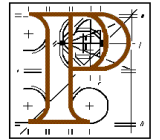


# Record Of Meeting



<b>Case Reference/Description</b>	07.VC0091 Proposed 220kV power supply for Apple Data Centre development, Athenry, County Galway.		
<b>Case Type:</b>	Pre-app consultation		
<b>Meeting:</b>	First		
<b>Date:</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> May, 2015	11a.m.	
<b>Location:</b>	Conference Room		
<b>Chairperson:</b>	Philip Green		

## Attendees:

### Representing An Bord Pleanála

Philip Green – Assistant Director of Planning

Deirdre MacGabhann – Senior Planning Inspector

Marcella Doyle – Senior Executive Officer

Kieran Somers – Executive Officer

### Representing Prospective Applicant

Sean Clarke, Arup, Planning and Engineering

Ria Lyden, Arup, Planning and Engineering

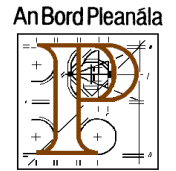
Gus McCarthy, McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan, Planning Advisor

Mark Flanagan, Kirbys, HV Power Design/Build Contractor

Susan Iverson, Apple Incorporated, Procurement

Spas Lazarow, Data Centre Group, Apple Incorporated

# Record Of Meeting



## Introduction:

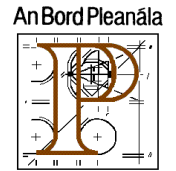
The Board referred to the letter received by it from the prospective applicant dated the 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2015 formally requesting pre-application consultations with the Board. It advised the prospective applicant that the instant meeting essentially constituted an information-gathering exercise for the Board; it also invited the prospective applicant to outline the nature of the proposed development and to highlight any matters 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 record would form part of the file which will be made available publicly at the conclusion of the process.
- The Board will serve formal notice at the conclusion of the process as to whether or not the proposed development is SID. It may form a preliminary view at an early stage in the process as to whether the proposed development would likely constitute strategic infrastructure.
- 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 any legal proceedings.

In respect of the written record of any meetings held, the Board confirmed to the prospective applicant that it may comment on this in writing or at any subsequent meetings held. The Board does not amend its own record, but any comments made would also form part of the public record. The pre-application consultation file is available for public inspection once the consultations are closed.

# Record Of Meeting



## Presentation by the prospective applicant:

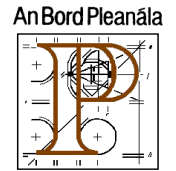
The prospective applicant gave a short background in relation to itself. The Apple Data Centre Group manages the development of Apple Data Centres worldwide.

The prospective applicant described the site location which is to the west of Athenry and the east of Galway City. The site is 500 acres in size and comprises mostly forest land. The long-term plan is to develop this land over a number of years. The prospective applicant referred to the fact that the subject site is roughly midway between Galway and Athenry and located on a strategic/economic corridor as defined in the Galway County Development Plan. The strategic nature of the subject site was emphasised by the prospective applicant. It said that there is a masterplan for the development of the site which would constitute Apple's European hub for data storage and management. As part of the development of the site, there is proposed a 50-metre perimeter buffer zone to be retained. A woodland walk is proposed to be incorporated in this buffer zone. Also native species across the site are proposed to be retained.

The prospective applicant referred to the planning application for Phase 1 of the proposed development which was submitted to Galway County Council on the 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2015. The prospective applicant said that, at Eirgrid's direction, it is seeking to establish a connection to the existing 220kV overhead lines to the east of the site. There would be a looped connection to these existing lines. Construction work on the proposed substation would be carried out by the prospective applicant, to Eirgrid's design, and, upon completion, transferred to Eirgrid. The prospective applicant said that negotiations with the landowner on the 220kV power supply route are at an advanced stage.

With respect to the 220kV power supply, the prospective applicant outlined the component elements. The prospective applicant referred to the fact that there are on-going construction works in relation to the nearby M6. It said that looping in and looping out of lines is required. There will be underground cabling involved and new pylons required at intersection points to the existing overhead lines. One new intermediate mast will be required; also four new end masts, two new angle masts and the retiring of a total of three masts. In total, the prospective applicant said that four extra masts will be erected. The prospective applicant said its proposals for these masts have been presented to Eirgrid who have accepted them in principle.

# Record Of Meeting



The prospective applicant outlined the key milestones for the project. These include the planning application for the data centre Phase 1 which has already been lodged with the local authority. The prospective applicant expects enabling works on site to commence in July, 2015 provided there is no planning appeal to the Board. As regards the instant project, the prospective applicant said that it hopes to lodge a planning application in July, 2015. It said preparation of an EIS for this has commenced and also consultations with stakeholder groups. These include the local authority, Eirgrid and local community representatives. The prospective applicant also plans to meet with relevant statutory bodies, members of the local community, the local school, and local golf and sports clubs.

With respect to strategic infrastructure criteria, the prospective applicant said that the proposed development does have a strategic economic importance to the region in terms of its economic importance and employment potential. Eight data halls in total are proposed to be constructed on a phased basis. The proposed development would also provide essential infrastructure in terms of the strategic economic corridor as designated in the County Development Plan.

The Board enquired as to whether the substation compound would allow for future expansion. The prospective applicant said that it would allow for future expansion as there is scope for future infrastructure to be provided by Eirgrid.

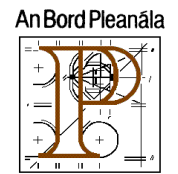
## **SID queries:**

The prospective applicant's queries for the Board were as follows:

- Does the proposed 220kV power supply constitute strategic infrastructure development
- If the proposed development is strategic infrastructure, would the subsequent application fall under section 182A or Section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

The Board replied that its preliminary opinion is that the proposed development would be strategic infrastructure and that Section 182A would be the relevant legislative mechanism as electricity transmission is involved.

# Record Of Meeting



The Board said that an EIS in compliance with the relevant legislation would be required for the instant project and reminded the prospective applicant of some of the areas/topics this should cover. These include addressing matters of alternatives, flora and fauna, effects on humans, effects on water regimes, air emissions, climatic factors, effects on landscape, visual impacts, effects on material assets and traffic impacts. Should the prospective applicant require a formal scoping opinion on the information to be included in the EIS, then they would need to make such a formal request in writing to the Board. The procedures for this were explained. The Board commented that this particular EIS could have reference to the EIS already prepared as part of the Phase 1 planning application lodged with the local authority. The Board also stressed the importance of the EIS addressing cumulative impacts. The Board said it would be important that the EIS integrate with the one prepared in respect of the Phase 1 planning application.

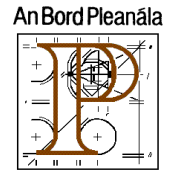
The Board outlined some of the issues which might be of relevance in terms of its consideration of the proposed development. These included:

- The policy context for the project and justification for its regional importance
- The strategic economic corridor as mentioned earlier
- The design of the proposed development
- The technical requirement for, and the proposed use of the substation in relation to both the data centre and in terms of its feeding into the electricity transmission network
- The potential issue of project-splitting with respect to the two planning applications
- Phasing of the proposed development

The Board enquired as to whether the proposed development would be located in a Gaeltacht area. The prospective applicant said it would not.

The prospective applicant said that it has already carried out some assessment in relation to the environmental effects of the proposed power supply. It acknowledged that cumulative impacts would need to be addressed.

# Record Of Meeting



The Board for its part said it is important that the EIS for the instant application be a stand-alone document in terms of its covering all relevant topics required in an EIS. This is required to facilitate the Board in carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment. The Board further advised that an appropriate letter of support from Eirgrid might accompany the planning application. The prospective applicant noted this and said it could also provide details of relevant consents obtained from the National Roads Authority.

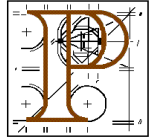
Responding to the prospective applicant's query, the Board said that the pace of the pre-application process is a matter for the prospective applicant. The Board can facilitate further meetings in a timely manner subject to staff availability. The Board said it may be advisable for the prospective applicant to leave the pre-application process open at this time in case further issues need to be discussed.

The prospective applicant said that it would wish to have a further meeting and indicated circa mid-June, 2015 as the likely time for this. The Board said that the formal planning application procedures could then be provided at this meeting. The Board briefly outlined the timeline in respect of a SID application. It said that the holding of an oral hearing is possible in respect of a SID application depending on the complexity of the case, issues arising and/or level and nature of third party involvement.

The Board emphasised that the planning application and supporting documentation should be as robust as possible to avoid delays at the planning application stage. The Board also advised on the desirability of public consultations prior to the lodgement of an application.

The Board mentioned the potential scenario of the planning application for Phase 1 being appealed to the Board. This might necessitate consideration by the Board on both planning applications at the same time. This was, however, entirely at the discretion of the Board.

# Record Of Meeting



## Conclusion:

The Board said that the record of the instant meeting will issue as soon as practicable. The prospective applicant reiterated that it intends to request a further meeting circa mid-June, 2015. It was agreed that, prior to the holding of this meeting, the prospective applicant will forward any relevant further information to the Board for information purposes.

The meeting concluded at 12.30p.m.

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