

East Meath – North Dublin Grid Upgrade

Community Forum

7pm, 21st November 2022, by Zoom

Attending (members): Gerardine Doyle (Craobh Chiarain GAA club), Helena Merriman (St. Margaret's Parish Hall Committee), Sheelagh Morris (St Margarets Action Committee), Liam O Gradaigh (St. Margaret's GAA), Denis O'Leary (Kilbride Tidy Towns), Tom O'Mahony (Dunboyne Community Centre), Cllr Damien O'Reilly (Meath Co. Co), Pearse Sutton (St. Margaret's The Ward), Rob Webb (Tyrrelstown Residents Community Council)

Apologies: Walter Moran (Dunboyne AFC), Richard Morris (Blackhall GAA Club),

Attending (EirGrid): Ailbhe Farrell (Senior Engagement Specialist), Grainne Duffy (Community Liaison Officer) , Eoghan O'Sullivan (Community Liaison Officer)

Facilitation: Harriet Emerson

Welcome & Agenda

All those present were welcomed and thanked for attending. It was agreed to proceed with the draft agenda as pre-circulated.

Minutes of Meeting 17th October 2022

All Forum members had been circulated with the Draft minutes of the previous meeting. It was agreed that these were an accurate record of discussions and they were adopted.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

No matters were identified as arising that were not already on the agenda.

Update on public consultation from both EirGrid and Forum members

EirGrid staff outlined the engagement activities that had taken place since the last Forum meeting, particularly the presence of the Mobile Information Unit in the project area (15th-17th November), the November webinar and meetings with the two local authorities. (The full summary is contained in the graphic at the end of this document.)

There were questions regarding whether the possibility of the upgrade following new road developments had been discussed with Fingal County Council, most particularly the proposed new road heading east from the Cherryhound roundabout, the western bypass around the airport, and the new road proposed to the south of the airport. The EirGrid staff were clear that the meetings with the local authorities will be ongoing and that they are aware of the potential to combine works. Forum members pointed to the expected publication of the Fingal County Development Plan in January or February 2023 and the hope that this will provide clarity over whether the western bypass will proceed.

Forum members expressed a sense that where roads are built by private developers and then taken in charge, there may be little likelihood of combining the grid upgrade. A number of situations around the country were referenced by EirGrid staff where local councillors are discussing new roads and bypasses and want to tie these in with infrastructure such as grid developments. Whether the timing of delivery can be co-ordinated is the major challenge for this joined up thinking, as work on the grid upgrade has to move ahead to schedule. Asked whether changes could be made to the route depending on decisions announced about new road developments, etc. the EirGrid staff indicated that no new or major changes to routes would be proposed but that small tweaks would be considered for as long as possible in the process where they represent an improvement in the delivery of the upgrade. It was clarified that if the development of the western bypass was confirmed, or any other favourable development that represented a significant change from the 4 published routes became an option, then this would have to go back to public

consultation again. There was some discussion of the complexity of dovetailing timing for combined delivery of projects. The grid upgrade project has a timeline necessary to meet infrastructure demands and so must move ahead, so there is a window to identify possible options to work in collaboration with other stakeholders after which decisions must be taken and work get under way. The route selection process, with its multi-criteria assessment, is evolving and all the information available will feed into determining the best emerging route option.

Forum members looked for reassurance that where groups have participated at consultation events, raised issues of concern and made their views known, it is not necessary for them to submit these again in writing for them to be taken on board. It was confirmed that all the material received by EirGrid at the open days has been recorded and will be considered. In addition, the feedback from the Forum has been passed to the Project Management Team for consideration. However, any groups wishing to add material or put the particular position of their organisation may do so for a further week before the consultation closes at the end of the month. Several Forum members had indicated previously that their groups would be doing this and the EirGrid staff wanted to confirm that such submissions would be gladly received. There will be a report on the consultation inputs received put together and published in the first quarter of 2023.

Forum members queried whether Kilreesk Lane is incorrectly identified as being included as a route option. The EirGrid staff will look into this and provide clarification.

It appears that Food Central has not engaged with EirGrid and Forum members suggested that this is important given how large an operation is involved here. Staff present agreed to follow up with this and thanked Forum members for their willingness to share relevant contact details.

Next steps in grid upgrade process

Once the public consultation closes on the 30th November 2022, all the information received will be collated and reviewed. A report on all this material will be published in February 2023.

Taking on board the public consultation inputs, EirGrid will continue to assess the route options using multiple criteria and develop the emerging best performing route option. It is intended that this will be announced in March 2023 and the Forum will meet just ahead of this to hear a presentation on what is proposed.

Any other business

Despite some shortcomings with social media coverage which were noted earlier in the public consultation, the exceptional campaign by EirGrid and efforts particularly by the “boots on the ground” [staff] to engage the local community was recognised by the Forum.

No further business was identified for discussion.

Next meeting

The Forum will meet just ahead of the publication of the report on the public consultation and all the feedback received during this engagement which it is anticipated will be at some point in February. Shortly after that, the Forum will meet to hear about the emerging best performing option prior to its announcement. (It is anticipated that a final route will be announced in summer 2023.)

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Forum should maintain communications in the interim (ahead of the report on the public consultation in February). The facilitator will feed back to Forum members on the main themes identified in the public consultation during January and on any other matters arising. (Forum members can raise issues at any time via email to the Forum as a whole or via the facilitator.)

As there was no further business, everyone was thanked for their attendance and the meeting ended at 8.15pm.

Consultation Activity Overview

Media & Advertising



Local

Regional press: Meath Chronicle, Dublin People, Meath Herald
Local radio: FM104, LMFM
Social media: FB, TW, INSTA, Spotify
Tesco Live, Supermarkets
GAA sponsorships

6 x Open days bi-weekly
Swords, Coolquay Lodge, Hilton Hotel (Malahide Rd), Kilbride (Sweeneys), St Margaret's GAA Club, Batterstown (Caffreys)
5 x Mobile Information unit @ 15-17th Nov
3 x Webinars @ 1 per month: Sept, Oct & Nov
Meath and Fingal County Council
Meath Co Council Energy Expo
Fingal & Meath Public Participation Network
Public Representative Briefings
Fingal and Meath Chambers
Focus Groups
Community Forum