

Meeting held in County Hall with representatives from ESB on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 14.30

In attendance:

Brendan Allen (BA) – Planning Team Leader ESB Engineering and Major Projects [ESB EMP]

Rose Walsh (RW)– Environmental Team Leader ESB EMP

Ciaran Hughes (CH) – ESB Networks Project Manager

Willie O’Dwyer (WO’D) – ESB Networks Project Engineer

Angela McEvoy (AMC), Simon Walton (SW) & John Ozenbrook (JO) – Laois County Council

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AMC opened the meeting and outlined concerns from residents and the local community regarding the Eirgrid site – particularly in relation to the 300,000 litres of oil.

The agenda for the meeting was agreed to be as per the letter sent on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022 by Mr. Simon Walton (copy attached).

CH provided an update on the project progress and stated that construction works completed to-date on the 400/110kv sub-station site were enabling works. Those enabling works are now complete and further works on the sub-station site will commence in late July/August 2022, subject to tender award.

In the meantime, road construction works, from the public road network to the 400/110 kv sub-station site, have recently commenced and will continue for about 2 months. A meeting had taken place with Laois County Council Area Engineer to discuss these works in early April, in particular the interface of the permitted access road and the public road.

It was noted that there were some outstanding drainage/culvert issues to be resolved/agreed. SW to engage with THE Area Engineer and ESB regarding same.

### **1. Ecological Clerk of Works**

BA advised that IE Consulting have been monitoring all the works to date in addition to EMP staff, including the EMP ecologist. AMC asked for a flow chart of the reporting from the Ecological Clerk of Works and Auditing Oversight to be submitted to the Council.

CH confirmed that groundwater monitoring has been undertaken in December 2021, and pH levels were being monitored on discharge point from filtrations units being used on site. BA will submit the monitoring results to Laois County Council.

Furthermore, BA will confirm contact details for Ecological Clerk(s) of Works for the duration of the main contract, when available.

### **2. Surface and Ground Water Monitoring**

In addition to the round of groundwater monitoring undertaken in December 2021, BA/CH confirmed that IE Consulting will be undertaking monitoring of the surface and ground water on behalf of ESB throughout the construction phase. SW asked about water monitoring during

the construction phase. BA advised that monitoring will be ongoing throughout the construction phase and that monitoring results will be provided to LCC. Any monitoring during operational phases will fall within ESBs Environmental Management System [EMS] which is a companywide EMS with standard operational procedures.

SW spoke of Kyle Spring and that LCC analyse the drinking water quality all over the area and not just the Spring each month. No adverse impacts on drinking water quality have been observed. Nonetheless, in accordance with monitoring commitments provided in the EIS, a surface and groundwater monitoring programme is to be provided as soon as possible. It was agreed that a surface water and ground water monitoring programme will be submitted to Laois County Council.

Furthermore, BA/RW advised that ESB will respond to SW letter by Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April.

### **3. Transformer Structures**

Laois County Council sought specific details regarding Transformer Structures together with responses to the various issues raised regarding same in Laois County Council correspondence dated 16th March 2022.

SW requested the construction details of the transformers, - how they will be built and constructed etc.

CH confirmed that the transformers contract has yet to be awarded but that specific details would be provided as soon as that contract is awarded.

Laois County Council highlighted that these details, including details of structures to house/support transformers, must comply with the commitments set out in the EIS and further provided for by way of planning conditions.

CH confirmed that bund integrity tests are undertaken by a suitably qualified Engineer on all new transformer bunds as part of ESB QA process.

CH advised that ESB use a Scada system which monitors temperature, loss of oil and any faults which may occur on site. He also noted that ENVA or similar manage and dispose of any waste material arising at/from the site.

BA advised that, in the Operational Phase, transformers are monitored through the SCADA system. Each station also has a supervisor. Standard practice is periodic in person inspections as per ESBs EMS.

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CH showed SW a photo of the proposed building and explained it in detail to him.

### **Concluding comments**

AMC asked what the timelines are looking like for completion of works.

BA advised that it would be August before the main work would begin, subject to tender award and the total build time for the Transformer Sub Station would be circa three years.

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AMC advised that Yvonne O'Reilly (LCC Enforcement) will be out on site frequently to check that work is in compliance.

Laois County Council requested ESB to consider the following:

- An independent peer review of the mitigation measures set out in the Environmental Impact Statement – ESB suggested that in order to maintain independence this might best be done by a consultant commissioned by LCC with ESB paying agreed costs back to LCC (this is a model being used on an ESB windfarm under construction in Mayo).
- That a HDPE liner be introduced as part of the development to the circa 500 sq. m. area beneath to transformer structures.

The meeting ended at 15.45.