



An  
Coimisiún  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report ABP-322700-25

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<b>Development</b>	Proposed installation of a new 110/38kV/MV station
<b>Location</b>	At a site currently located within the Diageo Complex which fronts Steeven's Lane, Dublin 8
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Dublin City Council South
<b>Prospective Applicant(s)</b>	Electricity Supply Board (ESB)
<b>Type of Application</b>	Pre-Application Consultation.
<b>Inspector (Reporting)</b>	Rachel Gleave O'Connor

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1.1. ESB is seeking confirmation from An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) as to whether the proposed development of a 110kV / MV substation on Steeven's Lane to connect to the adjacent Diageo energy centre, constitutes Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) in accordance with Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

## 2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1.1. The subject site fronts onto Steeven's Lane, Dublin 8, in Dublin City and is within the Guinness Brewery Diageo Site. The site is situated to the east of Steeven's Lane and south of Bow Lane West. Occupying the site there are existing warehouse structures and a car park. The Luas Red Line runs along Steeven's Lane adjacent to the site. In the immediate area proximate to the site there are a number of Protected Structures and conservation areas along the River Liffey/Victoria Quay to the north, Steevens' Hospital to the west and James's Street to the south. The site itself is not located in a conservation area and has no Protected Structures located within it.

## 3.0 Proposed Development

- 3.1.1. The proposed development involves the installation of a new 110/38/kV/MV station at a site currently located within the Diageo complex which fronts onto Steeven's Lane. The pre-application request cover letter notes that the proposed development is at a preliminary design stage and design elements of it are likely to change. The following works are proposed as detailed in the pre-application submission:

- Construction of a two storey building to accommodate a high voltage substation;
- Construction of associated site infrastructure including:
  - Boundary walls and internal roadways;
  - Construction of two banded 110kv transformer bays and two banded auxiliary transformer bays;

- Construction of high voltage cable circuits to connect with Diageo's energy centre and existing circuits on James' Street;
- Construction of medium voltage cable circuits to feed new and existing loads in the vicinity.

3.1.2. The letter notes that There are a number of drivers for the proposed 110 / MV station, all of which will contribute to additional capacity and improvements in the security of supply for the area, as follows:

- a connection for the customer (Diageo) at 110 kV to increase their MIC from 6 to 27 MVA;
- 2 x 31.5 MVA 110/10 kV strategic transformers to help offload local stations at MV and provide new capacity to the area at MV;
- there is a significant mixed use development across the road from Diageo for ~15 MVA of new load which cannot be fully accommodated at MV with the current station capacity;
- an increase being sought by St. James Hospital from 6 to 10.5 MVA in the area;
- there is a large mixed development off Kevin Street (Camden Yard) which requires long term reduction of current loads on 38 kV stations to accommodate at MV;
- the new transformers will allow for transfer of MV load away from local stations;
  - an enhanced ring type station will allow flexibility for 2 spare 110 kV bays and future reinforcement of the network in the area.

## 4.0 Pre-Application Consultation Meetings

4.1.1. A pre-application consultation meeting was held in relation to the proposal via Microsoft teams on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2025 with discussions focused upon whether the proposed 110kV substation would constitute Strategic Infrastructure Development for the purposes of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

4.1.2. The prospective applicant asserted that the proposal would equate to part of the distribution network rather than forming transmission, with reference to precedent decisions from the Board. It was argued that as a result the proposals are not Strategic Infrastructure Development.

## 5.0 Precedent Decisions

There are a large number of precedent decisions in relation to developments of this nature, there are summarised in the table below:

Table 1: Precedent Pre-Application Decisions Concluded to be SID

<b>ABP Ref.</b>	<b>Development Description</b>	<b>Decision Date</b>	<b>ABP Decision</b>
319699	Proposed development of 110kV ESB supply, 110kV underground cable network and 110kV substation	2024	Is SID
318011	Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), 110kV substation and 110kV Underground Grid Connection to existing Great Island Eirgrid Substation and all associated site works	2023	Is SID
313680	110kV substation and grid connection to serve PV farm	2023	Is SID
313352	110kV substation and grid connection cabling	2022	Is SID
313001	110kV substation and underground grid connection.	2022	Is SID
312860	Proposed development of 110kV electrical substation and its grid connection options to the existing transmission network	2022	Is SID
312700	Proposed 110kV loop-in substation, overhead lines to connect to transmission network and underground grid connection to consented solar farm	2022	Is SID
312532	Proposed development of a 110kV on-site 'Loop-In/Loop Out' substation.	2022	Is SID

312249	Development of a 110kV substation and provision of electrical connection to the national grid	2022	Is SID
311904	Proposed new tail-fed 110kV substation and associated works.	2022	Is SID
311778	Provision of a 110kV GIS substation and associated development.	2022	Is SID
311204	Proposed 110kV substation	2022	Is SID
311176	Proposed construction of two new 110kV substations and 110kV underground cable connecting both substations	2022	Is SID
311403	Proposed development of 110kV infrastructure	2022	Is SID
311032	Proposed new tail fed 110kV substation and 110kV underground cables	2022	Is SID
312226	Construction of a 110kV substation and underground grid connection.	2022	Is SID

The applicant as part of the covering letter requesting pre-application consultation, referred to a case which it considered might also be relevant in assisting the Boards determination on the matter. This is set out below:

Table 2: Applicant Precedent Pre-Application Decisions Determined not to be SID

ABP Ref.	Development Description	Decision Date	ABP Decision
316225	Proposed installation of a new 110kV/MV station.	2023	Not SID

## 6.0 Prospective Applicants Case

- 6.1.1. The applicant initiated a pre-application meeting with the Board in relation to this prospective case. The applicant contends that the proposed development does not constitute Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) as it comprises the 'distribution' of electricity from the grid to an end-user and does not include 'transmission' to the grid network. The applicant referred to the precedent case, Pre-Application Ref. ABP-

316225-23 which concerned the proposed installation of a new 110kV substation to St. Vincent's University Hospital and was determined by the Board to not constitute SID in 2023.

- 6.1.2. The applicant describes the proposed development as comprising a new 110kV 'Loop-In / Loop-Out' electricity substation, with the primary purpose and technical design to serve the increasing electricity demands of the Diageo complex and St James Hospital. I also note the wider network support that the infrastructure is intended to satisfy as outlined in the pre-application cover letter and extracted into section 3 above.
- 6.1.3. The applicant states that Section 182A(9) of the Act sets a threshold of 110kV for a high voltage electricity transmission line to be considered strategic infrastructure, and that there is no threshold set in respect of a substation. The applicant states that the proposed substation constitutes 'electrical plant' as defined under section 4.1 as it will be used to distribute electricity and that it will form part of the existing ESB networks distribution system.
- 6.1.4. In the letter requesting closure of the pre-application discussions, the applicant refers to Section 2(1) of the Electricity Regulation Act 1999 which defines transmission as follows:
- "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, 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\*."
- \*For the purposes of this Act, the "Board" is the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) and the "Commission" is the Commission for Electricity Regulation (CRU).
- 6.1.5. The applicant therefore contends that it is for ESB and the CRU to specify which lines and associated substations form part of the distribution system.

## 7.0 Legislative Provisions

### 7.1.1. Planning and Development Act 2000, as Amended

7.1.2. Section 2(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended ('PDA'), defines 'strategic infrastructure' as including, *inter alia*:

*"any proposed development referred to in section 182A(1)"*

7.1.3. Under subsection 182A(1) of the PDA, where a person (the 'undertaker') intends to carry out development comprising or for the purposes of electricity transmission, the undertaker shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, an application for approval of the development under section 182B and shall apply to the Board for such approval accordingly.

7.1.4. Subsection 182A(9) states that:

*"'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."*

### 7.1.5. Electricity Regulation Act 1999, as Amended

7.1.6. The following definitions, as set out in section 2(1) of the Electricity Regulation Act, 1999, as amended ('ERA'), are noted:

- **'Transmission':**

*"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<sup>1</sup> 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.”*

- **‘Electric Plant’:**

*“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, (b) a meter used for ascertaining the quantity of electricity supplied to any premises, or (c) an electricity appliance under the control of a consumer.”*

- **‘Distribution’:**

*“in relation to electricity, means 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 switchgear and which is used for conveying electricity to final customers.”*

## 8.0 Assessment

- 8.1.1. Under section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) an undertaker shall apply to the Board for approval of a development comprising, or for the purposes of, ‘energy transmission’. Section 182A(9) states that ‘transmission’ shall be construed in accordance with section 2(1) of the Energy Regulation Act 1999 (as amended) and shall also be construed as meaning inter alia the transport of electricity by means of a high voltage line where the voltage would be 110kV or more.
- 8.1.2. Section 2(1) of the Energy Regulation Act defines the transmission system as a system which consists wholly or mainly of high voltage lines and electrical plant 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.
- 8.1.3. The applicant describes the proposal as a 110kV substation which will connect to the Diageo energy centre and satisfy network demands as outlined in section 3 above. As

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<sup>1</sup> For clarity, references to the ‘Board’ in this instance relate to the Electricity Supply Board.

such, I am satisfied that the proposal, as described by the applicant, comprises a substation for the purposes of transporting electricity via 110kV high voltage lines, and would therefore fall within the definitions set out above.

- 8.1.4. While I note that there is no threshold under section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in respect of a substation, the proposal will include an associated 110kV transmission line (which as outlined above would be a SID project). The definition of 'transmission' under the 2000 Planning Act incorporates both the electricity regulation definition and the transport of electricity by means of a high voltage line, therefore a development including a substation of at least 110kV comprises 'transmission' under the 2000 Planning Act, regardless of any interpretation under the Electricity Regulation Act.
- 8.1.5. The applicant refers to a precedent case from 2023, ref.316225 which included a tail-fed substation and was determined to not be SID, however I consider that the vast majority of recent decisions by the Board demonstrate that tail-fed substations are within the scope of SID provisions as set out in Table 1 above and including ABP ref.318011 also determined in 2023, and ABP ref.319699 determined more recently in 2024 and adjacent to the site.
- 8.1.6. While I note the applicant's case that Section 2(1) of the Energy Regulation Act states that transmission "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" (referring to ESB as the Board and CRU as the Commission); the primary legislation with respect to this pre-application request relates to the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), where Subsection 182A(9) states that:

*"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—*

*(c) a high voltage line where the voltage would be 110 kilovolts or more,*  
*or*

*(d) an interconnector, whether ownership of the interconnector will be vested in the undertaker or not." (My emphasis).*

- 8.1.7. The Planning and Development Act is clear that in addition to the definition under the Electricity Regulation Act, for the purposes of pre-application discussions under Subsection 182A, the transmission of electricity shall also include the transport of electricity by a high voltage line of 110kV or more, which includes the proposed development subject to this pre-application request.
- 8.1.8. I consider that the proposal meets the definition of electricity transmission under section 2(1) of the ERA and Section 182A of the 2000 Planning Act and therefore would be deemed to be Strategic Infrastructure Development.
- 8.1.9. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed 110kV underground cable network and 110kV substation at Steeven's Lane constitutes strategic infrastructure development.
- 8.1.10. I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.

## 9.0 Recommendation

- 9.1.1. I recommend that ESB be informed that the proposed development comprising the installation of a new 110/38/kV/MV substation at a site currently located within the Diageo complex and fronting onto Steeven's Lane, Dublin 8, in Dublin City, 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 Commission.



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Rachel Gleave O'Connor  
Senior Planning Inspector

27<sup>th</sup> January 2026

## **Appendix A: Prescribed Bodies**

The following is a list of prescribed bodies considered relevant by the Board:

- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications
- Dublin City Council
- National Transport Authority
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- An Taisce
- Fáilte Ireland
- Heritage Council
- An Chomhairle Ealaíon
- Irish Water
- Commission for Regulation of Utilities
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Health Service Executive

Further notifications should also be made, where deemed appropriate.