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The Secretary,

An Commisuin Pleanála,

64 Marlborough Street,

Dublin 1,

D01 V902.

13th February 2026

Re: Request under Section 182E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, to enter into consultation in relation to the development of 400 kV/ 220 kV/ 110 kV substation, and associated and ancillary development, at Wards Cross, in the townland of Newpark, Fingal

Dear Secretary,

EirGrid plc (hereafter, EirGrid), the prospective applicant, wishes to enter into consultation with An Bord Pleanála (hereafter, the Board) under Section 182E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in relation to the development of a 400 kV/ 220 kV/ 110 kV substation, and associated and ancillary development, at Wards Cross, in the townland of Newpark, Fingal. The proposed substation will connect (or 'loop-in) to the transmission grid via the permitted 400kV East Meath North Dublin 400kV underground cable linking Woodland Substation to Belcamp Substation (An Commisuin Pleanála (ACP) Ref: 319422-24).

It is requested that the Board provides advice as to whether or not the proposed development is Strategic Infrastructure Development in accordance with the provisions of Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, or whether an application for permission should be made to the local authority for the area, namely Fingal County Council, in accordance with the provisions of Section 34 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

The development and site location are described in detail in Section 2.0 and Section 3.0 of this request letter respectively.

Stiúrthóirí: Brendan Tuohy **Cathaoirleach**, Mark Foley **Príomhfheidhmeannach**, an Dr Theresa Donaldson **Leaschathaoirleach**, Shane Brennan, Tom Coughlan, Michael Hand, Rosa M Sanz García (An Spáinn), Martin Corrigan **Rúnaí na Cuideachta**

Directors: Brendan Tuohy **Chair**, Mark Foley **Chief Executive**, Dr Theresa Donaldson **Deputy Chair**, Shane Brennan, Tom Coughlan, Michael Hand, Rosa M Sanz García (Spain), James Nyhan, Martin Corrigan **Company Secretary**

Uimhir Chláraithe na Cuideachta No. | **Company Reg No.** 338552

It is EirGrid's initial consideration that the proposed development does constitute Strategic Infrastructure Development, having regard to the precedent established by the Board for such consideration – this is set out below in Section 4.0. However, this is of course a matter for the Board to conclude.

1.0 Details of the Prospective Applicant

The following are the details of the Prospective Applicant:

Table 1: Details of the Prospective Applicant	
No.	**Detail**
Name	EirGrid plc,
Address	The Oval, 160 Shelbourne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, D04 FW28
Telephone	+353 (1) 677 1700
Email	info@eirgrid.ie
Website	www.eirgrid.com

The details of the named person acting on behalf of EirGrid are provided below. All correspondence should be directed to the named person.

Table 2: Details of named person acting on behalf of the Prospective Applicant	
No.	**Detail**
Name	Leah Kenny
Address	The Oval, 160 Shelbourne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, D04 FW28
Telephone	+353 (0)1 237 0743
Email	Leah.kenny@eirgrid.com

2.0 Development Description

The proposed development is for a new 400kV/220kV/110 kV transmission interface substation, situated west of Swords with a new 400 kV loop-in connection with the East Meath – North Dublin Grid Upgrade 400 kV underground circuit from Woodland to Belcamp (EirGrid Reference: CP1021 / ACP Ref. 319422-24).

The new substation compound will measure circa 6.5ha (16 acres) within an overall development site area of c. 12.8ha (31.6 acres). While the details of the proposed development are currently envisaged to be:

- Three new Gas Insulated Switchgear Substation (GIS) buildings:
  - A new 400 kV GIS substation building;
  - A new 220 kV GIS substation building;
  - A new 110 kV GIS substation building;
  - All substation buildings will have lightning protection masts.
- 5no. transformers to transform electrical power from 400kV to 220kV and 110kV;

- 3no. new shunt reactors and associated connections;
- Local realignment of the previously Approved East Meath – North Dublin 400kV underground cable circuit (ACP Reff. 319422-24) in the area of Ward's Cross to divert into the substation site.
- New site access onto the R135 serving the substation site; new internal access road within the substation site and car parking spaces.
- All associated boundary treatment and landscaping including palisade fencing (2.6 m) and security lighting.
- All associated and ancillary infrastructural and site development works above and below ground within the substation site, including surface water drainage network, attenuation and SUDS, and installation of underground cable (UGC) and ducting within the substation and site.
- All ancillary and associated site preparation works to facilitate the development including site clearance, site excavation and levelling, provision of hardstanding, and undergrounding / relocation of existing 38 kV OHL and 11 kV OHL.
- Associated demolition of existing bungalow and associated buildings to facilitate the proposed development.
- All ancillary and associated temporary works to facilitate the development at the construction stage, including construction access track, temporary construction compound / site laydown areas.

The need for an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been screened out during the design stage of the project. In addition, following Stage 1 AA, it is EirGrid's consideration that the proposed development screens out for Appropriate Assessment (AA). However, detailed screening assessments for both Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), will be submitted as part of any planning application.

3.0 Development Location

The suitability of multiple potential sites for the proposed substation was carefully evaluated through a Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) process. This evaluation considered technical feasibility, deliverability, economic factors, socio-economic impacts, and environmental considerations across several potential locations. Following the MCA, the subject site was identified as the Best Performing Option.

The site is located at Wards Cross (Figure 1-1), in the townland of Newpark, Fingal to the east of the R135 and the Newpark local road and south of the R121 (see **Figure 1**).

The proposed development site is not located within any designated European sites. There are no Protected Structures or National Monuments within the site or within the immediate vicinity of the site.

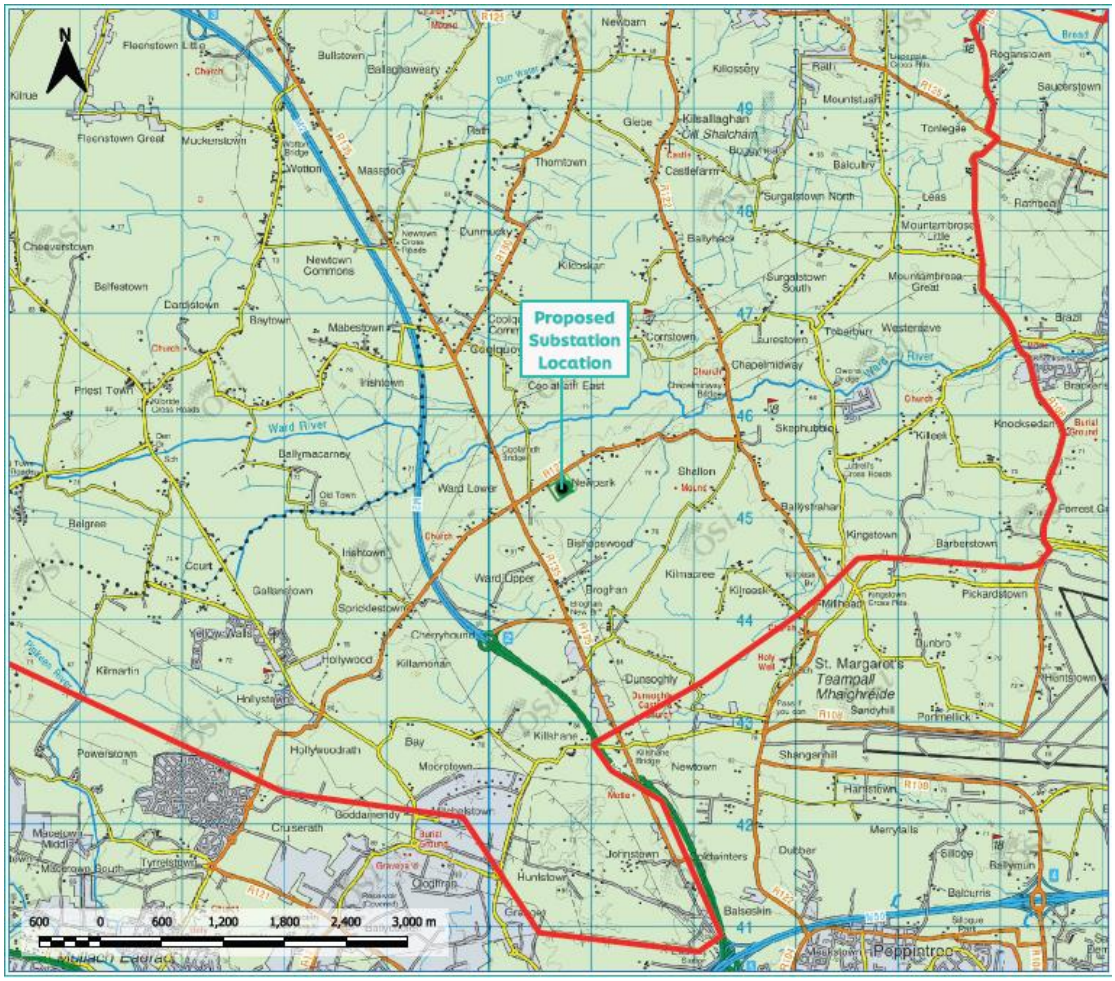

Figure 1: Indicative Site Location and Context
Source: Tailte Eireann Background Mapping

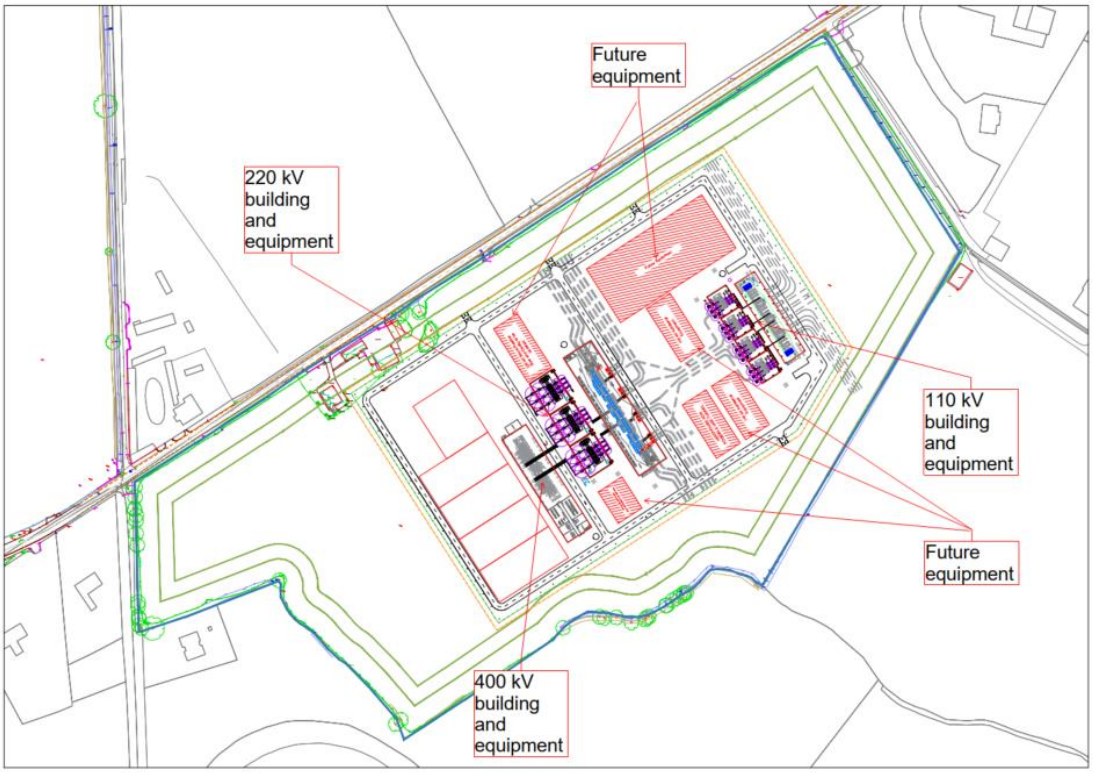

Figure 2: Indicative Layout (excluding loop-in details which are subject to further design)

The proposed site outline inclusive of indicative loop in arrangements is shown in **Enclosure A.**

4.0 Need for the Development

The current electricity network in the east of Ireland does not have the required capacity to accommodate anticipated future electrical generation and maintain compliance with the Transmission System Security and Planning Standards (TSSPS). New infrastructure is also needed to accommodate the continued growth in electricity demand in the North Dublin and East Meath area, which is being driven by several sectors including residential housing, commercial and industrial development, the electrification of heat and transportation, and integration of renewable energy connections.

The Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project (known as 'the Fingal East Meath project' or simply "FEM") is the Capital Project identified under the Infrastructure Agreement to address these significant additional capacity needs in the area. As such, it is a part of EirGrid's statutory objective to plan and develop the grid infrastructure needed to support Ireland's economy in accordance with Regulation 8(6) of SI 445/2000.

The Proposed Development is an individual and autonomous project within the FEM Capital Project required to address significant additional capacity needs in the North Dublin and East Meath area. It comprises a transmission interface substation (also referred to as a "Bulk Supply Point") which enables higher voltage levels (in this case 400kV and 220kV) step down to 110kV which in turn is stepped down to 38kV (and below) at substations on the distribution system. In connecting to the expanded 400kV network (via the permitted East Meath North Dublin 400kV underground cable), the proposed development will become a critical node on the transmission network; and a point of connection for future transmission and distribution circuits.

This substation is critical enabling infrastructure to enable residential housing, commercial and industrial development and the electrification of heat and transportation in the North Dublin and East Meath area in the short term and long term (40+ years).

5.0 Legal Interest

EirGrid plc is the licensed Transmission System Operator for Ireland pursuant to the provisions of the Electricity Regulation Act, 1999. Pursuant to the provisions of S.I. No. 445/2000, EirGrid plc has the exclusive function to operate and ensure the maintenance of and, if necessary, develop a safe secure, reliable electricity transmission system.

The Electricity Supply Board (ESB) is the licensed Transmission Asset Owner for Ireland pursuant to Section 14 of the Electricity Regulation Act, 1999. The role of the ESB is to ensure that the transmission system is developed in accordance with the requirements set down by EirGrid. The proposed transmission infrastructure will be constructed by the ESB pursuant to its statutory powers. EirGrid, the prospective applicant, does not have a beneficial interest in any lands.

6.0 Statement on Strategic Infrastructure Development

EirGrid considers that given the nature, scale and function of the proposed development on the transmission network, it may be considered Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID), having regard to Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, which requires that applications for

development concerning electricity transmission greater than or equal to 110 kV shall be made directly to An Bord Pleanála.

It is considered that the proposed development will contribute substantially to the fulfilment of objectives set out in the National Planning Framework and in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly area, in which the proposed development will be situated. The project will ensure a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity in both Dublin and the wider eastern region. More generally, it is considered that the project will be of strategic economic and social importance to the State when considering targets and objectives set out in the Government of Ireland's Climate Action Plan.

In similar proposals across the country, the Board determined that such substation and transmission projects fell within the scope of Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. Examples of these recent decisions are outlined in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Details of recent previous SID declarations by the Board for similar works

Ref.	County	Description of Development	Decision Date	
319385	Galway	Proposed 400 kV GIS substation, high voltage lines, electric plant and associated works.	08/05/2024	Is SID
318119	Kerry	Proposed 220 kV grid connection and 2 no. 220 kV GIS substations.	15/05/2024	Is SID
319155	Cork	Proposed 110 kV substation and grid connection to the adjacent 220 kV Knockraha Substation.	19/06/2024	Is SID
319140	Kildare	Proposed C-Type AIS 110 kV substation and grid connection comprised of an underground cable looping into the existing Derryiron - Timahoe 110 kV circuit and associated site works.	18/07/2024	Is SID
313767	Clare	Proposed 110 kV substation at Coolderry and associated 110 kV underground cabling to Ardnacrusha 110 kV substation.	22/07/2024	Is SID
320154	Cork	Proposed 220 kV Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) tail-fed substation with associated grid connection comprising 220 kV underground cabling connecting to the existing 220 kV Knockraha substation.	23/09/2024	Is SID
317275	Roscommon	Proposed 110 kV substation, grid connection and associated site works.	23/09/2024	Is SID
319699	Dublin	Proposed 110 kV ESB supply, 110 kV underground cable network and 110 kV substation.	09/10/2024	Is SID
316480	Offaly	Proposed 110 kV substation to connect into the existing Thornsbury substation.	09/10/2024	Is SID

Table 1: Details of recent previous SID declarations by the Board for similar works				
Ref.	**County**	**Description of Development**	**Decision Date**	
319879	Kildare	Proposed 220 kV GIS substation, 8 no. transformer bays and site infrastructure.	25/10/2024	Is SID
320535	Meath	Proposed 110 kV/38 kV/MV substation on a site located approximately 3km west of Hansfield Rail station.	25/10/2024	Is SID
319042	Roscommon	Proposed 110 kV loop-in loop-out substation and c. 6.5km of underground electricity cables.	25/10/2024	Is SID
322217	Dublin	Proposed development of a new 220/110kV Gas Insulated Switchgear substation	11/06/2025	Is SID

Given the nature, scale and function of the proposed development, as well as the precedent established by the Board in determining similar proposals, it is considered that the subject proposal comprises Strategic Infrastructure Development as defined in Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. However, as previously noted, this is ultimately a matter for determination by the Board.

5.0 Conclusion

The prospective applicant seeks the advice of the Board in relation to whether or not the subject proposals for a new 400 / 220 / 110 kV electrical substation at Wards Cross, County Fingal, constitutes Strategic Infrastructure Development in accordance with the provisions of Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Given the strategic importance of this infrastructure project, we would respectfully ask the Board to consider this pre-application consultation request at its earliest convenience. EirGrid will ensure that appropriate personnel will be available to meet with the Board at any time, should this be required, in order to ensure timely engagement on this project.

As is the requirement in order for this pre-application consultation request to be processed, an Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) for the appropriate fee of €4,500.00 has been made to An Bord Pleanála (on the 7th October 2025). If there are any issues verifying this payment, please contact the undersigned.

Should the Board have any queries in respect of the documentation provided, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully,



Leah Kenny

Senior Planner

Leah.Kenny@eirgrid.com

Enclosures:

- Enclosure A: Site Location Map

Enclosure A

Site Location Map

Enclosure B

Indicative Site Masterplan Layout