



An  
Coimisiún  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report ABP-324051-26

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<b>Development</b>	Proposed Extension of Derryiron 110kV AIS Substation
<b>Location</b>	Lands at Derryiron, Clonin, Co. Offaly
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Offaly County Council
<b>Type of Application</b>	Pre-application consultation under section 182E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended
<b>Prospective Applicant</b>	Rhode LDES Limited
<b>Inspector</b>	Sarah Lynch

## **1. Introduction**

The Commission received a request on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2026 from the prospective applicant, Rhodes LDES Limited, to enter into pre-application consultations under Section 182E of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended ('2000 Act'), in relation to the proposed development of an extension to an existing 110kV AIS substation on lands at Derryiron Clonin, Co. Offaly.

The primary purpose of the pre-application consultation is to address the issue of whether or not the proposed development constitutes strategic infrastructure for the purposes of the 2000 Act.

A record of the written consultations undertaken is on file.

This report provides an overview of the proposed development, as well as details of legislative provisions, and relevant precedent.

## **2. Site Location & Description**

The proposed development site is located adjacent to the existing Rhode power station. The lands are bounded by Ballybeg bog which was historically utilised for peat extraction, a large solar farm to the south west and south and agricultural lands to the north and east. The site is accessed off the R400, to the east. There are no dwellings directly adjacent to the proposed site with the nearest c. 700 metres to the north east.

## **3. Proposed Development**

The proposed development comprises an extension and modifications to the existing Derryiron electricity substation, which specifically includes the following:

- (a) Construction of an additional connection bay resulting in an increase of the electricity substation compound from circa 6100m<sup>2</sup> to 6600 m<sup>2</sup>.
- (b) The construction of circa 75m of access track the installation of 110KV air insulated electrical equipment within the electricity substation compound.
- (c) The installation of circa 130m of 110 KV underground electrical cable which will extend and connect the existing Derryiron node to a proposed adjacent compound. This will provide additional bays for connection of nearby

consented renewable energy and energy storage developments to the electricity grid.

(d) The proposed C type extension substation compound will contain:

- a. four new 110 KB bays
- b. transformer
- c. IPP-MV switch gear room containing control rooms and electrical cabinets
- d. control building
- e. site development works including site preparation, hardstanding internal access tracks and temporary construction compound.

#### **4. Prospective Applicant's Case**

The prospective applicant's case, as outlined in the cover letter submitted can be summarised as follows:

- The Commission has previously determined a number of requests for pre application consultations in relation to proposed improvement, expansion, refurbishment, and upgrade works at existing electrical substations. The Commission has determined that such developments are not SID.
- There would be no significant changes in the existing transmission operations functions or purpose at the site. The proposed extension works do not present a form or appearance of approaches or structures that would be entirely incongruous within or in proximity to the established substation infrastructure. None of the proposed works trigger an Appropriate Assessment or EIA requirement.
- Is it therefore concluded that the proposed development would not fall within the scope of section 182A of the planning and development Act 2000.

#### **5. Relevant Precedents**

The following recent decisions I consider to be relevant to the consideration of this case:

ABP Ref. No.	Location	Development Description	Decision Date	Decision
320118	Moycullen CO. Galway	Synchronous Condenser and associated 110kV Underground Electricity Cabling and Connection Infrastructure to Buffy 110kV Substation.	16/08/24	Not SID
320053	Located at Athlone to Lanesboro 110kV Circuit in County Roscommon and County Longford.	Proposed uprating of 3 no. existing 110kV Circuits	08/10/24	Not SID

## 6. Legislative provisions

### 6.1 Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

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

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

Under subsection 182A(1) of the 2000 Act, 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 Commission for such approval accordingly.

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."*

Section 182E(1) provides that a prospective applicant who proposes to apply for approval under section 182B or 182D shall, before making the application, enter into consultations with the Commission in relation to the proposed development.

## **6.2 Electricity Regulation Act 1999, as Amended**

Section 2(1) of the Electricity Regulation Act 1999, as amended ('1999 Act'), sets out the following definitions:

- **'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 Commission 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 Commission."*

- **'Electric line':**

*"...has the meaning assigned to it by section 4(1) of the ESB (Electronic Communications Networks) Act 2014."*

The definition set out in s.4(1) of the 2014 Act is as follows:

*"...any line which is used solely or amongst other things for carrying electricity for any purpose and as including –*

*(a) any support for any such line, that is to say, any structure, pole or other thing in, on, by or from which any such line may be supported, carried or suspended,*

*(b) any apparatus connected to or associated with any such line for the purpose of carrying electricity or electronic communications services, whether such apparatus is owned by the Commission or by any company referred to in section 2 or by a company which has been provided access or services referred to in section 3, or*

*any wire, cable, tube, pipe or similar thing (including its casing or coating) which is used for the purpose of carrying electricity or electronic communications services and which surrounds or supports or is surrounded or supported by, or is installed in close proximity to, or is supported, carried or suspended in association with, any such line."*

- **'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 electrical appliance under the control of a consumer"*

- **'Distribution':**

*"...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".*

## **7. Consultation Meeting**

A meeting was not held in respect of this case. A written record of the consultations undertaken have been attached to the file.

## **8. Assessment**

As noted above, the definition of 'strategic infrastructure' includes development comprising or for the purposes of electricity transmission, with 'transmission' defined as either:

The transport of electricity by means of a high voltage line of 110 kV or more, or an interconnector.

The transport of electricity by means of a transmission system (a system of high voltage lines and electric plant 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, including interconnectors but excluding distribution system lines).

Based on this statutory definition and the information contained in the prospective applicant's request, I am satisfied that the existing Derryiron 110kV AIS electrical substation can be regarded as part of the electricity transmission system for the purposes of the 2000 Act.

The applicant has provided details of the proposed development in the form of a written description and a site layout and location plan. I consider the information provided to adequately outline the scope and, nature and purpose of the proposed development.

The proposed development is described as an extension to the existing Derryiron substation which will provide additional capacity at the site in order to facilitate the connection of consented renewable energy and energy storage developments in the area. The presence of a substation at this location is well established and I consider that the proposed development would not give rise to any fundamental change in the function, operation or purpose of the existing substation infrastructure at this location, nor would there be any material deviation to the routes of established electrical circuits. While the existing compound will be extended to the south it is not considered that any significant visual or landscape impacts will arise given the site location and characteristics and the distances from sensitive receptors.

As outlined above, the Board has previously determined a considerable number of requests for pre-application consultation in relation to proposed improvement / refurbishment / upgrade works to existing electrical infrastructure. In particular, I note the recent cases ABP-320118 and 320053.

The Board concluded in these, and other similar cases, that the development did not fall within the scope of section 182A of the 2000 Act, as amended, and consequently that planning applications should be made in the first instance to the local planning authority.

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, the fact that it relates to an extension and modification of an existing substation and transmission infrastructure, and noting previous determinations by the Board in respect of similar

requests for pre-application consultation, I conclude that the proposed development would not fall within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, necessitating the making of an application directly to the Board.

In conclusion, therefore, I recommend that the Commission issue a determination that the: Proposed Extension of Derryiron 110kV AIS Substation does not fall within the scope of section 182A of the 2000 Act, as amended, that a planning application for that element should be made to Offaly County Council, in the first instance.

## **9. Recommendation**

I recommend that the prospective applicant, Rhode LDES Limited, be informed that:

- (i) the proposed extension of Derryiron substation does not fall within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and that a planning application should be made in the first instance to Offaly County Council.

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.

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Sarah Lynch

**Assistant Director of Planning**

Date:24/02/2026

