

EirGrid Publishes Report on Underground Cables on Railway Lines

July 31 - EirGrid has published a report examining the viability of placing an underground cable along disused railway lines, where present, running through Meath, Cavan, Monaghan and on into Northern Ireland.

The report was commissioned as part of the consultation process for the two 400kV North East projects. During the consultation process there were suggestions from stakeholders that disused railway lines could be used to provide a route for an underground cable.

The report finds that co-location of transmission cables and rail to be unfavourable in terms of ongoing security of the electricity transmission system and the arrangements necessary in the event of major accidents or faults.

The report states that the selection of a rail bed route would direct a cable route at a series of obstacles, such as bridge abutments and narrow, steep-sided embankments and cuts, which would have to be severely modified.

It also found that legacy structures of the old railway would also have to be modified, removed or avoided.

The issues raised in the study were discussed with Iarnród Éireann and comments made by Iarnród Éireann have been incorporated in the report.

Commenting on the report, Tomás Mahony, EirGrid project manager, said: "The report concludes that the underground route corridor independently identified by Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB Power) earlier this year has significant advantages to that presented by attempting to make use of existing rail beds.

"Furthermore, it must be noted that the Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB Power) report found that the overhead line option is superior to the underground option based on a balanced assessment on economic, technical, reliability, security, and environmental grounds."

The report notes that the section of rail from Dunboyne to Navan is to be re-opened. It says that joint rail and cable works would require additional land and would severely impact on the development and operation of both projects. This would impose additional costs, risks, and unacceptable constraints.

It also notes that there is significant interest in reopening the Navan to Kingscourt, Cavan rail line.

Ends

The report *Locating 400kV Cables in or Adjacent to Rail Beds* is available on the EirGrid website - www.eirgrid.com