



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting

26.VC0102 3rd meeting

Case Reference / Description	26.VC0102 Proposed electricity interconnector between Ireland and Wales from Great Island, Co. Wexford.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	3 rd		
Date	14/05/19	Start Time	11 a.m.
Location	Cathal Brugha Room	End Time	12.05 p.m.

Attendees		
Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Anne Marie O'Connor, Assistant Director of Planning		
Una Crosse, Senior Planning Inspector		
Ellen Morrin, Senior Administrative Officer		
Kieran Somers, Executive Officer	k.somers@pleanala.ie	01-8737107
Representing the Prospective Applicant		
Daniel Garvey, Arup		
Tina Raleigh, Greenlink		

Introduction:

The meeting commenced at 11 a.m.

The Board referred to the previous meeting of the 20th September, 2018 held in respect of this case. The Board asked if the prospective applicant had any comments it wished to make on the record of this meeting. The prospective applicant referred to the submission it had made to the Board in January 2019 and said that this included its response in this regard.

The Prospective Applicant's presentation:

The prospective applicant provided the Board with an update on the proposed development generally which it noted has been included as a Project of Common Interest by the EU, as follows:

- The project has been awarded financial support from the Connecting Europe Facility for marine surveys and there is a connection agreement in place to the national grid network in the UK.
- The technology with respect to the proposed development has been refined and the route assessment process is concluding. Marine surveys concluded as of early 2019.
- It is intended to lodge the formal planning application in Q3 2019.
- Public consultations have taken place in Fethard, Duncannon and Ramsgrange as recently as March 2019. One final round of consultations will be held prior to the lodging of the planning application. The main issues raised related to effects of EMF and distribution to traffic during the construction of the grid connection in the existing road network.
- Consultation meetings have also taken place with the local authority. The primary issues raised were the potential effect of the project on road infrastructure and water assets during the construction of the grid connection in the existing road network.
- No specific issues were raised in consultations with the NPWS.
- Consultations with other bodies has also taken place, including relevant authorities in Wales.

- An EIA Scoping Report was forwarded to a number of bodies and consultees. It was stated that responses received did not contain anything unexpected.

Discussion:

The following matters were discussed:

- **Jurisdiction of the Board on the Foreshore:** The prospective applicant raised a query in relation to the Board's jurisdiction vis-à-vis offshore development and assessment of impacts. In the previous meeting of the 20th September, 2018, the Board's representatives had noted the precedent of the east west interconnector project (case reference number VA0002) in which the Board had undertaken an assessment of impacts to the 12-nautical-mile limit. The Board's representatives said that they could only advise the prospective applicant in the context of the approach taken on the east west case, but noted for the record that they have requested some clarification on the matter from the current Board. The prospective applicant was also invited to forward any legal opinion it has received on this issue. The Board's representatives said that they would hope to have further clarity on this point by the time of a subsequent meeting with the prospective applicant.
- **Foreshore Licence:** The prospective applicant said that its foreshore licence application is almost ready for submission to the Department, but that it may delay this pending some further clarification on the aforementioned issue. The Board also raised the matter of impending changes in relation to foreshore legislation. Although there is no certainty with regard to the timing of changes to legislation, the Board advised the prospective applicant to be mindful of any such changes.
- **Converter station:** The site for the convertor station remains as previously advised and the footprint for the proposed building remains the same. The prospective applicant indicated that the configuration for the proposed building may be modified somewhat and that it intends to present two alternatives in this regard as part of the planning application. The Board stated that consideration should be given to a mechanism for informing the planning authority of which alternative will be constructed if planning permission is granted for both options. The Board enquired as to whether members of the public have raised any

issues in relation to the scale of the proposed building. The prospective applicant said it was satisfied that the public understood the scale of the proposed building and that no significant issues have been raised and pointed out that the proposed building would be situated in a mainly industrial location.

- **Visual Impact:** The planning application should include photomontages in respect of the convertor station and should represent sensitive locations in the vicinity including Dunbrody Abbey. The input of the local authority on the location of such views was advised.
- **Cable route:** The prospective applicant recapped on the proposed route for the cable which, from a landfall point of view, terminates at Baginbun Beach on the Irish side. With respect to the said beach, the Board enquired as to whether there are any applicable bye-laws which might be of relevance. The prospective applicant undertook to do a check on this.
- **Local disruption:** The Board advised that consideration should be given to mitigating disruption to amenity areas (beaches etc) and tourist infrastructure (such as access to the ferry crossing). The prospective applicant stated that it is intended to avoid construction works during the summer period in order to mitigate disruption to holiday makers and the local tourist industry.
- **Road Reinstatement:** If possible, agreement should be reached with the local authority regarding details of road reinstatement in advance of the planning application. The prospective applicant confirmed that works along the road network will be carried out within the curtilage of same, and that it has engaged comprehensively with the Roads Department of the local authority in relation to this issue.
- **Heritage:** With respect to the Round Tower on Baginbun Beach, the prospective applicant said that the proposed cable route is not located close to this, nor will it impinge upon any structure of known archaeological or cultural heritage.
- **Coastal erosion:** Investigations have been carried out and that this will not have any bearing on the proposed development. The Board advised that this issue should be fully addressed in the planning application.

- **AA:** Part of the cable route traverses a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), but does not impact upon the qualifying interest of this European Site (Reef). No in-stream works are proposed in the River Barrow And River Nore SAC and construction works during sensitive seasons will be avoided.
- **EIA:** The Board's representatives referred to the prospective applicant's stated intention to submit an EIAR as part of the planning application and queried as to whether the proposed development falls within a class of development for the purposes of EIA. The prospective applicant's attention was directed to the case of the east west interconnector project (case reference number VA0002) in which the Board directed that an EIS was not required. The prospective applicant stated that its legal advice was that an EIAR should be produced as part of any planning application. Noting this, the Board said it will give the matter some further consideration and invited the prospective applicant to do the same. The Board also suggested that the prospective applicant might submit further information to it on this matter prior to the holding of a subsequent meeting.

Conclusion:

The record of this meeting will issue in the meantime and the prospective applicant may submit any comments it has on this in writing or at the time of the further meeting. It will be a matter for the prospective applicant to contact the Board as to when it wishes to hold a further meeting.

Anne Marie O'Connor

Assistant Director of Planning