



Pre-application Consultation request under Section 182E of the Planning & Development Act 2000

**Diversion of the existing Aghada-
Whitegate 110kV circuit on land located at
Aghada, Ballincarroonig, Co. Cork.**

On behalf of ESB

June 2026

Document review and approval

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview

KPMG Planning of 1 Stokes Place, Dublin 2 have been appointed by ESB to prepare this Preliminary Planning Statement as part of a pre-application consultation request under section 182E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to seek a determination as to whether the proposed development is or is not Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID), involving diversion of the existing Aghada-Whitegate 110kV circuit on land located at Aghada.

The diversion of the existing 110kV overhead transmission line is proposed to enable the future development for energy purposes of land owned by ESB, adjoining the ESB Aghada Generating Station. The access to the site will be via the existing ESB Aghada Station from the R630 public road.

ESB was established in 1927 as a statutory corporation in the Republic of Ireland under the Electricity (Supply) Act 1927. ESB operates across the electricity market: from generation, through transmission and distribution to supply.

This statement is accompanied by the following documents in support of this pre-application consultation:

- Cover letter
- Site location map
- Site Layout Plan- - 110 kV Line Diversion
- 110 kV Line Diversion Typical Details

The purpose of this statement to provide an overview of the proposed development and to set out the context and need for the development proposal which is to divert an overhead line (OHL). An overview of relevant legislative provisions, and notable precedents of relevance to the determination on whether the proposed development does or does not constitute Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID), is provided.

2.0 Location

2.1 Overview

The existing 110kV circuit overhead line proposed for diversion is located in the townland of Ballincarroonig between the villages of Aghada and Whitegate in Co. Cork. The site is surrounded by existing electricity infrastructure, with existing Aghada electricity generation station on the northwest side, and a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Aghada BESS 2 compound is situated on west side of the site.

The requirement to divert the overhead lines has arisen as the land they traverse, outlined in Figure 2.1 red, is intended to be developed, subject to planning permission, for a proposed energy development. The proposed 110kV line diversion alternatives would consist of underground cabling and a cable line interface tower. The land intended for future development and the line diversion alternatives proposed are shown on Figure 2.2 (please refer to submitted Drawing P000491-CE21-01-0041-001-000 - 110 kV Diversion ACP). The site of the future energy development is strategically located in the eastern part of the Cork harbour and is approximately 450 metres from the shoreline of Whitegate.



Figure 2-1 Indicative location of OHLs proposed for diversion shown in purple and orange in context of lands intended for future development purposes.

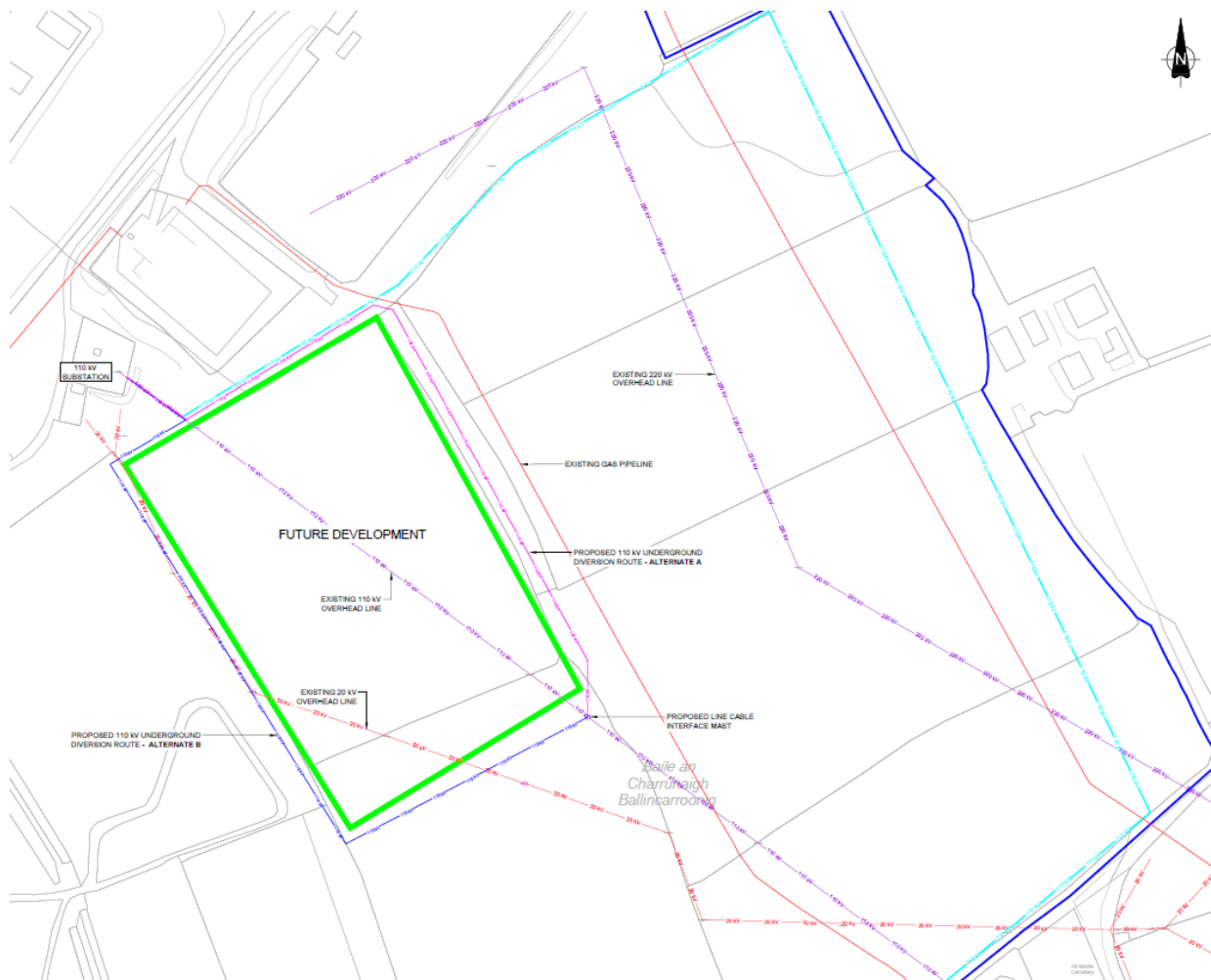


Figure 2-2 110kV line diversion alternatives in context of subject site for future development (Extracted from drawing: P000491-CE21-01-0041-001-000 - 110 kV Diversion ACP)

2.2 Land ownership

The lands are within the full ownership of ESB and are part of the overall energy base at this area. The site for the proposed future development is shown in Figure 2.2 (outlined in green) and is situated within the wider ESB landholding (outlined in blue), which includes the existing Aghada Generating Station and the existing and two proposed 110kV line diversion options 'Alternative A' and 'Alternative B'.

The site immediately neighbours the Aghada BESS 2 development on the east side, which was granted planning permission (Planning Application Reg. Ref. 216856) by Cork County Council in January 2022.



Figure 2-3 Location of subject site for future development

3.0 Planning History

For the purposes of this Pre-Application Consultation, this section outlines planning activity related to energy infrastructure projects on the site and across ESB landholdings within a 1 km radius of the Ballincarroonig townlands, as shown in Figure 3.1.



Figure 3-1 Aerial View for review of planning history within in 1km radius of subject lands (Site outlined in red colour)

3.1 Subject Site

A review of the available planning records indicates that there is no site-specific planning history associated with the subject site. No previous planning applications, permissions, or decisions pertaining directly to the site have been identified. This absence of documented planning activity suggests that the site has not been subject to formal development proposals or regulatory assessments to date.

3.2 ESB Landholdings

Major energy related infrastructure projects planning applications approved within the ESB landholdings since 2015, are set out in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3-1 Details of Planning History of Adjoining Lands within ESB ownership

Reg. Ref.	Address	Development Description	Decision Date /
185659	East of R360, Ballincarroonig and Aghada, located inside Aghada Generating Station, Ballincarroonig, Whitegate, Co. Cork	The development of a c.19 MW capacity battery storage facility located within a secured compound, on a 0.65 Ha site, and will –subject to detailed design, commercial and technical considerations	Granted 27/09/2018
186919	Aghada, Ballincarroonig, Whitegate, Co. Cork	Alterations and improvements to the existing 220kV substation consisting of a single storey control building (approx 204 sqm and approx. 5.2 in height) located at the (rear) Southern corner of the existing substation. The development will also consist of alterations and improvements to the existing 110 kV substation consisting of 1no. control and protection kiosk approx. 16sqm. and approx. 3.4m in height; 1no. lightening monopole up to approx 10m in height; upgrade of existing strung busbar to tubular busbar, extension of existing palisade fence around proposed lightening monopole and all associated site works. Extension of Duration of Permission granted under Planning Reference: 13/0607	Granted 20/12/2018
194891	Lands to the east of the R630 in the townlands of, Ballincarroonig, located inside the Aghada, Generating Station, Ballincarroonig, Whitegate, Co. Cork	A c.159 MW capacity battery storage facility located within a secured compound, on a c. 3.2 Ha site, and will - subject to detailed design, commercial and technical considerations,	Granted 10/07/2019
195411	Aghada Generating Station, Ballincarroonig, Aghada, Whitegate, Co. Cor	A 55 MWe (electrical output) aero derivative gas fired turbine, including the following elements: (a) 1 No. Turbine module (c.535 sq.m., c.15.2m high) in a fully enclosed weatherproof acoustic enclosure	Granted 02/10/2019
204294	Lands to the east of the R630 in the townlands of, Ballincarroonig and Aghada located inside the, Aghada Generating Station, Ballincarroonig, Whitegate, Co. Cor	Development on a c. 1.8 ha site, on ESB lands. The development will consist of a c.19 MW capacity battery storage facility located within a secured compound, and will - subject to detailed design, commercial and technical considerations.	Granted 06/07/2020
206011	On a 1.81 ha site to the east of the R630 in the townlands of	Permission for development on a 1.81 ha site which is licenced by the Environmental Protection Agency under an Industrial Emissions (IE)	Granted 10/11/2020

Reg. Ref.	Address	Development Description	Decision / Date
	Ballincarroonig and Aghada, located, inside the Aghada Generating Station, Ballincarroonig, Whitegate, Co. Cork	Licence (Ref. P0561-05) and a Lower Tier COMAH site and therefore falls under the requirements of the control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations (COMAH) Regulations, 2015. The development will consist of a 75 MWe (electrical output) aero derivative gas fired turbine,	
205788	ESB lands to the east of the R630 in the townlands, located inside the Aghada Generating Station, Ballincarroonig, Whitegate, Co. Cork	The development will consist of development on a 0.8ha site of a c. 2MW capacity edge computing facility located within a secured compound, and will, subject to a detailed design, commercial and technical considerations,	Granted 16/11/2020
216856	Lands to the east of the R630 in the townlands of Ballincarroonig, located inside the Aghada, Generating Station, Ballincarroonig, Whitegate, Co. Cork	Minor modifications and reconfigurations to the previously permitted Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) development (Cork County Council Reg Ref. 19/04891), primarily comprising: (1) Updated layout of the substation compound based on revised electrical requirements to facilitate grid connection; (2) revised battery equipment based on updated battery technology; and (3) ancillary equipment to support the BESS development.	Granted 27/01/2022
235104	ESB Aghada Generating Station, Ballincarroonig, Aghada, Co Cork	Development is sought for a period of 10 years at a 10.22 hectares site within ESB Aghada Generating Station consisting of 1) Construction/installation of an open cycle gas turbine (OCGT) generating unit and associated plant and equipment.	Granted 02/11/2023
244026	0.56 hectares site within ESB Aghada Generating, Station Ballincarroonig, Aghada, Co Cork P25 XE94	The proposed development consists of the construction of a hydrogen production facility comprising a hydrogen compound and contractor's compound with all associated site access and ancillary site development works. The proposed development will demonstrate the full chain hydrogen production via electrolysis, storage, usage on site via fuel cell and transport offsite to other sector hydrogen users. The proposed development is to be used for hydrogen production for an operational period of up to five years	Granted 12/04/2024

The planning history outlined above demonstrates a clear precedent for the proposed energy development that the diversion of the overhead lines, the subject of this SID determination request, will enable.

4.0 Policy Context

For context and background an overview of key planning policy of relevance to the proposed future development that the diversion of the OHL, which is the subject of this SID determination request, will enable, is summarised below.

4.1 National Policy

Climate Action Plan 2025 Ireland states *“A renewables-led system is at the core of Ireland’s plan to radically reduce emissions in the electricity sector, protect our energy security, and ensure our economic competitiveness. This requires the accelerated and increased deployment of new renewable electricity generation capacity and related infrastructure.”*

The Planning and Development Act, 2024, the Renewable Energy Directive and the revised NPF all support our renewable electricity ambitions at national, regional, and local authority levels. Ireland is in the process of transitioning from a fossil fuel-based electrical power generation model to a reliable renewables-led energy generation system. To facilitate the ongoing expansion of renewable energy generation capacity, it is essential to implement mechanisms that can provide grid support during periods of mismatch between renewable output and electricity demand.

The proposed development will enable future development of ESB owned for energy purposes, that will contribute to the decarbonisation of Ireland’s electricity grid. The scheme will enable greater integration of renewable energy sources into the national transmission network, thereby enhancing system resilience and supporting Ireland’s transition towards a low-carbon energy infrastructure.

4.1.1 Project Ireland 2040 - Revised National Planning Framework (NPF)

The Revised NPF published in April 2025 guides the high-level strategic planning and development for the country over the next 20+ years, so that as the population grows, that growth is sustainable (in economic, social and environmental terms). The revised NPF places an increased emphasis on renewable energy generation and associated infrastructure development. Chapter 9 acknowledges that the *“accelerated delivery of additional renewable energy generation is...essential for Ireland to meet its climate targets.”*

National Strategic Outcome (NSO) 8 seeks to drive a transition to carbon neutral and climate resilient society incorporating a more renewable energy focused approach prioritising energy sources such as solar, wind and wave. In support of NSO8, new energy systems and transmission grids will be required to support a more distributed, renewables-focused energy generation system harnessing the potential from renewable energy sources.

Retained NPOs in the revised NPF include NPOs 53, 54 and 55 set out below which reaffirm commitments to a low carbon society.

- **NPO 53** Support the circular and bio economy including in particular through greater efficiency in land management, greater use of renewable resources and by reducing the rate of land use change from urban sprawl and new development.

- **NPO 54** Reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.
- **NPO 55** Promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050.

The Framework sets out a broad series of measures to encourage the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions *including ‘the continued reduction in dependency on imported fossil fuels and decarbonisation of the energy system as a whole and in particular the electricity sector through the identification of targets for renewable electricity and the accelerated roll out of onshore wind energy and solar development’ and ‘encouraging climate resilient planning policies’.*

There are several new or revised National Policy Objectives (NPOs) and changes to support this. These include regional renewable energy capacity allocations which require each region to plan for sufficient wind and solar energy development so that Ireland achieves the overall national target of 9GW onshore wind and 8GW onshore solar by 2030.

- New **NPO 74** requires each Regional Assembly to plan, through their Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, how and where to deliver the required capacity set out in Table 9.1 by identifying capacity allocations for each Local Authority in its area.
- New **NPO 75** requires Local Authorities to plan, through their City and County Development Plans, for the delivery of the energy capacity target that they have been allocated.

The revised NPF recognises that meeting these regional capacity targets will require the *“development and expansion of the electricity grid, at a national and local level, in a coordinated manner.”*

4.1.2 National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2023 and NDP Review 2025

The National Development Plan is the Government's long-term strategy for major public capital spending, primarily focused on national infrastructure. It aims to support economic and social development by funding large-scale projects across key sectors. The most recent NDP, covering 2021–2030, originally committed €165 billion to investment priorities outlined in *Project Ireland 2040*.

In July 2025, the National Development Plan Review 2025 was published which updates and prioritises the Government's capital investment plan with renewed commitments across housing, water, transport and energy infrastructure up to 2035.

The plan sets out capital supports available to support the delivery of large energy projects led by ESB and Eirgrid to enhance energy grid capacity and support housing and competitiveness objectives.

To facilitate this will require strengthening the reliability of electricity supplies through investment in the electricity grid network, to be complemented by measures such as

investment in energy storage. The NDP is central to the delivery of the revised NPF NSOs and NPOs on climate, energy and renewables.

The target of delivering 80% of Ireland's electricity from renewables by 2030 is recognised as needing investment not only in generation and grid, but also in storage. The security of supply issue is also noted – to be addressed partly by conventional electricity generation when wind and solar is not sufficient to meet demand. Battery storage is a crucial part of the overall energy mix to support grid security and further remove reliance on traditional fossil fuel energy generation.

4.1.3 Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP 2025)

Climate Action Plan 2025 sets out a range of policies and measures to meet our national climate goals under the Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 which commits Ireland to transition to a climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable, and climate-neutral economy by 2050 and a reduction of 51% in GHG emissions by 2030, compared to 2018 levels and also to achieve obligations under the Paris Agreement and under EU Climate Law.

Climate Action Plans and Sectoral Emissions Ceilings set out emission targets for high impact areas including electricity – a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030 (compared to 2018).

Climate Action Plan 2025 sets out a range of policies and measures to meet these targets, in areas such as renewable energy, retrofitting, public transport and energy efficiency, many of which require significant capital investment to achieve and fully realise the potential benefits. CAP 25 outlines actions to meet the 2030 target of a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and achieve climate neutrality by 2050. The plan focuses on six key sectors—agriculture, transport, electricity, buildings, industry, and land use/forestry—and provides a roadmap for achieving these targets, though progress reports indicate current efforts are insufficient to close the emissions gap. Actions to accelerate renewable energy generation, reduce emissions and strengthen energy security and which signal the commitment to energy related projects.

4.1.4 Electricity Storage Policy Framework for Ireland 2024

The aim of the Electricity Storage Policy Framework for Ireland is to clarify the role of electricity storage systems (ESS) in Ireland's climate objectives and energy transition. This policy framework outlines the present roles, processes, regulatory structures and market positions of electricity storage. This policy framework presents 10 Government actions to support the role of electricity storage systems in Ireland's energy transitions. These include the following actions which, among the full range of actions, signal the ambition and intent to expand our national energy storage capacity through BESS and other forms of electricity storage systems (ESS):

- **Policy Action 1** – *Maintain a technology neutral approach to all electricity storage systems*
- **Policy Action 3** – *Convene an electricity storage and system services working group as part of the Accelerating Renewable Electricity Taskforce*
- **Policy Action 5** – *Support access to the wholesale electricity markets, arbitrage and revenue stacking for electricity storage systems.*

- **Policy Action 7** - *Initiate a ‘Quantity’ consultation to establish the optimal (long duration) electricity storage requirements to meet climate targets and electricity grid network expansion between 2030-2040*
- **Policy Action 10** - *To ensure a route to market for the identified optimum (long duration) electricity storage requirements for 2030-2040 is in place before end of 2028.*

The proposed scheme will enable future development of lands that will be instrumental in maximising the incorporation of available renewable electricity across the grid system, further decarbonising our electricity system, reducing our dependence on fossil fuel generation and improving the overall operation and reliability of the electricity network.

4.2 Regional Policy

4.2.1 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 for the Southern Region

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region establishes a broad framework for the way in which our society, environment, economy and the use of land should evolve. It includes Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs) for Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford and strategies for our Key Towns, towns, villages and rural areas. The RSES primarily aims to support the delivery of the programme for change set out in Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan (NDP).

The RSES outlines following regional policy objectives that addresses electricity infrastructure, energy storage and for broader integration with renewable generation and energy system transformation:

- **RPO 102 Energy Research Funding**

“It is an objective to support initiatives for energy research funding within our region to accelerate diversification away from fossil fuels to green energy, including the potential of wind, wave, solar, biomass, biofuels, biogas and hydrogen in the Region.”

- **RPO 104 Energy Storage and Carbon Capture**

“It is an objective to support investment in initiatives to develop innovation, advances in technology and pilot projects for the sustainable development of energy storage and carbon capture within the Region and to work with key stakeholders in developing sustainable forestry, including initiatives for native tree planting and better management of peatland and soil management to support carbon sequestration and enhancement of biodiversity.”

- **RPO 222 Electricity Infrastructure**

“It is an objective to support the development of a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity and to support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity networks and facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects that might be

brought forward in the lifetime of this plan under EirGrid's (2017) Grid Development Strategy (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) to serve the existing and future needs of the Region and strengthen all-island energy infrastructure and interconnection capacity."

4.3 Local Policy

4.3.1 Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028

The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out the policy objectives and the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County over the plan period from 2022 to 2028. The Plan sets out an approach centred on the core principle of sustainability with a focus on creating vibrant, liveable, climate resilient communities.

The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 replaces the Cork County Development Plan 2014, the eight Municipal District Local Area Plans adopted in 2017 and the nine Town Development Plans of the former Town Council Towns of Clonakilty, Cobh, Fermoy, Kinsale, Macroom, Mallow, Midleton, Skibbereen and Youghal. This Plan is consistent with both the 'National Planning Framework' (2018) (NPF) and the 'Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy' (2020) (RSES) for future growth and development in the County.

The site forms part of the settlement of Whitegate and Aghada which is located in the County Metropolitan Cork Strategic Planning Area and also benefits from its position within the designated Cork 'Harbour area' of the County and specifically within the East Cork Growth Corridor.

The site's strategic location within the settlement of Whitegate and Aghada holds great importance considering its designation as an Energy Hub and a preferred strategic location for expansion.

4.3.1.1 Core Strategy

The Cork County Core Strategy Statement table for County Metropolitan Strategic Planning Area classifies the overall settlement of Whitegate and Aghada as Key Villages to grow in excess of 1,500 people and identifies population target of 2,341 which will require the delivery of 60 units for the plan period.

The plan recognises the existing scale of population and social/community infrastructure, including schools, sports facilities, and recreational amenities of Whitegate and Aghada which serve a large rural hinterland.

4.3.1.2 Land use zoning

The lands on which the OHLs proposed for diversion are located are zoned "Industry" under the CDP (refer to Figure No.4.1 below). The Plan identifies the purpose of the zoning Industrial Areas (I) is to facilitate opportunities for industrial and warehousing uses, activities and processes which would in general give rise to land use conflict if located within other zonings.

County Development Plan Objective ZU 18-16: Industrial Areas

"Promote the development of industrial areas as the primary location for uses that include heavy industry, manufacturing, repairs, medium to large scale warehousing and distribution, biomedical, pharmaceutical, bioenergy plants, open

storage, waste materials treatment, port related facilities and port related activities and recovery and transport operating centres. The development of inappropriate uses, such as office-based industry and retailing will not normally be encouraged. Subject to local considerations, civic amenity sites and waste transfer stations may be suitable on industrial sites with warehousing and/or distribution uses. The provision of strategic large scale waste treatment facilities including waste to energy recovery facilities will be considered in 'Industrial Areas' designated as Strategic Employment Locations in this Plan subject to the requirements of National Policy, future Regional Waste Management Plans and the objectives set out in this Plan."

Appropriate Uses in Industrial Areas

"Medium to large scale warehousing and distribution, bioenergy plants, open storage, recovery and transport operating centres, strategic large scale waste treatment facilities including waste to energy recovery facilities(as per objective above), port facilities and port related activities, logistics, heavy industry, offices ancillary to permitted use, laboratories, food related industry, marine related development, general industry, civic amenity site, plant storage, sustainable energy installation, heavy vehicle park, fuel depot/fuel storage, telecommunication structures, biomedical, pharmaceutical, data centres, childcare facilities, commercial film studio facilities"*



Figure 4-1 Extract of Land Use Zoning Map of from Cork County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 with the Subject Site outlined in Red.

Considering the zoning criteria outlined above, the future development proposal for energy purposes, **that the diversion of the OHL will enable (the subject of this SID determination request)**, is considered compatible with the Industrial zoning of the subject lands as a sustainable energy installation which is classified under appropriate uses. It should also be noted that the previous, now superseded, East Cork Municipal District LAP 2017 identified 'Maintain existing industrial/ electricity generation use on Industry zoned lands, which includes the subject site.

4.3.1.3 Energy Storage

The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 under section 13.15 Further Renewable Energy Considerations details the significance of the Battery Energy Storage facilities:

*“Renewable energy sources have vast potential to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions. Despite this many of the resources have intermittent or variable output, therefore if they are not harnessed the energy goes to waste. **As a result, there is an increasing need for energy storage when demand is low, to be utilised when demand is high. Energy storage technologies are growing rapidly, offer significant potential, offer opportunities to integrate different forms of renewables, and improve security in the energy supply.** The EU’s Energy Roadmap 2050 confirms that storage technologies remain critical, and that future integration of RES-E will depend on increased storage capacity. The typical energy storage technologies include Pumped hydroelectric energy storage (PHES), Battery Energy storage, Heat/Thermal Energy Storage (TES), Electrical Storage heaters and heat pumps.”*

“Battery Energy storage can be integrated with renewable energy generation systems in either grid connected or stand-alone applications. For grid connected systems, batteries add value to intermittent renewable sources by facilitating a better match between supply and demand. Other benefits of this method of energy storage include power quality assurance, load levelling and integration of renewable energy generation plants. There are no emissions, solid wastes or effluent produced from these battery storage systems. There three important types of large-scale Battery Energy Storage BES. These are Lead-Acid (LA), Nickel-Cadmium (NiCd), Sodium Sulphur (NaS). These operate in the same way as conventional batteries, except on a larger scale.”

“Energy storage will give the opportunity for rural communities and islands off the coast of Ireland to be self-sufficient with a secure energy supply of renewable energy and not dependent on the national grid. Cork County Council will continue to support energy storage technologies as we aim to achieve our renewable energy targets and become a carbon neutral economy.”

Of specific note is relevant objective ET 13-2 which is to:

ET 13-2 Renewable Energy

“ a) Support Ireland’s renewable energy commitments as outlined in Government Energy and Climate Change policies by facilitating the development of renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, geothermal, hydro and bio-energy and energy storage at suitable locations within the county where such development has satisfactorily demonstrated that it will not have adverse impacts on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or amenities.”

5.0 Proposed Development

5.1 Development Description

The proposed development, the subject of this SID determination request, is for the diversion of the existing Aghada-Whitegate 110kV circuit overhead line on land located at Aghada.

The diversion of the existing 110kV circuit is proposed to enable the future development of land for energy purposes owned by ESB adjoining the ESB Aghada Generating Station. The access to the site will be via the existing ESB Aghada Station from the R630 public road.

The proposed development involving diversion of the existing Aghada-Whitegate 110kV circuit will be undertaken as part of the future energy development. The diverted line will consist of an underground cable with a steel lattice pylon at each end of the diversion route although it is possible that a pylon may not be required at the northern end of the diversion. Two potential diversion routes are shown in the Figure 5.1. However, the final route and details will be agreed with EirGrid / ESB Networks during detailed design.

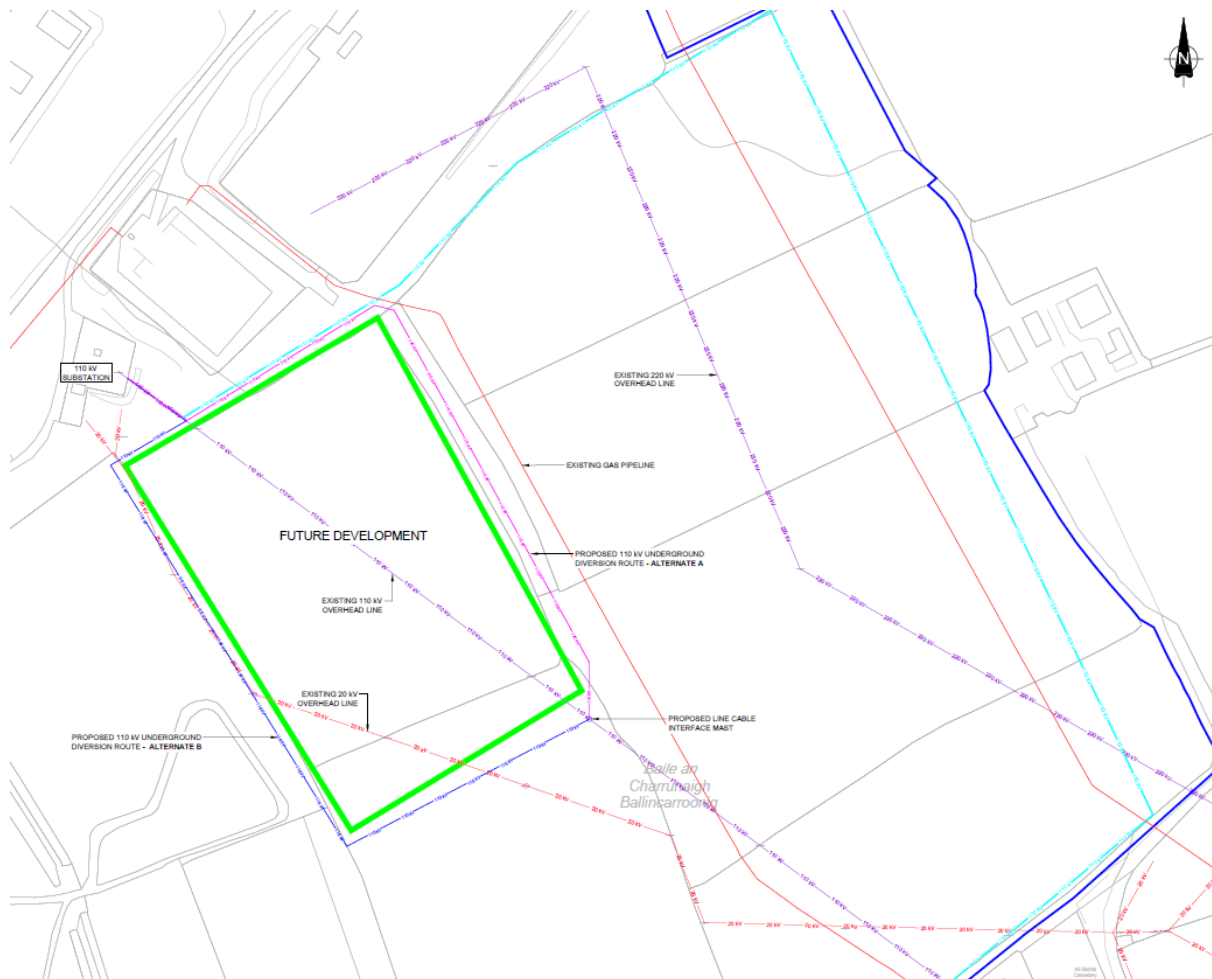


Figure 5-1 110kV line diversion alternatives in context of subject site for future development (Extracted from drawing: P000491-CE21-01-0041-001-000 - 110 kV Diversion ACP)

5.2 Need for the development

The expansion and enhancement of Ireland's electricity transmission and storage network is crucial to delivery of Ireland's Climate Action Plan and net zero by 2050 initiative. As part of ESB's parallel ambition of Net Zero by 2040. The proposed diversion of the lines will clear the lands they cross allowing for their development, subject to planning approval, as an energy scheme complementing the surrounding lands uses and optimising the use of the land in this energy zone.

6.0 Opinion on SID

6.1 Definition of Strategic Infrastructure Development

The 7th Schedule to the 2000 Act (as amended) lists the classes of infrastructure development which, require direct application for permission to An Coimisiún Pleánala as Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID). To qualify as SID, a proposed development must first come within the scope of one or more of the classes and comply with the thresholds contained in the 7th Schedule,

We consider the key elements of the development proposal in the context of the 7th schedule classes and the thresholds for SID below.

- is of strategic economic or social importance to the State or the region in which it would be situate,
- would contribute substantially to the fulfilment of any of the objectives of the National Planning Framework or in any regional spatial and economic strategy in respect of the area or areas in which the development would be situate,
- would have a significant effect on the area of more than one planning authority.

Additionally, 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 182 and shall apply to the Board 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 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, provides that before a person (prospective applicant) applies for approval for strategic infrastructure electricity transmission development, he/she shall enter into consultations with the Board in relation to the proposed development. The Coimisiún will advise on whether or not the development is strategic infrastructure development.

6.2 Proposed Development at Aghada

The proposed scheme includes proposed diversion alternatives for a 110 kV circuit overhead transmission line, to enable the future development on site for energy purposes. The overhead line will be diverted as part of the proposed future energy development.

The indicative diversion routes have been shown on Figure 5.1. The final route and details will be agreed with EirGrid / ESB Networks during detailed design. **The question as to whether the proposed scheme is SID arises solely in relation to the proposed diversion of 110 kV overhead line.**

We consider that the proposed diversion of overhead line does not constitute Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID). It is not a new development; rather, it involves the diversion of existing overhead lines. The proposed works will not have impacts on the route of the line and its voltage and capacity will remain unchanged – it is a minor diversion of an existing section of transmission line. Therefore, we contend that the proposal falls outside the scope of Section 182A of the Planning Act, and a planning application should, in the first instance, be made to the local planning authority.

However, in order to proceed with the planning application for the forthcoming development of the lands for energy purposes, we would appreciate confirmation, by way of a determination from ACP, that the diversion of the overhead lines does not constitute SID.

The following table outlines relevant “Not SID” determinations made by the ACP during the pre-application consultations and which relate to amendments, additions, replacement, and expansion of electricity infrastructure. **The established precedent provides the support to the determination that the proposed scheme is not SID.**

Table 6-1 Pre-Application Consultation History

Reg. Ref.	Location	Development Description	Date	Decision
314767	Dublin	Upgrading of the existing Poolbeg 200kV electrical substation	2023	Not SID
314111	Meath	Upgrading of the existing Woodland 400/200kV electrical substation	2022	Not SID
313964	Kildare	Proposed redevelopment of the existing Maynooth 220kV / 110kV electrical substation	2022	Not SID
313227	Kildare	Proposed diversion of the existing Maynooth-Ryebrook 110kV circuit, along the eastern edge of the site at Collinstown linking back into the OHL section at Lidl at Intel Campus in Leixlip	2022	Not SID
311950	Mayo	Modification and upgrade of the Dalton 110 kV substation	2021	Not SID

Reg. Ref.	Location	Development Description	Date	Decision
311253	Galway & Roscommon	Refurbishment of the 220kV circuit between Cashla 220kV substation in and Flagford 220kv substation	2021	Not SID
310830	Mayo & Galway	Uprate of the 11 0kV circuit between Castlebar 11 0kV substation in Co. Mayo and Cloon 11 0kv substation in Co. Galway.	2021	Not SID
309446	Donegal	Uprating of 11 0kV circuit between Bin bane 11 0kV substation and Cathaleen's Fall 110 kV station, Co. Donegal.	2021	Not SID
311253	Galway & Roscommon	Refurbishment of the 220kV circuit between Cashla 220kV substation in and Flagford 220kv substation.	2021	Not SID
305276	Wexford	Refurbishment works to the existing Great Island - Kellis 220 kV Line	2019	Not SID
VC0108	Kilkenny	Uprate and refurbishment of the existing Great Island - Kilkenny 110kV Overhead Line substation in Co. Wexford & Co. Kilkenny	2018	Not SID
VC0106	Galway	Refurbishment of the existing Cloon to Lanesboro 110kV Overhead Line	2017	Not SID

SID pre-application consultation (ABP-313227-22)

The pre-application consultation precedents referenced above include a Section 182E request for SID pre-application consultation (ABP-313227-22) which relates to a scheme comprising the diversion of the Maynooth–Ryebrook 110 kV overhead transmission line along the eastern boundary of the Collinstown site, reconnecting with the OHL section at Lidl at the Intel Campus, Leixlip, Co. Kildare. **This case is directly comparable to the proposed diversion of overhead lines to facilitate the proposed BESS at Aghada, the subject of this SID determination request.**

An Bord Pleanála, on 14 June 2022, after considering the inspectors report determined that the scheme (ABP-313227-22), falls outside the scope of Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and that a planning application should, in the first instance, be made to Kildare County Council. The inspector report notes the following:

“7.2- The Board will note, in making decisions on strategic infrastructure pre-application consultation requests under section 182E in relation to works to electricity transmission infrastructure of a relatively minor nature, and in the context of the lack of clarity in the interpretation of section 182A, that it has exercised some discretion. Specifically, it has referenced the broad definition of the Strategic Infrastructure Act, developments of strategic importance to the State, and the criteria contained in section 37(A)(2) to determine such matters (noting

that these criteria are not expressly cited for cases coming forward under s.182A). While the Intel facility may be of strategic importance the proposed development in itself would not in my opinion be strategic as it comprises a minor amendment to the transmission network to divert an existing line with no strategic gain to the network itself.

“7.4- Having regard to the stated purpose of the 2006 Act as set out in the long title and the general description and scale of strategic infrastructure development set out in section 37A(2), I consider that the proposed development as described, comprising a minor diversion of an existing section of transmission line, would not constitute strategic infrastructure. I conclude, therefore, that it does 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.”

Accordingly, having regard to this established precedent and for the reasons and justifications set out within this section, we respectfully request a determination from the Coimisiún that the proposed scheme described in this planning statement is not classified as SID.

7.0 Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is our considered opinion that the proposed development does not constitute strategic infrastructure as it does not fall within the scope of section 182A of the 2000 Act, as amended.

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