



An
Bord
Pleanála

Recording of Meeting 07.VC0100 1st meeting

Case Reference / Description	07.VC0100 Proposed 110kV electrical substation, Letter, Co. Galway.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st		
Date	13/09/16	Start Time	11 a.m.
Location	Conference Room	End Time	11.55 a.m.
Chairperson	Anne Marie O'Connor	Executive Officer	Kieran Somers

Attendees		
Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Staff Member	Email Address	Phone
Anne Marie O'Connor, Assistant Director of Planning		
Stephen Kay, Senior Planning Inspector		
Marcella Doyle, Senior Executive Officer		
Kieran Somers, Executive Officer	k.somers@pleanala.ie	01-8737107

Representing the Prospective Applicant		
Jimmy Green, McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan		
Liam Flynn, McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan		
William O'Connor, Ardderroo Windfarm Ltd		

The meeting commenced at 11a.m.

Introduction:

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant dated the 14th July, 2016 formally requesting pre-application consultations with the Board.

The prospective applicant was advised 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 records will 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.

The Board commented generally that the purpose of the instant meeting on this particular pre-application case was for the Board to receive further clarity on the nature and extent of the proposed development to allow it to establish whether it might or might not constitute strategic infrastructure development.

Presentation by the prospective applicant:

The prospective applicant outlined the constituent elements of the proposed development which is for a 110kV substation, two control buildings and approximately 300 metres of underground 110kV cabling to an existing substation at Letter, Co Galway. The Letter substation was granted permission by the Board under case reference number VA0016. The prospective applicant referred to the proposed substation layout, elevation and section.

The proposed development would provide grid connection for the permitted Knockalough Wind Farm (11 turbines) for which permission was granted by Galway County Council in October 2015. Construction of the wind farm is due to commence in Q1 2017.

It is also intended that the proposed development would potentially serve a future wind farm on nearby lands at Ardderroo should planning permission be granted for that development in the future. Both wind farms are being brought forward by the same developer. The prospective applicant referred to the fact that the proposed substation formed part of a previous planning application to the Board for the Ardderroo windfarm, which was subsequently refused permission by the Board (PA0036). The prospective applicant said that the location of the substation was altered as part of a further information response which was submitted to the Board in respect of that application. The prospective applicant also referred to a new pre-application request it has lodged with the Board in respect of the Ardderroo wind farm development under case reference number PC0227.

The prospective applicant stated that an underground cable connection from the Knockalough Wind Farm to the existing Letter substation was the subject of a Section 5 declaration by the local authority that the development did constitute exempt development. The proposed development would mean that instead of connecting directly into the Letter substation, the underground cable from the wind farm would connect into the proposed Ardderroo substation some 300m to the southwest. The Ardderroo substation would then connect into the national grid at the Letter substation. It was explained that this would mean that the Knockalough Wind Farm would not have to be shut down to facilitate a future connection of the Ardderroo substation into the grid at Letter if that substation was subsequently constructed as part of the proposed Ardderroo wind farm development.

The prospective applicant made reference to existing infrastructure in the vicinity of the proposed development. In particular, the Shannagurraun/Truskaunagappul, Lettergunnet/Derrycreeh and Inverin wind farms. The prospective applicant said that the proposed substation would be adjacent to these permitted wind farms, as well as the permitted Galway Wind Park development which comprises four wind farms to the west and north-west of the Ardderroo site and which are under construction.

In a policy context, the prospective applicant referred to Policy ER 3 of the Galway County Development Plan 2015 – 2021 which relates to security of supply. It also referred to Objectives ER 1 and ER 2 of the county development plan which relate respectively to electricity and renewable energy infrastructure and priority transmission infrastructure projects. The prospective applicant also referred to the Galway County Wind Energy Strategy 2015 – 2021 and the fact that the existing and proposed wind farms in the vicinity of the subject site are in areas designated as strategic or open for consideration for wind energy.

With respect to the SID status of the proposed development, the prospective applicant referred to the definitions of electricity transmission under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and the Electricity Regulation Act 1999. It stated its own opinion that the proposed development would likely constitute strategic infrastructure development. In this latter regard the prospective applicant alluded to pre-application case reference numbers VC0062 (Letter, County Galway) and VC0049 (Dulla, County Tipperary), both of which were determined by the Board to constitute strategic infrastructure development. It also made reference to other cases which involved alterations, revisions, replacements and refurbishments which have been deemed as not strategic by the Board.

With regard to on-going preparation for the project, the prospective applicant reported that the scoping of environmental assessments and project design are underway. It hoping to lodge a formal planning application circa Q1 2017.

Comments/queries by the Board:

The Board enquired as to the likely timeline the prospective applicant may envisage with respect to any planning application on the Ardderroo wind farm. The prospective applicant replied that this might be circa March/April 2017. Noting the prospective applicant's intention to lodge an application for the proposed substation prior to this, the Board reminded the prospective applicant that cumulative impacts would have to be addressed.

Having regard to the issue of in-combination effects for AA, the Board also reminded the prospective applicant that procedures for Appropriate Assessment are markedly different to EIA. In this respect stage 1 screening and stage 2 assessment, if required, would have to have regard to proposed plans and projects as well as to extant permissions. Noting this, the prospective applicant remarked that there are five designations within the vicinity of the proposed development. It indicated that a Natura Impact Statement would most likely have to be prepared in connection with any formal planning application.

The Board enquired as to when the permitted Galway Wind Park would be operational. The prospective applicant said its understanding is that this would be circa Q1 2017. The prospective applicant stated that the Galway Wind Park development is proposed to be connected into the Letter substation.

In relation to the close proximity of the proposed substation to the permitted Eirgrid Letter substation, the Board advised the prospective applicant that it would be important to clearly set out the rationale for the proposed development from an engineering and a planning perspective. The Board asked if there were any issues for Eirgrid in having multiple connections (Galway Wind Park and connection from the proposed substation) into the Eirgrid Letter substation. The prospective applicant stated that this was not considered to be an issue. Responding to the Board's query, the prospective applicant advised that discussions between itself and Eirgrid are progressing.

Conclusion:

The Board said that a second meeting would be likely required if its preliminary opinion is that the proposed development would constitute strategic infrastructure development. It said that such a second meeting could be arranged promptly at which time the formal planning application procedures would be given to the prospective applicant. The Board will revert to the prospective applicant in due course with its preliminary opinion after which the prospective applicant may request this second meeting. If the opinion is that the proposed development would not be SID, then a further meeting will not be required. From its perspective, the prospective applicant emphasised to the Board its sense of urgency in terms of progressing the planning application for the proposed development.

The meeting concluded at 11.55 a.m.

Anne Marie O'Connor

Assistant Director of Planning