelling in relation to the proposed development, but does not have a great deal of data to consider thus far with regard to assimilative capacity. The Board, for its part, pointed out that some studies in relation to benthic ecology have been published by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

## Record Of Meeting



### **Conclusion:**

The Board pointed out that the EPA would be a prescribed body in respect of any planning application made to it. It will be open to the Agency to submit submissions/observations to the Board in relation to the proposed development.

It was agreed that the Agency may brief the representatives of the Board in some way following its site visit to the facility in Holland. The Board welcomed this and said that any feedback the Agency could provide would be very useful.

The meeting concluded at 12.05p.m.

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**Anne Marie O'Connor**

**Assistant Director of Planning**