

## Do community forums make a difference?

Yes. Community forums can make a difference in how grid projects are designed, located, and delivered. The planning of routes for EirGrid infrastructure projects has been greatly supported by community forums across the country, helping EirGrid find solutions that minimise disruption.

For example, in South Dublin, members of a residents' association joined the forum and attended a participatory workshop that allowed them to actively engage with EirGrid engineers. Their local knowledge and connections resulted in rerouting a section of electricity cabling off the public road and through sporting amenity lands with landowner cooperation.

In Kildare, some community members were initially concerned over the project and the impact it would have on their area. They were invited to join the forum and to work with EirGrid to find deliverable solutions and continue to remain part of the forum, helping to develop the community benefit strategy for their area.

Forum members on the Celtic Interconnector project have been instrumental in the design and delivering of the community benefit strategy.

## What does participation on a community forum involve?

Community forums aim to meet regularly to ensure two-way communication is ongoing throughout project planning and delivery. On average, a forum meets 3-4 times a year in line with project milestones. Unless otherwise agreed, meetings take place in the evening and last no longer than two hours. They may take place in person or online, depending on the forum preferences.

We were kept informed so there wasn't a need for rumours, speculation or nervousness because the journey and the updates were very clearly given throughout the whole project.

- Kildare Meath Community Forum Member

The provision of a non-technical summary report on the reasons for the selection of the Emerging Best Performing Route is very important to make this information accessible to as many people as possible.

- East Meath North Dublin Community Forum Member

It is important to EirGrid that everyone participating in a community forum is respected and feels comfortable sharing their views. On establishment of a community forum, the terms of reference are agreed with the forum facilitator and forum members and is reviewed annually.

Forums are chaired by an independent facilitator whose role is to ensure the independence and integrity of the forum throughout grid development projects. They are responsible for communicating with forum members, arranging meetings, facilitating sessions, minute taking and capturing feedback to share with EirGrid. For full transparency, forum meeting minutes are shared on EirGrid's website.

## How do I join a community forum?

If you or your organisation is interested in getting involved in a forum, please visit our current project list at [eirgrid.ie](http://eirgrid.ie) where you will find the relevant projects and Community Liaison Officer details. When we are establishing new projects we will host public information events in the region, and our Community Liaison Officers will be on the ground engaging with community groups and local residents. We will open an expression of interest form where community groups can express an interest in joining a forum. Depending on the level of interest, there may be a public nomination period where community groups are asked to nominate an individual to participate.

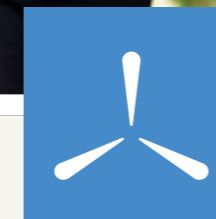
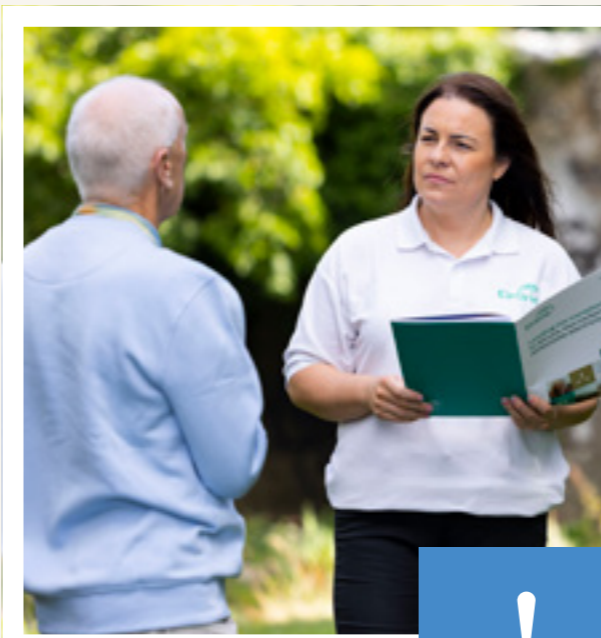
More information

For more information about community forums, visit:

<https://www.eirgrid.ie/community/engaging-public>

We felt that we were listened to, and our suggestion was taken on board. Now, that's the option EirGrid are going with.

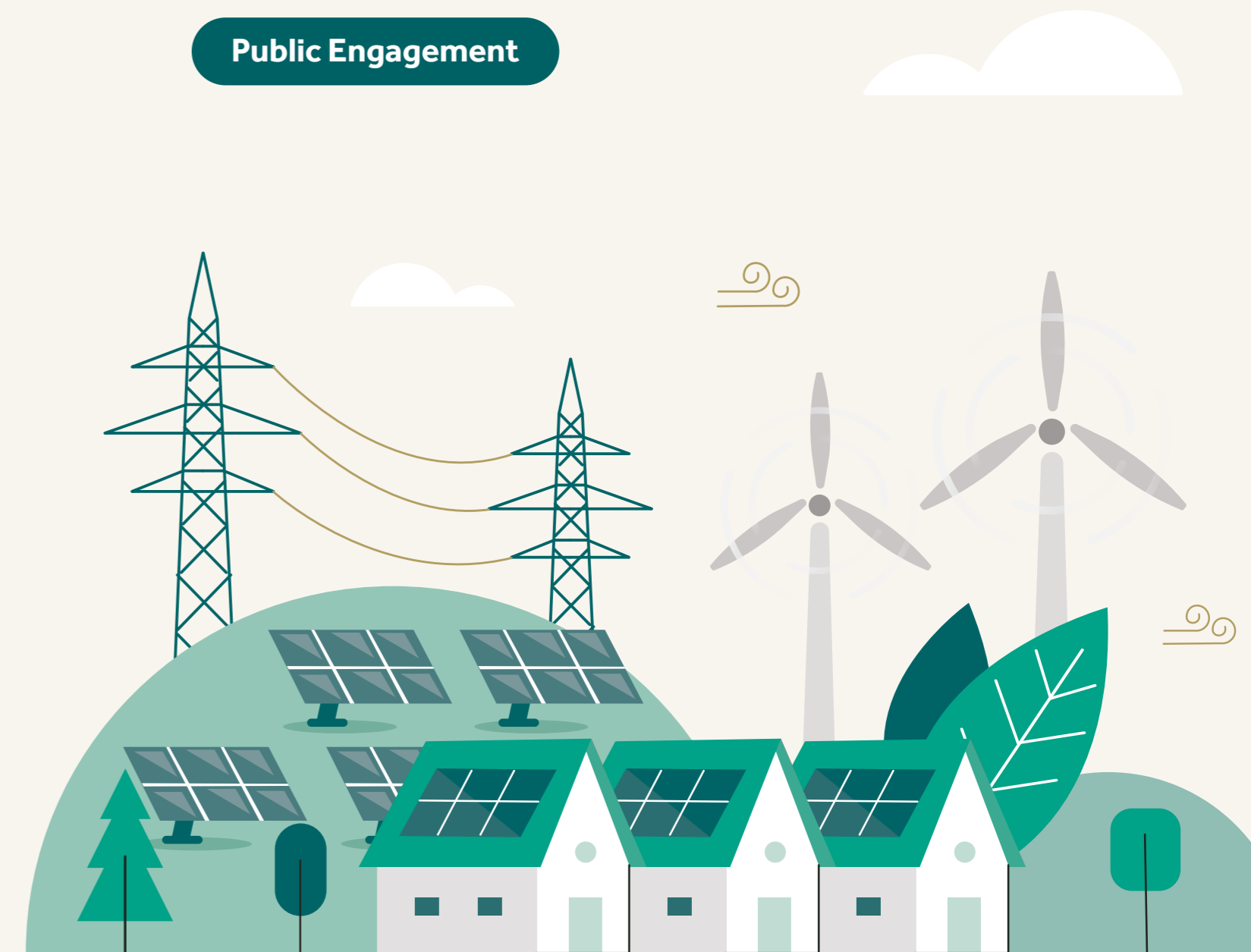
- Powering Up Dublin Community Forum Member



# Community Forums

Autumn 2024

Public Engagement



## Securing our future needs

EirGrid needs to meet the growing and changing electricity needs of Ireland. This includes the electrification of transport systems, vehicles, heating and the development of housing, offices, and large energy users. We also need to accommodate new and clean sources of electricity, such as wind and solar, to help Ireland's transition to a low-carbon future.

## Working with the public

We are committed to putting citizens at the centre of our decision making. One of the ways we do this is by establishing community forums in areas where grid infrastructure is being proposed. This ensures that communities are consulted, and that local knowledge informs decisions at every step of the journey, from planning and design through to construction and delivering community benefit funding.

## What is a community forum?

Where EirGrid is developing an electricity grid project, a community forum is set up so that stakeholder and community views can be discussed, understood, and properly considered during design and construction.

Community forums aim to include broad representation from communities within the project regions. Membership of a community forum generally consists of representatives from local resident and community associations, not-for-profit organisations, disability and special interest groups, local businesses or business groups, and local councillors from within the area.

One of the things I really appreciated was the direct dialogue and the opportunity to be able to speak or ask questions and connect with the actual EirGrid people

- East Meath North Dublin Community Forum Member

## Why should I join?

Community forums create the opportunity for dialogue between the public and the EirGrid team responsible for delivering projects. Participating in a community forum empowers citizens to:



### Stay informed

Forum members receive regular updates from the EirGrid team about how the project is being planned and delivered. This will help you to understand any impact the project may have locally and ensure you are informed throughout the process.



### Represent your local community

Participating in a forum allows you to represent the views of local organisations or communities. Forum members can share information with their community groups on projects progress and feed information back to EirGrid ensuring there is a two-way flow of information. Members are also invited to input on the design and strategy of Community Benefit Funds which directly support local communities in areas that host new grid infrastructure.



### To share local knowledge

We recognise that communities know their areas best. Forum members will have opportunities to provide guidance on local needs and priorities, and to identify local sources of information that should be considered during project delivery.



### To participate in Ireland's renewable energy transition

EirGrid is at the forefront of Ireland's ambition to be sustainable and carbon neutral through the transition away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy. Community forums contribute to this mission by supporting the delivery of new infrastructure in a way that is acceptable to local communities.

