

An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

ACP-324187-26

Development	Proposed development of a 110 kV [Electrical Substation] and associated infrastructure
Location	within the townlands of Ashwood Lower, Coolroe Little and Whitepark, Co. Wexford & Springfield, Rockbog, Bogland and Kish, Co. Wicklow
Planning Authority	Wexford County Council Wicklow County Council
Prospective Applicant	Loricloy Limited
Type of Application	Pre-Application Consultation under Section 182E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended
Date of Site Inspection	9 th July 2026
Inspector	T Bradley

1.0 Introduction

Under the provisions of Section 182E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (the Act), Loricloy Limited (the prospective applicant) has made a pre-application request to An Coimisiún Pleanála (the Commission) as to whether the proposed development of a 110 kV Electrical Substation and associated infrastructure for the prospective 'North Wexford Solar Farm'¹ constitutes Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID). The proposed development is in the local authority of Wexford County Council and Wicklow County Council.

The Commission is requested to determine whether the proposed development constitutes SID. The prospective applicant is of the view that the proposed development constitutes SID.

2.0 Site Location and Description

The substation site is located 3.5 km south of Arklow, Co. Wicklow in proximity to the boundary of Co. Wicklow and Co. Wexford. The M11 Motorway is located to the west of the proposed development. The substation site and wider solar farm site is accessed via a network of minor local roads. The substation site will be located amongst a prospective solar farm, the lands for which are currently in agricultural use. It is intended to connect the substation via local roads to an approved but unconstructed substation (ABP-315200-22) at Kish Business Park on the outskirts of Arklow and to the north of the substation site. The need for this approved but unconstructed substation is related to a data centre development in the area. The Commission should note that the prospective applicant submitted updated site layout drawings in a letter of 1st of September which supersede those submitted with the initial application.

3.0 Prospective Development

The proposed development includes:

¹ A review of the Wexford County Council Planning Portal was carried out in September 2026 and no file relating to a solar farm in the townlands of Ashwood Lower, Coolroe Little and Whitepark, Co. Wexford was noted.

- a 110 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) building, transformers, electrical equipment and associated compound. The fenced compound shall also include other electrical plant, underground ducting and cabling.
- underground cabling & ducting from the proposed substation to the planned 110kV substation (Ref:ABP-315200-22) at Kish Business Park.
- access tracks, which will link the public road to the northwest of the proposed development to the substation

The Commission should note that the development description has changed since the initial submission of the application. The primary changes, as outlined in a letter of 1st September 2026 include use of GIS rather than Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS). The battery energy storage compound has also been removed from the development and will form part of the prospective solar farm application which is being made directly to Wexford County Council.

4.0 Planning History

A review of the Wicklow and Wexford Planning Portals and the Commission's case files was carried out in September 2026 to collate any relevant planning history for the site.

No file relating to a solar farm in the townlands of Ashwood Lower, Coolroe Little and Whitepark, Co. Wexford is noted. The prospective applicant has not indicated when it expects to submit that application but I am satisfied it would not have any material bearing on the Commission's consideration of this file before it.

The Commission should note its own file, ABP-315200-22, in which it ordered approval for a 110 kV substation with GIS technology and two 110 kV underground transmission cables (connecting to existing 220 kV overhead lines to the northwest of the proposed substation) along with associated and ancillary works. In the townlands of Bogland, Kish, Cooladangan, Ballintombay, Ballyroonaun, and Ballynattin, Co. Wicklow. The Commission determined that this substation was 'transmission' infrastructure in a pre-application determination under reference, ABP-311778-21. This is the approved but unconstructed substation which the solar farm substation will connect to.

There are numerous planning applications adjoining the proposed substation and underground cable route in respect of residential, commercial and agricultural developments which is to be expected in a such a rural location.

5.0 Precedent

A review of the Commission's case files was carried in September 2026 to collate any relevant planning precedent cases for this class of development. There is significant precedent specific to the circumstance of this application where the proposed development included a 110 kV and underground grid connecting a solar farm to the transmission network. All are generally considered SID.

6.0 Submission of the Prospective Applicant

The submission considered the development location, development description, legislative provisions and the prospective applicant's consideration of SID.

A meeting was held with the prospective applicant on the 25th of May 2026. The details of this meeting are set out in the record contained on the file.

The prospective applicant by way of letter of 1st September 2026 sought to close the pre-application request and updated the development description and provided update site layout plans.

7.0 Legislative Context

Section 2 (1) of the Act defines SID as including, *inter alia*:

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

Under subsection 182A (1) of the 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 high voltage line where the voltage would be 110 kilovolts or more, or

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.

The following definitions, as set out in Section 2(1) of the Electricity Regulation Act, 1999, as amended, 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 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 line’**: “...has the meaning assigned to it by section 4(1) of the ESB (Electronic Communications Networks) Act 2014.”

The definition set out in Section 4 (1) of the ESB (Electronic Communications Networks) Act 2014 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 Board 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 –

An electric line

a meter used for ascertaining the quantity of electricity supplied to any premises, or 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”.

8.0 Assessment

Based on this statutory definition, planning history and the information contained in the prospective applicant’s request, I am satisfied that the approved but unconstructed 110 kV substation at Kish Business Park will ultimately form part of the transmission network can be regarded as part of the electricity transmission system for the purposes of the 2000 Act. While this substation is unconstructed, the pre-application request, under reference ABP-311778-21 accepted that the development was SID. While this is an unusual situation whereby, a solar farm is relying on an unconstructed substation and the unconstructed substation may be relying on the development of the data centre, the Commission could appropriately rely on its previous determination. While the sequencing of construction of this infrastructure may be important, it is not a material factor in determining the SID status of the pre-application before the Commission now.

Therefore, the proposed grid connection from the proposed 110 kV Substation at the North Wexford Solar Farm via a 110 kV underground cable would compromise SID under the plain meaning of Section 182A (9) of the Act. It satisfies the definition of 'transmission', being a system which consists, wholly or mainly, of high voltage lines and electrical plant used for the conveying of electricity from one substation to another. This interpretation is supported by a significant number of precedents also, including inter alia: ABP-313680-22, ABP-313352-22, ABP-313001-22, ABP-312860-22, and ABP-312700-22.

Therefore, I consider that the 110kV substation and 110kV cable of the proposed development would fall within the scope of section 182A of the Act, and that a planning application should be made directly to the Commission.

8.1. Prescribed Bodies

In view of the nature and location of the proposed development, as described in this report, it is recommended that the prospective applicant should consult with the prescribed bodies listed in the attached Appendix in respect of any future application for approval.

9.0 Recommendation

Based on the foregoing assessment, it can be concluded that the proposed development (110 kV substation and underground cable) falls within the scope of Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

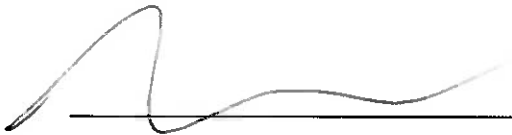
It is recommended that the Commission serve a notice on the prospective applicant that it is of the opinion that the 110 kV Substation and underground cable does fall within the scope of Section 182A of the Act and that a planning application should be made directly to the Commission.

10.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the voltage and purpose of the proposed grid connection, it is considered that the proposed development constitutes development that falls within the scope of Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Professional Declaration

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.



T Bradley,

Senior Planning Inspector

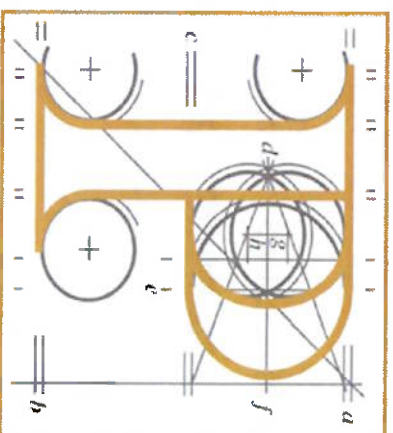
11th September 2026

1.0 Appendix A: Prescribed Bodies

Note 1: The following is a list of prescribed bodies considered relevant for the purposes of section 37E(3)(c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Development Applications Unit).
- Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications.
- Minister for Transport
- Wexford County Council
- Wicklow County Council
- Southern Regional Assembly
- Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- An Chomhairle Ealaíon
- Fáilte Ireland
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Córas Iompair Éireann
- The Heritage Council
- An Taisce – the National Trust for Ireland
- Health Service Executive
- The Commission for Energy Regulation
- Uisce Éireann

Further notifications should also be made, where deemed appropriate



An Coimisiún Pleanála

Site Visit

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