



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting 10.VC0108 1<sup>st</sup> meeting

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	10.VC0108 Uprate and refurbishment of the existing Great Island – Kilkenny 110kV overhead line substation in Co. Wexford and Co. Kilkenny		
<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>	14/08/17	<b>Start Time</b>	11 a.m.
<b>Location</b>	Meeting Room 3	<b>End Time</b>	11.45 a.m.
<b>Chairperson</b>	Phillip Green	<b>Executive Officer</b>	Kieran Somers

Attendees		
Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Staff Member	Email Address	Phone
Phillip Green, Assistant Director of Planning		
Stephen Kay, Senior Planning Inspector		
David Curran, Senior Executive Officer		
Kieran Somers, Executive Officer	k.somers@pleanala.ie	01-8737107

<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>		
Des Cox, Planner, Eirgrid		
Sinead O'Malley, Planner, Eirgrid		

The meeting commenced at 11 a.m.

**Introduction:**

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant requesting pre-application consultations and 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.

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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.
- 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 said that the main purpose of the instant meeting was to seek further information from the prospective applicant in order to inform its determination as to whether or not the proposed development might constitute strategic infrastructure.

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The Board ~~representatives stated said~~ that ~~the purpose of the meeting was it would wish~~ to discuss the nature and scale of the proposed development and to receive

further clarity on what is entailed- [prior to making a determination as to whether it did or did not constitute strategic infrastructure development.](#)

The prospective applicant set out what is involved generally in terms of the refurbishment of an existing line and the uprating of a line. It said that refurbishment refers to the replacement of and/or the undertaking of remedial works to structures, hardware and/or conductor on an existing transmission line which have been deemed to have come to the end of their design life. Uprating, on the other hand, refers to the practice of uprating an existing transmission line to operate at an elevated design temperature and/or use of larger conductor such that an increase in the level of current that an overhead line can transmit can be achieved. The prospective applicant stated that refurbishment and uprating of a line can extend its lifespan by approximately 30 years.

The prospective applicant referred to its Grid Development Strategy (copy provided) which it said has effectively replaced its previous Grid 25 strategy. The prospective applicant noted in particular that a central platform of this strategy, which was published in February 2017, is to optimise the existing grid so as to minimise the requirement for new infrastructure. An implementation plan, which will include SEA, is likely to commence later in 2017. The prospective applicant said that the ~~instant~~ proposed development is informed by such an approach in terms of optimising an existing line.

The prospective applicant set out the background to the project referring to the previous Grid Link project (2014) which it said was proposed to satisfy three separate and distinct needs, namely:

- Transfer wind from the south-west to demand centres in the east
- Provide for associated reinforcement of the grid in the south-east
- Facilitate future connection of the Celtic Interconnector

The prospective applicant stated that ~~the grid link this~~ project is now satisfied by a number of separate projects which ~~would~~ include the instant proposal of uprating and refurbishing the Great Island – Kilkenny line. It set out the constituent elements of the proposed development which include the replacement of the existing conductor with new higher capacity conductors for the entirety of the line. Arising from these new conductors additional loading would be generated which would necessitate the replacement of up to 26 lattice steel angle masts, of 158 wooden polesets and other related works.

The prospective applicant noted for the record that proposed refurbishing and uprating is normally considered exempted development having regard to section 4(1)(g) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. It said that it was taking a precautionary approach in this particular instance having regard to the fact that initial Appropriate Assessment Screening, as conducted, has determined that potential effects on European Site(s) could not be ruled out.

With respect to the matter as to whether the proposed development would constitute strategic infrastructure development, the prospective applicant noted that the proposed development is for the uprating and refurbishment of an existing line and are essentially routine in nature. The prospective applicant, however, noted that all transmission infrastructure (as defined in the Act) is of strategic importance constituting strategic infrastructure. For the record, it referred to previous pre-

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application consultation cases in which the Board had decided that the proposed development would not constitute strategic infrastructure development. These included case reference numbers VC0072, VC0079 and VC0080.

| The prospective applicant also highlighted the fact that irrespective of other basis for the works, upgrading of the line would be required on account of its age and to ensure the reliability and safety of the network.

| The Board's representatives noted these views and remarked that the main purpose of this meeting was for it to get a greater sense of clarity regarding the proposed development and as to how it might align with any of the provisions set out under section 37A(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (albeit that that Section did not specifically apply in this type of case but which could be used to establish the 'strategic' nature of the proposed development). With reference to the prospective applicant's acknowledgement that all transmission infrastructure as defined in the Act is effectively of strategic importance, the Board's representatives said that this was the key issue which the SID division of the Board would have to consider. The Board's representatives also noted that, at 49 kilometres in length, this line was longer than any previous proposals for upgrading and uprating considered by the Board under the pre application consultation provisions of the Act.

#### **Conclusion:**

| The prospective applicant was advised that the reporting inspector will draft a report and recommendation for the Board's consideration. If the Board is of the preliminary opinion that the proposed development would constitute strategic infrastructure development, then at least one further meeting would be required. Application procedures and other matters would be addressed at such a meeting.

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The Board will revert to the prospective applicant in due course if such a further meeting is required. If it determines that the proposed development is not SID, then such a decision will be conveyed by way of formal letter.

The meeting concluded at 11.45 a.m.

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**Phillip Green**

**Assistant Director of Planning**