



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-323959-25

Development	The proposed development consists of a distribution 110kV/38kV/MV substation
Location	In the townland of Wallingstown, Little Island, County Cork.
Planning Authority	Cork County Council
Prospective Applicant(s)	Electricity Supply Board (ESB)
Type of Application	Pre-Application Consultation.
Inspector (Reporting)	Ronan 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 / 38kv/MV substation at a site in the townland of Wallingstown, Little Island, Co. Cork, 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

- 1.1.2. The site is located in Little Island, Co. Cork, which is a major employment centre for Cork and the wider area, and is currently undergoing significant redevelopment. The subject site fronts onto the R623 which runs to the north of the site and is bounded by open/brownfield lands to the east, south and west. On site are large areas of hardstanding. Access to the site is via the R623.

3.0 Proposed Development

- 3.1.1. The proposed development of a 110kV / 38kv/MV substation at a site in the townland of Wallingstown, Little Island, Co. Cork. 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 but the general technical requirements for the project will remain unchanged. The following works are proposed as detailed in the pre-application submission:

- A 110 kV GIS building with 8 x 110 kV bays;
- A 38 kV / MV GIS building with 14 x 38 kV bays and 14 MV bays;
- Two 110 / 38 kV 63 MVA transformers in transformer bays with associated electrical equipment;
- Two 38 kV / MV 15 MVA transformers in transformer bays with associated electrical equipment;
- Three Arc-Suppression Coils with associated electrical equipment;

- 110 kV underground cabling between the 110 kV GIS building and an existing 110 kV underground cable supplying Castlevue 110 kV / MV substation;
- 38 kV and MV underground cabling to feed distribution substations and new / existing loads in the vicinity; and
- All associated site development works including provision of access roads, lighting, boundary walls/fences, landscaping, site services including drainage and all other works.

3.1.2. It is further noted that ESB Networks have submitted a transmission system operator (TSO) connection agreement application to Eirgrid for a loop-in connection to one of the existing 110 kV circuits connected to Castlevue 110 kV substation. The grid connection will likely consist of two 110 kV underground cables which will run between the proposed Courtstown 110 kV substation and will connect into an existing circuit connected to Castlevue 110 kV substation which is located c. 300m Northeast of the proposed substation. The exact connection route will be determined by Eirgrid on issuing of the connection agreement. The substation will be a combined Transmission and Distribution substation with the 110 kV circuits feeding the substation, the 110 kV GIS building and 110 / 38 kV transformers forming part of the 110 kV Transmission Network operated by Eirgrid.

3.1.3. The cover letter notes that there are a number of drivers for the proposed substation all of which will contribute to additional capacity and improve security of supply for the area and these include:

- To provide additional capacity required to cater for future demands in Little Island and the surrounding area. ESN currently have connection applications in the order of 15 MVA from a combination of Industrial, Commercial and Residential customers.
- Allow MV load transfers between stations improving continuity and security of supply to the very numerous large industrial and commercial customers.
- Provide capacity for future electrification of roadway services stations. This station will be located close to the N25 national road Cork - Rosslare and will provide capacity for any new EV / HGV charging facilities that are to be installed on this area.

- Provide capacity in the wider region for the electrification of heat and transport as per Government targets.

3.1.4. As noted above, the substation will likely be looped into the existing Castleview 110kV station via 110kV double circuit cable.

2.0 Pre-Application Consultation Meetings

2.1.1. On February 3rd 2026, ACP issued an email to the applicant confirming if they wished to have a meeting in relation to this pre-application consultation, made under Section 182E of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended in respect of the proposed development of a 110/20 KV substation and ancillary works located in the townlands of Wallingstown, Little Island, County Cork.

2.1.2. ACP indicated that if the applicant wished to have a meeting, such a meeting would be facilitated as expeditiously as possible. Conversely, it was indicated that if the applicant did not wish to have a meeting, a written record of consultations will be kept on file and the Commission's representatives will proceed to undertake the reporting and determination stages of the request as expeditiously as possible.

2.1.3. The applicant confirmed by way of email on 3rd February 2026 that they did not require a pre-application meeting. As such, this pre-application now proceeds to the reporting stage.

2.1.4. A hard copy of the above communications have been placed on file.

3.0 Precedent Decisions

3.1.5. 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

ABP Ref.	Development Description	Decision Date	ABP Decision
320535	Proposed development of a new 110kV/38kV/MV substation	2024	Is SID

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
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4.0 Prospective Applicants Case

- 4.1.1. As noted above the applicants were satisfied a pre-application meeting was not necessary in this instance. In the application documentation, the applicant contends that the proposed development does constitutes Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID). Reference is made to the following relevant legislation:

Section 182A (1) of the PDA, as amended (see details of same in Section 5 below)

Subsection 9 of above (see details of same in Section 5 below)

- 4.1.2. In relation to Section 182A(9) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) the applicant highlights that same sets a threshold of 110 kV for a high voltage electricity transmission line to be considered 'Strategic Infrastructure' The applicant notes that no threshold is set in respect of a substation.
- 4.1.3. The applicant sets out that the proposed development comprises of an 'electrical plant' that will be used to 'distribute electricity'. It is further set out that, whilst the primary purpose of the substation is to supply the local distribution grid, the substation will be a combined Transmission and Distribution substation with the 110 kV circuits feeding the station, and as such, the station will form part of both the transmission and distribution network. The proposed 110kV/38kV/MV station will be looped into the existing Castlevue 110 kV Substation, thereby creating a new node on the transmission system.
- 4.1.4. The applicant further states that numerous similar projects involving the creation of a new node on the transmission system, have been determined by the ACP in the past to constitute SID, for example ACP-320535-24 (as included in Table 1 above).

5.0 Legislative Provisions

Planning and Development Act 2000, as Amended

- 5.1.1. 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)”

5.1.2. 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.

5.1.3. 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.”

Electricity Regulation Act 1999, as Amended

5.1.4. 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 Board¹ 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’:**

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

“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.”

6.0 Assessment

- 6.1.1. 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.
- 6.1.2. 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.
- 6.1.3. The applicant describes the proposal as a 110 kV substation, which will likely be looped into the existing Castleview 110kV substation, and will serve network demands as outlined in section 3 above. As 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.
- 6.1.4. 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.

- 6.1.5. 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.
- 6.1.6. 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.
- 6.1.7. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed 110kV substation constitutes Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID).
- 6.1.8. 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.

7.0 Recommendation

- 7.1.1. 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 in the townland of Wallingstown, Little Island, County Cork and fronting onto the R623, 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.



Ronan O'Connor

Senior Planning Inspector

26th February 2026

Appendix A: Prescribed Bodies

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

- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications
- Cork County 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.