



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report ABP 304629-19

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<b>Development</b>	110kV substation and associated transmission grid connection.
<b>Location</b>	Harristown, Castlejordan and Clongall, Co. Meath
<b>Prospective Applicant</b>	Lightsource Renewable Energy Ireland Ltd.
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Meath County Council
<b>Inspector</b>	Pauline Fitzpatrick

## **1.0 Pre-Application Consultation**

The Board received a request on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019 from Lightsource Renewable Energy Ireland Ltd. to enter pre-application consultations under Section 182E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in relation to the proposed development at Harristown, Castlejordan and Clongall, Co. Meath.

The Board's representatives met with the prospective applicant on the 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2019 and the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020.

The prospective applicant formally requested closure of the pre-application consultation process in an email received on the 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2020.

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> pre-application consultation process undergone for a 110kV substation and associated infrastructure on these lands. Under file ref. ABP 301646-18 the Board previously decided that a 110kV substation and 2 no. cable end masts was Strategic Infrastructure.

## **2.0 Site location**

The site is as previously described:-

The site in question is located in the townland of Clongall approx. 2km to the south-east of Castlejordan village in County Meath. It is c. 7km to the south of Kinnegad, c.6 km to the north of Edenderry and c. 1km to the north and west of the administrative boundaries with Counties Offaly and Kildare. It forms part of a larger site of approx. 117 hectares on which permission has been secured for a solar farm from Meath County Council.

The lands are in agricultural use with the terrain noted to be relatively flat with hedgerows delineating field boundaries. The site is set back c.1 km from the local road to the north with access via an agricultural track. There is a cul-de-sac road c. 500 metres to the south. Views of the site are not possible from the local roads in the vicinity. One off housing is prevalent in the area.

The location of the substation has been moved approx. 180 metres to the east of that which was the subject of the previous consultations.

The Kinnegad-Dunfirth Ree-Rinawade 110kV overhead line is immediately adjacent with a further 110kV overhead line c. 400 metres to the west.

The site is c. 1km to the north of the Yellow River and c.1km to the west of the River Boyne. It is not within or in the vicinity of a European Site. The site is approx. 10km upstream of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and approx. 9km to the south of Mount Hevey Bog SAC.

### **3.0 Proposed Development**

The proposed development comprises a 110kV substation which is to be looped into the existing Kinnegad-Dunfirth Ree-Rinawade 110kV overhead line immediately to the east. An overhead line and two lattice towers to be inserted into the existing line are proposed to facilitate the loop-in of the substation. The substation is to have separate customer and Eirgrid Compounds. A fibre optic connection by way of fibre wrap along the existing overhead line is proposed between the proposed new substation and the existing Kinnegad ESB substation, a distance of c.5km.

The substation is to be located in the south-western corner of the proposed solar farm at a remove from any dwellings.

### **4.0 Planning History**

TA181225 – 10 year permission granted for a solar farm on the lands in 22/01/20. An EIAR and NIS were submitted following a further information request.

### **5.0 Applicant's Case**

The applicant makes reference to the Board's determination on the earlier proposal under file ref. ABP 301646-18. It notes that Meath County Council, during its assessment of the solar farm planning application, requested an EIAR and NIS. It also noted that the design of the substation and associate grid connection has changed.

Should the Board determine that the proposal constitutes Strategic Infrastructure the application would be accompanied by the said EIAR and NIS which give due consideration to the substation and grid connection.

## 6.0 Legislative Provisions

Under section 182A (1) of the 2000 Act (inserted by section 4 of the 2006 Act) where a person, (thereafter referred to as the ‘undertaker’) intends to carry out development comprising or for the purposes of electricity transmission, (hereafter referred to in this section and section 182B as ‘proposed development’), the undertaker shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, an application for approval of development under section 182B and shall apply to the Board for such approval accordingly.

Subsection 9 states that in this section ‘transmission’ in relation to electricity, shall be construed in accordance with section 2(1) of the Electricity Regulation Act 1999 but, for the purposes of this section, the foregoing expression, in relation to electricity, shall also be construed as meaning the transport of electricity by means of

- (a) a high voltage line where the voltage would be 110 kilovolts or more, or
- (b) an interconnector, whether ownership of the interconnector will be vested in the undertaker or not.

In section 2(1) of the Electricity Regulation Act, 1999, “transmission” is defined as the transport of electricity by means of a transmission system, that is to say a system which consists, wholly or mainly, of high voltage lines and electric plant and which is used for conveying electricity from a generating station to a substation, from one generating station to another, from one substation to another or to or from any interconnector or to final customers but shall not include any such lines which the Board may, from time to time, with the approval of the Commission, specify as being part of the distribution system but shall include any interconnector owned by the Board.

“Distribution” is defined as

“The transport of electricity by means of a distribution system, that is to say, a system which consists of electric lines, electric plant, transformers and switch gear and which is used for conveying electricity to final customers.”

“Electric plant” is defined as:

“any plant, apparatus or appliance used for, or for the purposes connected with, the generation, transmission, distribution or supply of electricity other than –

(a) An electric line

## 7.0 Assessment

As noted previously this request constitutes the 2<sup>nd</sup> for a 110kV substation on these lands to serve a permitted solar farm. The current proposal differs from the previous iteration in that the substation is to be located 180 metres further east and closer to the existing 110kV overhead line into which it is to connect. Rather than the previous underground grid connection c. 50 metres of overhead line is proposed with 2 no. lattice masts to be inserted into the existing overhead line to facilitate same. The compound is bigger with a different configuration. The current proposal will also include a fibre optic connection from the substation to the existing Kinnegad ESB substation by way of a fibre wrap along the existing overhead line, a distance of c. 5km.

As per my assessment on the previous file ref. ABP 301646-18 I consider that the substation constitutes electric plant as defined above in that it is plant for the purposes connected with the generation of electricity.

Section 182A (9) of the Act sets a threshold of 110kV in order for a high voltage electricity transmission line to be considered strategic infrastructure. No threshold is set in respect of a substation.

By reason of the loop in-loop out link to the existing circuit via the overhead line the power of the overall existing circuit will be entirely diverted into the substation and back out again. In effect the substation will form a new node along that existing circuit. Therefore, the new substation and associated overhead line will form part of the existing transmission network.

I conclude that the substation, in forming such a node on the 110kV transmission network, constitutes Strategic Infrastructure.

The Board will note previous decisions it has made on strategic infrastructure pre-application consultation requests in relation to electricity transmission infrastructure under Section 182E. Of particular note is the above referenced determination on the previous consultations pertaining to the lands under ref. ABP 301646-19.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

I consider that the proposed development as described in the submissions and drawings constitutes strategic infrastructure coming within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, necessitating an application direct to the Board.

## **9.0 Recommendation**

I recommend that Lightsource Renewable Energy Ireland Ltd. be informed that the proposed development consisting of a 110kV substation and associated transmission grid connection in the townlands of Harristown, Castlejordan and Clongall Co. Meath as set out in the plans and particular received by An Bord Pleanála on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2019 and 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January 2020 falls within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and that a planning application should be made directly to the Board.

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**Pauline Fitzpatrick**  
**Senior Planning Inspector**

**February, 2020**

## **Appendix 1**

The following is a schedule of prescribed bodies considered relevant in this instance for the purposes of Section 182A(4)(b) of the Act.

Minister of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment

Meath County Council

Transport Infrastructure Ireland

An Chomhairle Ealaíon

Failte Ireland

An Taisce

Heritage Council

Commission for Regulation of Utilities, Water and Energy

Health Service Executive

Office of Public Works