



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

ABP-324402-26

Development	Proposed 110kV substation and a double circuit underground cable (also 110kV) to loop into an existing 110kV overhead line
Location	located in the townlands of Loughlinstown and Cricketstown. Kilbrew, Ashbourne County Meath.
Planning Authority	Meath County Council
Prospective Applicant(s)	Kilbrew Eco Developments Limited
Type of Application	Pre-Application Consultation.
Inspector (Reporting)	Ronan O'Connor

1.0 Introduction

ESB is seeking confirmation from An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) as to whether a proposed 110kV substation and a double circuit underground cable (also 110kV) to loop into an existing 110kV overhead line located in the townland of Loughlinstown and Cricketstown. Kilbrew, Ashbourne County Meath constitutes Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) in accordance with Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

This pre-application seeks to make minor amendments to a previously determined pre-application request (Ref 312226-21)¹. On 21st September 2022, the [then] Board made a determination on same and it was determined that the proposed development falls within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended and that it would be strategic infrastructure.

With reference to email communications received by ACP following submission of this pre-application request, which I have placed on file, the amendments to the previously determined pre-application are as follows:

- Relocation of 110kV substation by 200m (approx)
- Relocation of one (of the two) 110kV masts (LCIMs) by 500m

The method of connection to the grid are unchanged from that in the previously determined consultation request.

2.0 Site Location and Description

The proposed site, which has a stated area of c. 2.18 ha, is located in the townland of Loughlinstown, Kilbrew, Ashbourne, Co. Meath, c. 5km north west of Ashbourne, 3.1km north of Ratoath and 5.6km north east of Dunshaughlin.

The site is located c. 600m south of Tayto Park and currently comprises agricultural grassland. To the north there are a number of commercial and industrial premises,

¹ <https://www.pleanala.ie/en-ie/case/312226>

with the wider area generally in agricultural use with scattered residential development and agricultural buildings. Fields in the area are generally relatively large and well-defined by boundary hedgerows and trees.

As per the previous pre-application, the proposed substation would be connected via underground 110kV cables to the existing 110kV Baltrasna to Corduff overhead power line in the townland of Crickstown, located a straight-line distance of c. 1.3km to the east, via 2 No. new tie-in masts. The cable route variously crosses agricultural lands and follows local roads.

3.0 Proposed Development

The proposed development as described in the submitted documentation is as follows:

- 1 no primary transformer
- 110kV AIS (Air Insulated Switchgear)
- IPP substation compound, control building housing necessary switchgear
- 110kV underground cables (double circuit) from IPP substation to 2 new Line Cable Interface Masts (LCIMs) located on the existing Baltrasna – Corduff 110kV circuit

As described in the previous pre-application documentation related to case reference 312226, also proposed is the laying of c. 2.3km of 110kV underground cable between the substation and the overhead power line. The proposed cable will be installed in a cable trench including ducting, fibre optic conductor, insulated earthing conductor where required and link boxes at some jointing locations. The applicant has confirmed that this remains the case with this pre-application i.e. it is stated that the method of connection to the grid are unchanged from that in the previously determined consultation request.

Also as set out in the previous pre-application request, the purpose of the proposed development is to facilitate the connection of a permitted solar farm to the national grid. The Board granted permission for a solar farm on c. 56.76 ha of land located c. 1.3km to the west of the subject site in 2019 (ABP-301049-18). I note. extensions to

same were granted by Meath County Council since that date (Register Reference AA/170860).²

As set out in the application documentation, a planning application for a solar PV development including a Battery Energy Storage facility (BESS) adjacent to the substation will be submitted to Meath County Council in July 2026. I note that this has subsequently been submitted (Register Reference 2660951) and has yet to be determined.

4.0 Pre-Application Consultation Meetings

On 19th August 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.

The applicant confirmed by way of email on 20th August that they did not require a pre-application meeting. As such the pre-application now proceeds to the reporting stage.

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

5.0 Precedent Decisions

The following table outlines the most recent and relevant precedents for the proposed construction of new 110kV substations.

ABP Ref.	Development Description	Decision Date	ABP Decision
312226	Construction of a 110kV substation, two tie-in masts and 110kV underground cable	2022	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	2022	Is SID

² I note a 3rd party appeal relating to same was subsequently withdrawn (313745).

	substation and its grid connection options to the existing transmission network		
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
311403	Proposed development of 110kV infrastructure	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

1.0 Prospective Applicants Case

I would note that the current pre-application relates to minor amendments only to the previously determined pre-application request, as detailed above, and the prospective applicant's case is summarised in the Inspector's report relating to same. In the interests of avoiding repetition, I would refer the Commission to same. I have placed a hard copy on file for Commission's consideration.

The application document submitted with this pre-application refers to the previous determination made on 21st September 2022 that the previously proposed

development falls within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended and that it would be strategic infrastructure.

It is also set out that, as per the previous consultation, the proposed 110kV station will be capable of connecting 100 MVA of renewable generation to the grid which will play a significant part in helping Ireland reach its target of 80% renewables by 2030. It therefore meets the requirements of the Strategic Infrastructure Act 2006 and is appropriate for submission under the SID process.

In addition, and as noted above, the current proposal is a minor alteration to a previous pre-application. As such, I am satisfied that the original justification for the proposal is still relevant in this context and this is set out the original Inspector's report, and I refer the Commission to same.

2.0 Legislative Provisions

Planning and Development Act 2000, as Amended

- 2.1.1. 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)"

- 2.1.2. 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.

- 2.1.3. 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."

2.1.4. Electricity Regulation Act 1999, as Amended

2.1.5. 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 Board³ 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."

3.0 Assessment

The proposed development comprises a new 110kV substation and underground 110kV cable intended to facilitate the connection of a permitted solar farm to the

³ For clarity, references to the 'Board' in this instance relate to the Electricity Supply Board.

National Grid via proposed tie-in towers and breaking into the existing 110kV Baltrasna to Corduff overhead power line in the townland of Crickstown.

The prospective applicant is seeking a determination from the Board as to whether the proposed development is or is not Strategic Infrastructure Development. The prospective applicant contends that it is Strategic Infrastructure Development.

Under section 182A of the PDA 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 ERA 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.

Section 2(1) of the ERA 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.

Based on the information contained in the prospective applicant's cover letter, and having regard to the previous determination made by the [then] Board in relation to pre-application reference 312226, I am satisfied that the proposed 110kV substation and 110kV underground cable development which will connect a permitted solar farm to the national grid would constitute the 'transport of electricity by means of a transmission system' as defined in Section 2(1) of the ERA and therefore can be considered to form part of the electricity transmission system for the purposes of the PDA.

I consider that the proposal meets the definition of electricity transmission under section 2(1) of the ERA. As such, it would fall under section 182A of the PDA and would be deemed to be Strategic Infrastructure Development.

I therefore conclude that the proposed development constitutes strategic infrastructure within the scope of section 182A of the PDA, necessitating an application direct to the Board

5.1. Prescribed Bodies

In view of the scale, 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 Appendix A in respect of any future application for approval.

6.0 Recommendation

I recommend that Kilbrew Eco Developments Limited be informed that the proposed development consisting of the construction of a 110kV substation, two tie-in masts and 110kV underground cable in the townlands of Loughlinstown and Crickstown, Kilbrew, Ashbourne, Co. Meath, as set out in the plans and particulars received by An Bord Pleanála on 23rd June 2026 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.



Ronan O'Connor

Senior Planning Inspector

02nd September 2026

Appendix A

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
- Meath County Council
- 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
- Office of Public Works

Further notifications should also be made, where deemed appropriate.