



Kildare-Meath Grid Upgrade

**Capital Project 966
Step 4 Consultation Update
March 2022**



Delivering a cleaner energy future

Who are EirGrid – and what do we do?

EirGrid is responsible for the safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity – now and in the future.

We develop, manage and operate the electricity transmission grid. This grid brings power from where it is generated to where it is needed throughout Ireland. We use the grid to supply power to industry and businesses that use large amounts of electricity. The grid also powers the distribution network and supplies the electricity you use every day in homes, businesses, schools, hospitals and farms.

Key findings in this update.

This update is for you as stakeholders, communities, landowners and members of the public interested in keeping up to date about the Kildare-Meath Grid Upgrade. This document provides information about what this project is and the outcome of our recent public consultation on four route options which took place from August 31, 2021 to November 22, 2021.

During this consultation, we invited stakeholders to provide feedback on a shortlist of four route options for the Kildare-Meath Grid Upgrade. **Based on our assessments and your feedback to date, we have identified Option A: The Red Option as the emerging best performing option. We will now bring this to the next step of the project.**

We will continue to engage with landowners, community and statutory stakeholders, and expect to confirm a best performing route in June 2022.

This document provides information on the project to date, including:

- What is the Kildare-Meath Grid Upgrade;
- Our six-step approach to developing the electricity grid;
- What has happened in this project so far;
- The refined study area;
- What underground cable construction looks like;
- Next steps and how to keep up to date.



What is the Kildare-Meath Grid Upgrade?

The Kildare-Meath Grid Upgrade will add a high-capacity, underground electricity connection between Dunstown substation in County Kildare and Woodland substation in County Meath.

The upgrade will help to:

- transfer power more efficiently from the south and south west of Ireland, including from offshore renewable sources, to the east of the country; and
- distribute that power within the electricity network in Meath, Kildare and surrounding counties.

The project is essential to enable further development of renewable energy generation in line with Government policy of having at least 70% and up to 80% of electricity coming from renewable sources by 2030. This includes transporting electricity from offshore renewable sources.

The project will also help meet the growing demand for electricity in the east. This growth is due to increased economic activity in Kildare, Meath and Dublin.

Benefits



Competition

Apply downward pressure on the cost of electricity.



Sustainability

Help facilitate Ireland's transition to a low carbon energy future.



Security of Supply

Improve electricity supply for Ireland's electricity consumers.



Economic

Contribute to the regional economy and support foreign direct investment.



Community

Deliver community benefit in the areas that facilitate the project infrastructure.

What is our six-step approach to developing the electricity grid?

We have a six-step approach to gathering and understanding your and other stakeholders' views during this process. Our 'Have Your Say' publication outlines our renewed commitment to engage with, and listen to, stakeholders.

Our 'Public Engagement Strategy' publication reinforces our commitment to engaging with our stakeholders in the development of projects like this. You can get a copy of both publications at www.eirgrid.ie



Figure 1: Our six-step approach to developing the electricity grid

This project is currently in Step 4. By June, we will have identified where we propose to build the underground electricity cables.

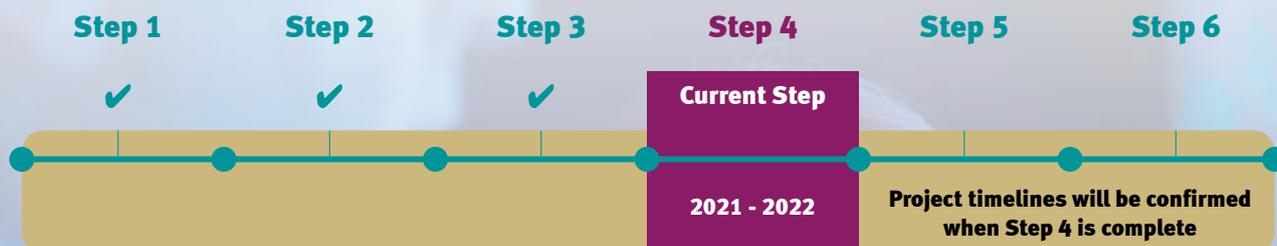


Figure 2: Our six-step timeline for the Kildare-Meath Grid Upgrade

What has happened so far?

In **Step 1**, we identified the need for the Kildare-Meath Grid Upgrade.

In **Step 2**, we compiled a shortlist of best performing technical options, which went out for public consultation between November 2018 and February 2019. These options included a mix of overhead line, underground cable and upvoltage technologies (increasing voltage capacity). Four of those options were taken forward to Step 3 in April 2019.

In **Step 3**, we identified that one of the shortlisted technology options could be done in two different ways. For this reason, we had five options. We investigated and consulted with you on the shortlisted technology options to strengthen the electricity network between Dunstown and Woodland. In April 2021, we identified the 400 kV underground cable option as the best performing option to progress for this project.

As part of **Step 4**, we identified four potential underground cable route options and consulted with you, our stakeholders on these.

Step 4 Consultation

As part of this step we committed to reaching a number of milestones, including:

Commitment we made:	Action we took:
Consult with you on the four route options proposed for this project	We undertook a 12-week public consultation period from August 31 to November 22 2021.
Publish a Consultation Report on the feedback we received during our 12 week public consultation from August to November 2021	The Consultation Report is published on our website, which can be located at www.eirgrid.ie/KildareMeath
Announce an emerging best performing route option in Summer 2022 and consult locally with stakeholders on this.	This Consultation Update brochure and the detailed 4A multi-criteria assessment report both outline our findings to date, determining the emerging best performing option. Both of these report can be located at www.eirgrid.ie/KildareMeath
As further studies and engagement continues, we will be in a position to announce the best performing option in Summer 2022. This step will not include applying for planning permission. This will be completed in Step 5.	

Step 4 Studies and Assessment Criteria

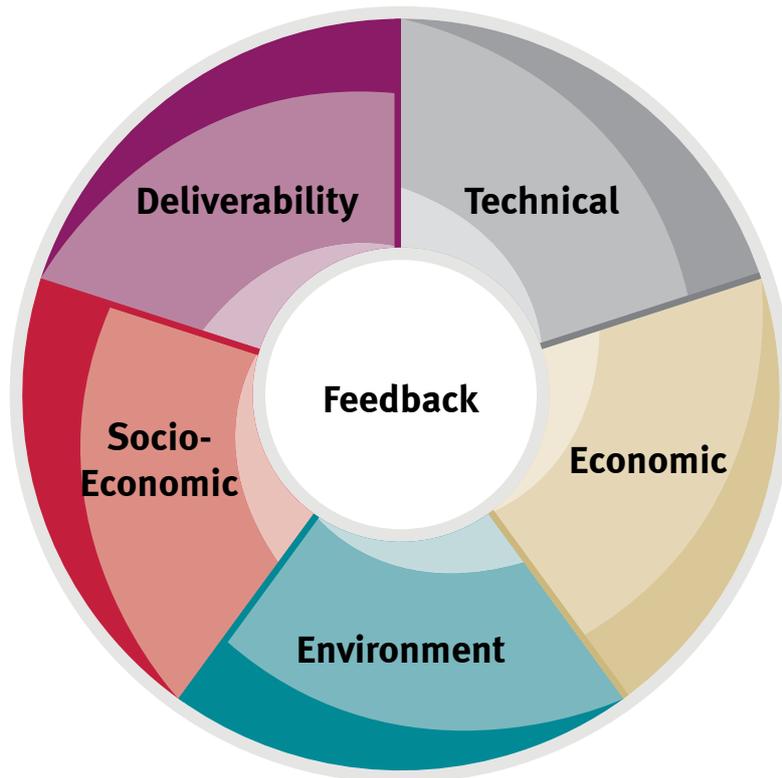


Figure 3: The five categories we use to assess options with your feedback

As part of Step 4, we are continuing with further investigations, building on those we completed in Steps 1, 2 and 3. We are assessing and comparing these investigations under five categories:

- 1. Technical aspects;
- 2. Economic factors;
- 3. Environmental factors;
- 4. Socio-economic factors, and
- 5. Deliverability factors

The responses to the Step 4 consultation allowed us to understand the concerns people raised, and to assess new information about the four proposed options.

We carefully considered this information, alongside our analysis when deciding which of the four proposed options to take forward.

Respondents raised some common concerns:

- Traffic / access;
- Impact on people and communities;
- Positioning of the route;
- Undergrounding of the 400kV cable;
- Environmental and wildlife impacts;
- Deliverability of the project, and
- Consistency of electricity supply.

What is the refined study area?

This is the refined area within which the underground cable for the Kildare-Meath Grid Upgrade is expected to be built. The current study area is outlined by the red dashed line in Figure 4.

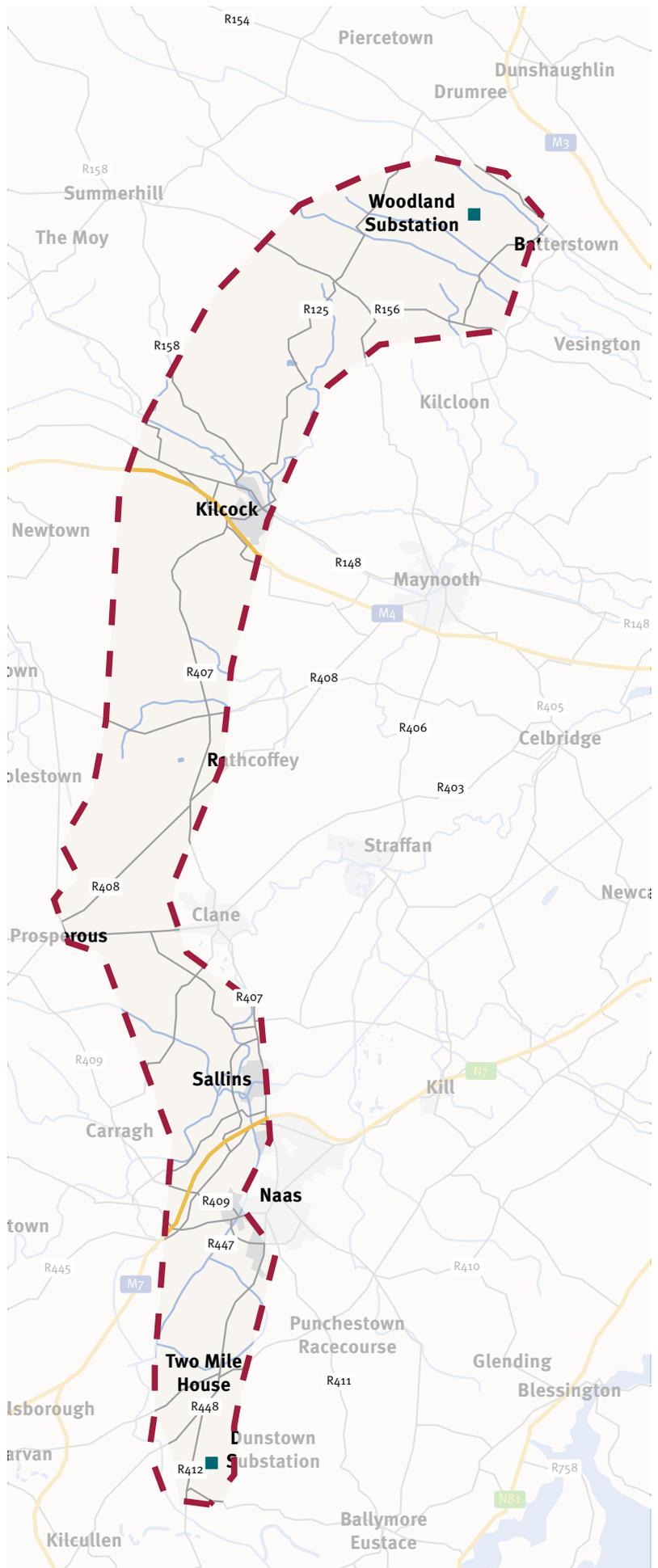
When planning routes, we follow a set of guidelines called routing principles. To recap, our routing principles for this project, where possible, are to:

- Avoid motorways;
- Maximise the use of national, regional and local roads;
- Avoid town centres and industrial estates;
- Avoid going off-road, through private land and through agricultural land where possible;
- Avoid sensitive natural and built heritage locations;
- Minimise impact on communities where possible; and
- Minimise the overall length of the route.

We also consider constraints. Examples of constraints are:

- The width and quality of the road;
- Other services in the road such as water, gas and drainage;
- Impact on the environment including European and national protected areas for biodiversity, invasive and protected species and other important biodiversity areas (including undesignated habitats);
- City and County Development Plans and Local Area Plans; and
- Areas of high amenity and ongoing works.

Figure 4: The study area



The Emerging Best Performing Option: The Red Route, in more detail

The emerging best performing option is Option A: The Red Option.

The route, shown as a red line on these maps, follows the existing roads. The wider rectangular sections represent indicative areas where we are seeking to confirm an off-road route. Engagement with landowners in these locations is ongoing.

From Woodland, Option A would travel north west along the R156 towards the Mullagh Crossroads. It would travel south along the R156, R125, and R158 towards Kilcock. Option A would pass to the west of the village of Kilcock and a potential off-road corridor is shown on the route map.

The route will need to cross:

- the Rye Water,
- the Dublin-Sligo railway line, and
- the Royal Canal,
- the M4 Motorway.

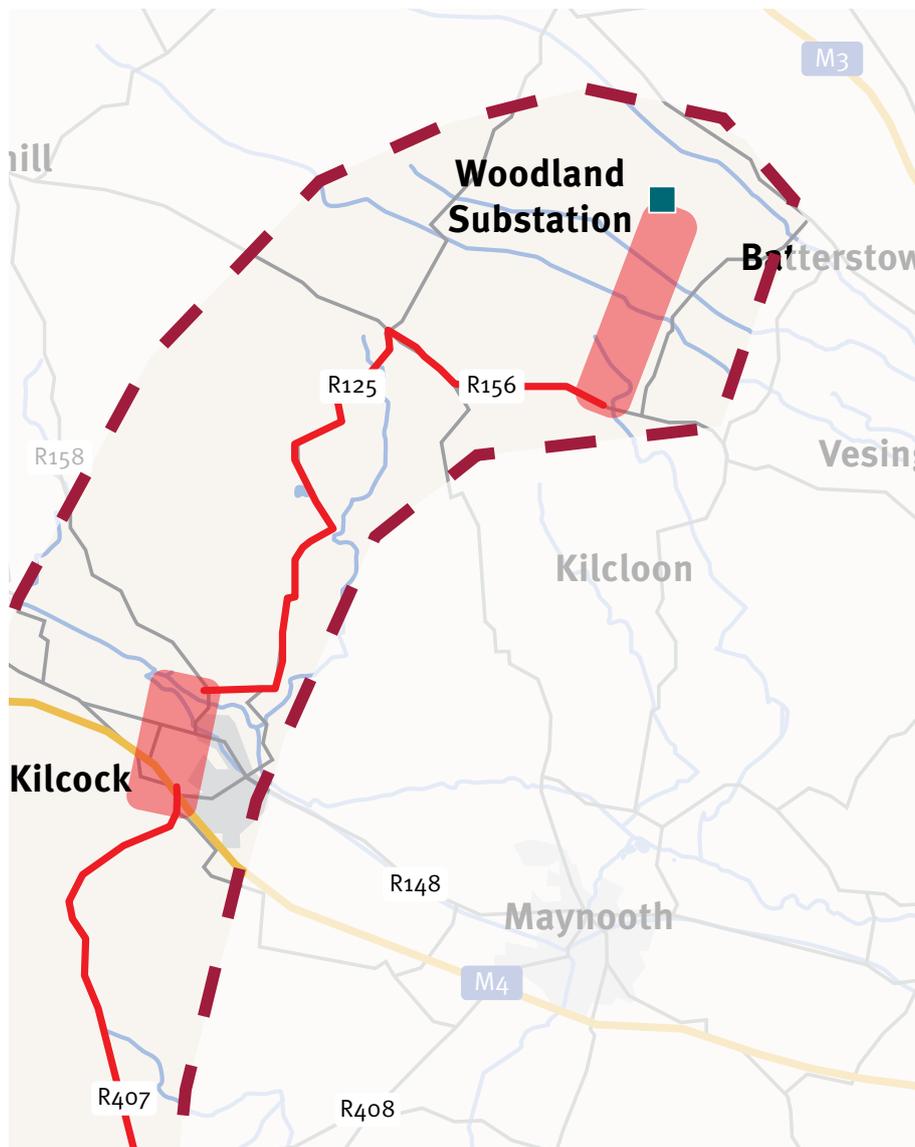


Figure 5: Woodland to Kilcock

The Emerging Best Performing Option in more detail

To the south of Kilcock, Option A is proposed to travel to the south along the R407 towards Clane, passing by Rathcoffey. To the north of Clane at the Boherhole Crossroads, it is proposed to take Option A to the west to avoid Clane.

Option A will travel along the R408, the road to Prosperous. Close to the townland of The Cott, it is proposed to route the cable across agricultural land to the south east of the R408 so that the route can continue to travel to the south towards the Dunstown substation.

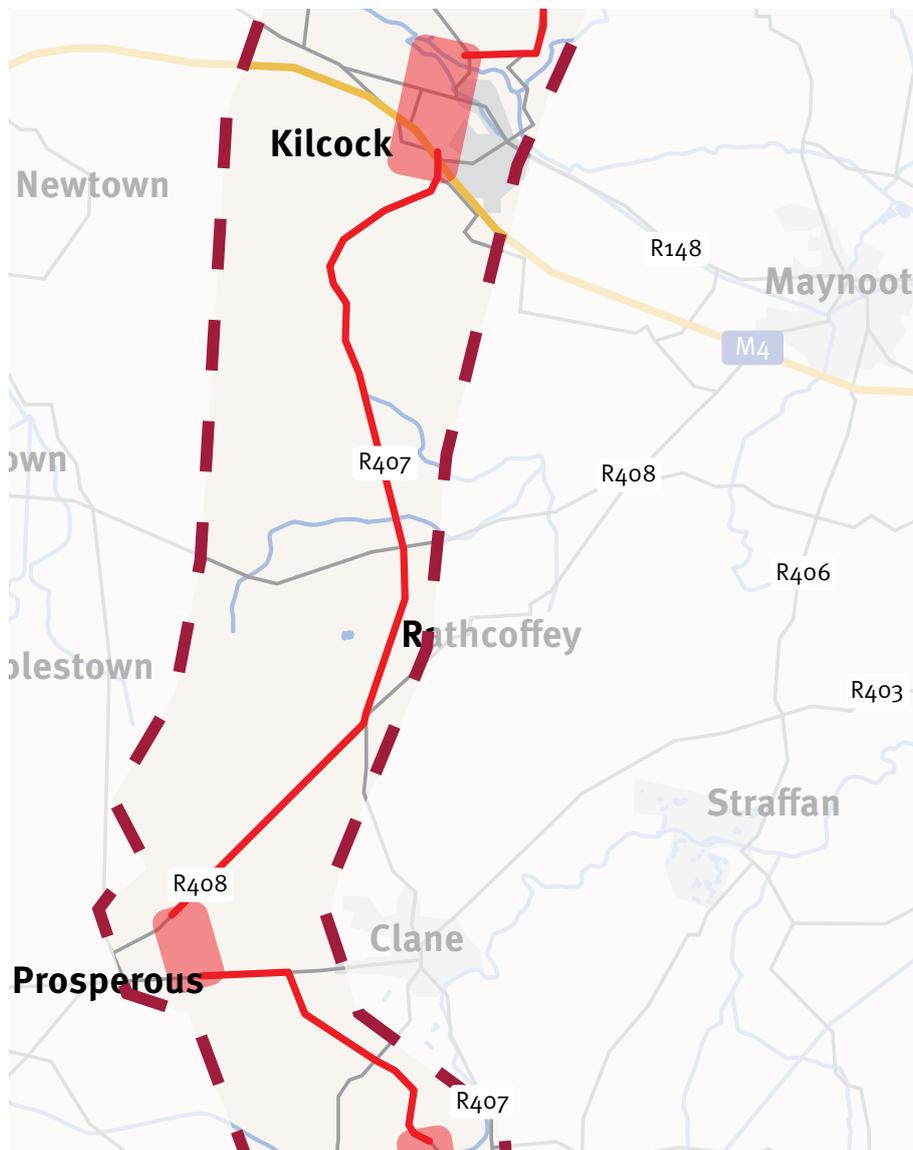


Figure 6: Kilcock to Clane

The Emerging Best Performing Option in more detail

Option A will travel south to the Sallins Bypass where a potential off-road corridor is shown for a crossing of agricultural land.

Along the Sallins Bypass, Option A will cross:

- the River Liffey,
- Dublin-Cork (and others) railway line,
- the Grand Canal, and
- the M7 Motorway (potential off-road corridor).

After crossing under the M7 Motorway, Option A will travel along the Millennium Link Road, travelling to the west around Naas.

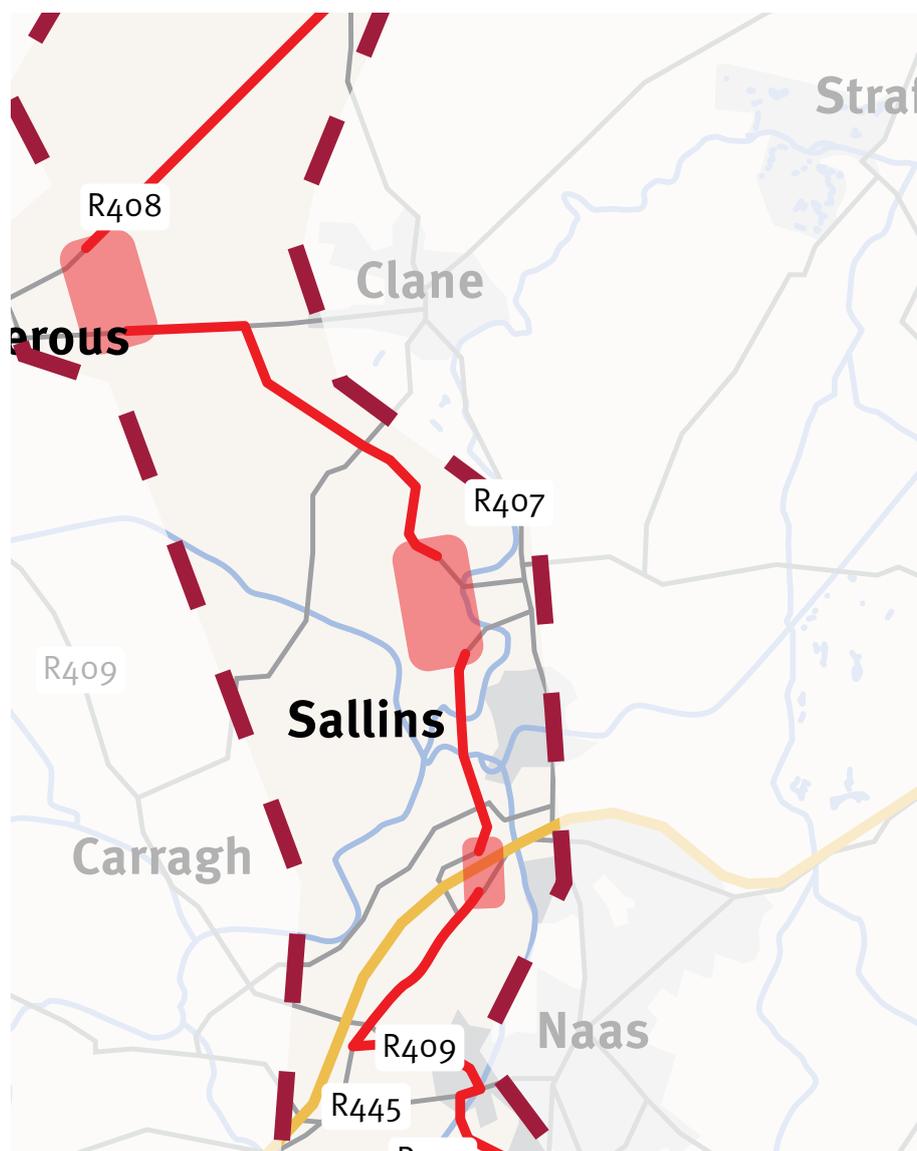


Figure 7: Clane to Naas

The Emerging Best Performing Option in more detail

Option A will connect with the R409 and travel east towards Naas, passing the Naas Sports Centre and across the Grand Canal. The cable route then travels along the R445 and the R447 (South Ring Road).

Option A connects with the R448 (Kilcullen Road) and then travels into the Dunstown substation.

We are now engaging further with landowners and communities before we confirm a best performing route in June 2022.

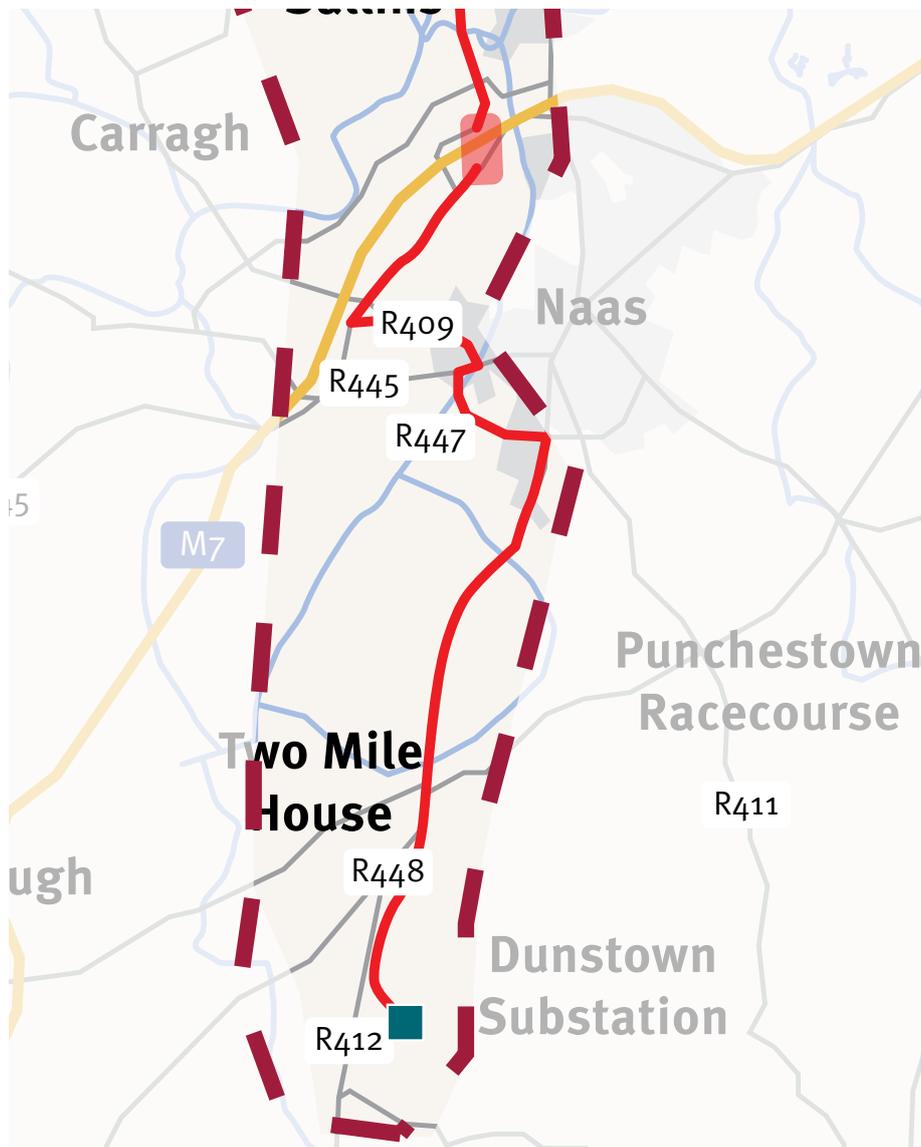


Figure 8: Naas to Dunstown.

What is a 400kV underground cable?

Before our Step 4 public consultation, we published our Step 4 Consultation Brochure. This brochure described the 400kV cable technology which we will be using in the project. This brochure can be located at www.eirgrid.ie/kildaremeath.

To recap here, we will use High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) for this project. This form of electricity transmission is used internationally in electricity networks and in Ireland. Our studies have determined that a 400 kV Underground Cable between Woodland and Dunstown substations is most suitable for this project. Figure 9 provides an indicative overview of what a typical underground cable arrangement would look like.

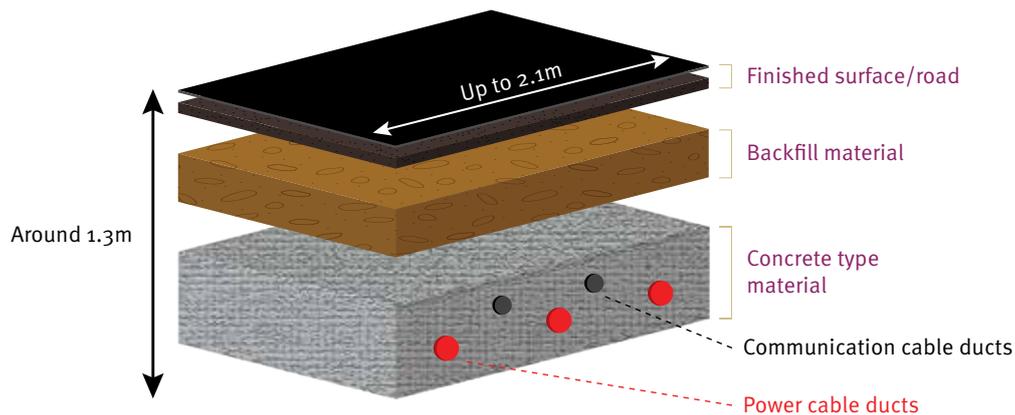


Figure 9: Typical HVAC underground cable duct arrangement

Further information about underground cable construction and what it looks like can be found in the Kildare-Meath Grid Upgrade Step 4 Consultation Brochure, located in the related documents section here www.eirgrid.ie/kildaremeath.

Kildare-Meath Grid Upgrade Community Forum

The Kildare-Meath Grid Upgrade Community Forum offers advice to us on key project developments such as:

- how we communicate and engage with the public;
- what we need to consider in developing the project;
- how we can deliver meaningful community benefit to the area where our infrastructure is hosted.

This is an advisory forum and does not replace any other engagement and consultation we carry out.

The Community Forum is facilitated by Development Perspectives, an independent Development Education non-governmental organisation (NGO) and registered charity. It has met a total of seven times since its first meeting on July 14, 2021. The forum continues to meet regularly to provide feedback, for project updates and to ensure two-way communication is on-going.

To be kept informed of forum activity, visit our website www.eirgrid.ie/KildareMeath.



Community Benefit

We recognise the importance of local communities and businesses who facilitate the upgrading of the electricity transmission network and the Community Benefit Fund reflects this.

While the Kildare-Meath Grid Upgrade is being built, we will work to support communities as part of our community benefit policy.

A dedicated fund for Kildare Meath Grid Development will be made available to provide direct benefits to communities who are closest to new transmission infrastructure. These funds, which are proportional to the scale of the project, support local good causes, help communities transform their area, and provide the opportunity to each community to become or remain a ‘sustainable energy community’. The overall aim is to leave a positive legacy in the communities hosting electrical infrastructure.

The community benefit scheme becomes live once a project receives planning permission.

The Kildare Meath Community Forum will lead the development of the community benefit project strategy. This will be agreed before the community benefit funding is released.

EirGrid will appoint an independent body, to administer the fund on its behalf and work with the Community Forum.

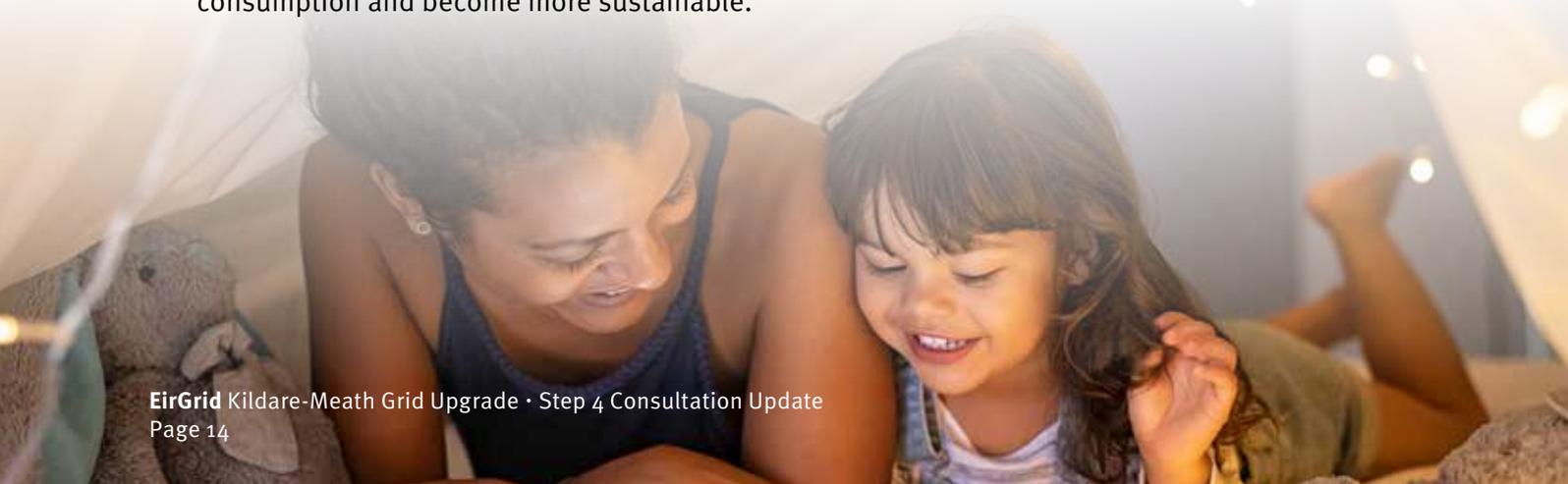
This fund will be released in 3 phases, which align with the development of the infrastructure:

Phase	Percentage
1 - Construction	40%
2 - Cable installation	30%
3 - Energisation	30%

These funds will provide support to local community groups, not-for-profit organisations and social enterprises that operate or service communities near the new infrastructure.

Examples of Projects include:

- Heritage projects like supporting a historical or archaeological association;
- Community projects like walkways or support for retrofitting of local community halls;
- Education initiatives like IT equipment to enhance digital learning;
- Environmental initiatives like installing beehives;
- Youth facilities like a playground;
- Sports facilities like equipment or a playing pitch, or supporting sporting groups to reduce energy consumption and become more sustainable.



What are the next steps and how to keep up to date?

Step 1 Completed identifying needs of the grid.

Step 2 Completed identifying the technologies that can meet these needs.

Step 3 What's the best option and what area may be affected?

Step 4 Where exactly should we build?

Step 5 Apply for planning permission.

Step 6 Construct, energise (make live), and share benefits.

Step 4 At a glance

What's happening?

Following public consultation on four proposed route options to upgrade the electricity grid between Kildare and Meath, we have identified and are announcing the emerging best performing option – **Option A: The Red Route.**

This route is approximately 51km in length with an estimated off-road section of five kilometres.

How long will this take?

Step 4 will take us to the end of June 2022.

Until then, we will continue to:

- engage with residents, landowners, community groups and other stakeholders from the Red Route study area;
- carry out more technical studies and onsite investigations; and
- engage with local authorities, elected representatives, specialist representative groups, and environmental and planning agencies.

You can get involved in many different ways:

- ask for more information,
- share your views,
- register to receive update emails, or
- give feedback on this project.

Just get in touch:

- www.eirgrid.ie/KildareMeath,
- KildareMeath@eirgrid.com, or
- contact your local Community Liaison Officer, Eoghan O'Sullivan, on 087 247 7732.



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