

29 May 2009

EirGrid evening meetings now available

PEOPLE will now be able to hold evening meetings with EirGrid at local information centres following the introduction of new opening hours.

The new arrangements have been prompted by requests from the public and the centres will now open from 1pm until 7pm every Tuesday in Navan, and from 1pm until 7pm every Wednesday in Carrickmacross.

Tomás Mahony, EirGrid Project Engineer, said: "Following the announcement of the preferred route corridors in April we have received many requests for later appointments and we are responding by expanding our meeting schedule into the evening. People therefore can call into the centres at a time that is more convenient for them, or, if they are seeking specific information, we would urge them to call a few days ahead to make an appointment, as this will ensure the right experts are available to deal with specific issues at a time that suits."

EirGrid has written to landowners inviting them to meet and there has been a good response, with many looking to set up appointments. Those who have engaged with the Project Team to date have discussed the issues and benefits that relate to the projects and have been in a strong position to suggest possible mitigation options that may be available.

"EirGrid appreciates the input of all stakeholders and is still in the process of examining many issues which have been highlighted for us. Once all relevant studies, including the Environmental Impact Statement, are completed and all issues addressed, EirGrid will bring the final line routes to An Bord Pleanála.

"The route corridors we announced last month were first highlighted in May 2008 by our consultants as their emerging preferred corridors. At that point, we told the public of our consultants' recommendations and that more detailed studies would have to be done before they could be accepted by EirGrid.

"This is a very important time for stakeholders, particularly landowners, and we're providing an opportunity to engage with EirGrid on a one-to-one basis so people can find out more and have an opportunity to influence how the project develops," Tomas added.

EirGrid Navan information centre is on 046 9027855 or meathcavanpower@eirgrid.com, while Carrickmacross information centre is available on 042 969 0000 or 042 969 001 or by emailing CavanTyroneInterconnector@EirGrid.com

There is also a lo-call number 1890 25 26 90, where people can get further information.

EirGrid Information Centres – most frequent recent questions

- **Preferred Route Corridor** - At the start of April, EirGrid nominated one preferred route corridor for each power line project for further study following a review of all project documentation, including consultants' studies, reports and consultation feedback. Detailed studies will now focus on Route Corridor 3B, for the Meath-Cavan line, and Route Corridor A for the Cavan-Tyrone line. Each preferred route corridor strikes the best balance between the competing priorities of community concerns, environmental issues and the technical aspects of the project. The preferred route corridors announced last month, were first highlighted in May 2008 by EirGrid's consultants as the most likely emerging corridors. At that point, EirGrid told the public of the consultants' recommendations and that more detailed studies would have to be done to examine their findings.

- **Undergrounding** - EirGrid and Northern Ireland Electricity commissioned their own study into undergrounding, as well as asking teams of foreign experts to review all the other relevant reports. At the moment, EirGrid believes overhead power lines are the best solution for the projects. Putting lines of these lengths and size underground has never been attempted before anywhere in the world and to attempt to do so for these projects would be, at best, an unacceptable experiment which would jeopardise electricity supplies to the north-east and hamper development in the area.

- **Electromagnetic fields (EMFs)** - Extensive worldwide research costing over €440 million has found no conclusive evidence that extremely low frequency EMFs from power lines are harmful to health.

-ENDS-

For further information contact Eimear Fitzpatrick on 01 709 8001 or 087 413 9387