

East Meath – North Dublin Grid Upgrade

Community Forum

7.20pm, 22nd February 2024, Dunboyne Castle Hotel

Attending (members):	Cllr Cathal Boland (Fingal Co. Co.), David Branagan (Fingal Chamber), Philip McCormack (Batterstown Village Enhancement Assoc.), Helena Merriman (St. Margaret's Parish Hall Committee), Richard Morris (Blackhall GAA), Sheelagh Morris (St Margaret's Action Committee), Liam O Gradaigh (St. Margaret's GAA), Cllr. Caroline O'Reilly (Meath Co. Co.), Pat Smith (Meath Chamber), Pearse Sutton (St. Margaret's The Ward), Rob Webb (Tyrrelstown Residents Community Council)
Apologies:	Deirdre Arthur (Craobh Chiarain GAA), Cllr. Brian Dennehy (Fingal Co. Co.), Julie Dowd (Scoil Bhríde, Kilbride), Caroline Ledwith & Emer Lynch (Rathregan Batterstown NS Parents Assoc.), Walter Moran (Dunboyne AFC), Denis O'Leary (Kilbride Tidy Towns), Tom O'Mahony (Dunboyne Community Centre), Alan Tobin (Meath Chamber), Aidan O'Toole (Craobh Chiarain GAA)
Attending (EirGrid):	Grainne Duffy (Community Liaison Officer), Eoghan O'Sullivan (Community Liaison Officer, EirGrid),
Facilitation:	Harriet Emerson

Welcome & Agenda

Everyone was welcomed and a short agenda of items to be discussed was distributed.

Welcome to new Forum members

Each member present briefly introduced themselves. A number of apologies had been received and there were a few last-minute drop-outs due to illness. Harriet explained that the evening's meal was a particular "thank you" on behalf of EirGrid to those Forum members that have given up their time to participate over the past 18 months. It was also an excellent opportunity to welcome new Forum members.

Minutes of meeting on 12th September 2023 & matters arising

Those who were present at the meeting approved the draft minutes of the 12th September 2023 (previously circulated). The agenda appeared to cover all matters arising from that meeting.

EirGrid update on planning submission

EirGrid has finalised the route within the remaining "bubbles" on the Best Performing Route (where it crosses the M3 and from the M1 to the Belcamp substation). These are all on private land and, while no updated map will be put up on the website, if Forum members wish to view this detail, they can be provided with a copy. Submission of the planning application is planned for the 28th March. EirGrid will notify the Forum of the 6-week consultation period once this is validated with An Bord Pleanála.

While the application is being considered, from quarter 3 or quarter 4 EirGrid will be carrying out ground investigation works along the length of the route for approximately 6 months. They will be notifying communities and local residents when this work is due to be undertaken. These investigations will be scheduled intermittently to reduce disruption to an absolute minimum, for example avoiding school holidays terms if at all possible.

EirGrid's aim is to minimise disruption during the construction phase and it has been actively seeking to avoid road closures except where absolutely necessary. To help achieve this, Agricultural Liaison Officers will continue to communicate with private landowners along the route

to secure permission for passing or jointing bays where required, to accommodate traffic flows while work is underway. Landowners will be compensated for allowing construction of passing bays on their land, and in all cases these locations will be reinstated once works are completed.

The Forum's role in relation to the Community Benefit Fund

Working on the expectation that the upgrade will be approved as part of the capital programme for Irish infrastructure, it is important to be ready for when work can proceed.

The Community Benefit Fund is provided in recognition of communities support throughout the project lifecycle and of the potential disruption that will be experienced by communities along the route during the construction phase and for the hosting of this infrastructure. The value size of the Fund is in proportion to the scale of the project itself and is calculated at 3% capital cost of the cable. As the exact cost of the cable is unavailable at present however we expect the fund to be circa €2.5m

The Fund aims to help communities transform their area and become (or remain) a “sustainable energy community”. Three equal funding streams are included:

- Sustainability
- Biodiversity
- Community

The Community Forum is asked to provide advice and guidance on all aspects of the Community Fund. This includes:

- Working with EirGrid in identifying what each of their communities/towns/villages need and in doing so work with local organisations/other community groups to discuss potential projects to ensure maximum impact of the community benefit in the area
- Identifying partnership and collaboration opportunities
- Agreeing the criteria and parameters of the Fund
- Accessing proposals for discussion and consideration
- Inputting key local knowledge around area needs and priorities
- Provide feedback at key stages in the process.

Members of the Forum will be asked to promote the Community Benefit Fund when the fund goes live in their area and encourage others to engage. There will be information clinics held across the project area and these along with the fund will be advertised in all media platforms. An independent fund administrator will be appointed to manage the fund

Any other business

No additional items of business were raised for discussion.

Next meeting

It was agreed that Harriet will circulate a brief survey for all members to identify the dates, including some shortly before and shortly after Easter, when they would be able to attend. The date suiting most members will be chosen for the next meeting.

It was agreed that all Forum members should read EirGrid's Community Benefit Policy document before the next meeting and come with ideas and suggestions.

The meeting ended at 8.05pm.