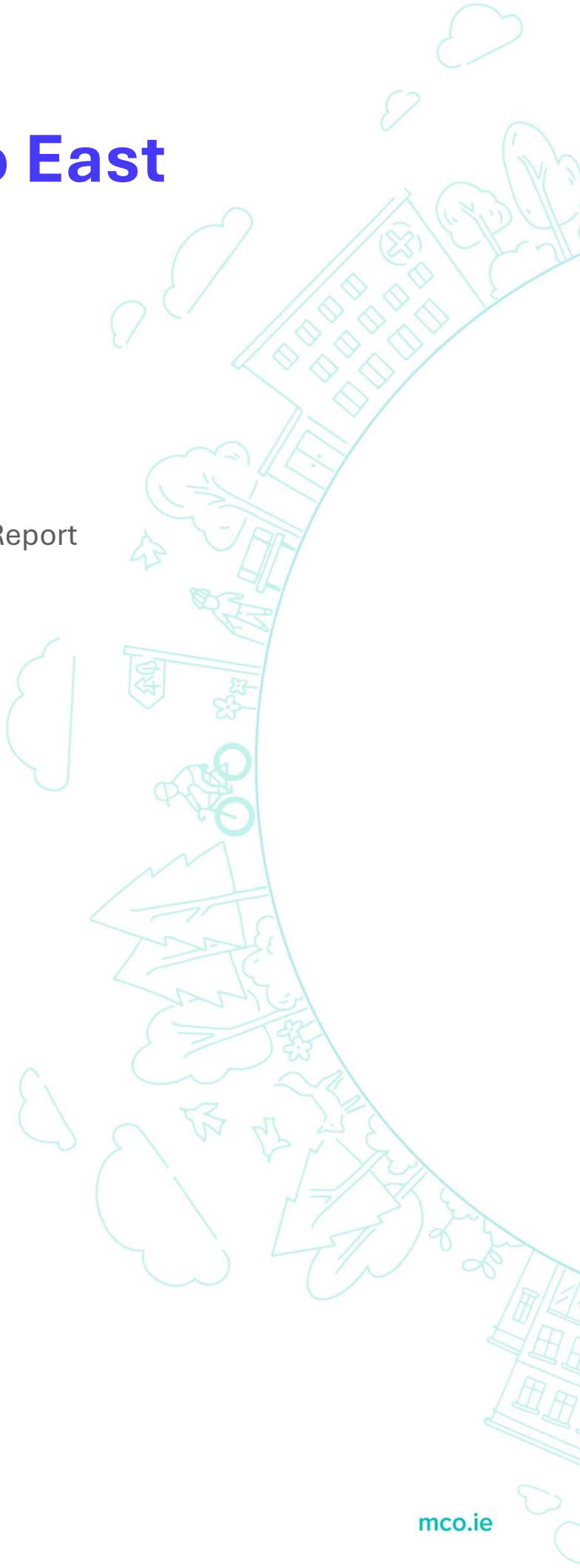
CP1214 Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement

Step 3 Engagement and Consultation Report

November 2024



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1	28/11/2024	EIRPE 241128 FEM Step 3 Public Engagement Report Final	M-CO	Sinead Dooley, Head of Public Engagement, EirGrid

Executive Summary

EirGrid is planning to upgrade the electricity grid in the area of Fingal and East Meath to help meet growing electricity demand. Key to this project is the development of a new transmission interface substation and associated connecting circuits in the vicinity of North Dublin, which will connect to a substation in East Meath. The primary function of this substation is to facilitate power flows between the transmission and distribution systems to enable power to be distributed to where it is needed. This project is a critical addition to the electricity network, providing connectivity to the proposed CP1021 East Meath-North Dublin 400 kV underground cable and the East Meath 220 kV substation. The Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project is currently in Step 3 of EirGrid 6-step development framework. The objective of Step 3 is to identify a best performing technology solution and associated study area to meet the identified need from the shortlist of options identified during in Step 1 and Step 2.

A public engagement and consultation period ran from the 8th of October to the 8th of November 2024 which invited feedback on the substation technology options and substation locations. A webinar and information events were held where members of the public could learn about the project and engage with EirGrid staff. Formal submissions were accepted via an online consultation portal, by email or by post, and members of the public could make enquiries by contacting the Public Engagement team by phone or email.

Key local stakeholders, including elected officials and representative groups, were engaged with directly and had an opportunity to pose their concerns or queries to EirGrid in advance of formal consultation submissions. EirGrid's Agricultural Liaison Officers (ALOs) also engaged with landowners in the study area who may be impacted by this project during this time.

Six formal consultation responses were received during the month-long consultation period. These included responses from five local residents and one county council. Informal feedback was also received during events and through contact with the Public Engagement Team. Common themes which arose included concerns about land and road reinstatement, electromagnetic fields, the community impact of major development projects in the area, as well as the protection of flora and fauna.

This report provides a summary of the engagement and consultation activities carried out by EirGrid at Step 3 of Powering Up Fingal to East Meath. M-CO, an independent consultancy specialising in engagement and consultation analysis, was commissioned to report on the findings of the Step 3 consultation process. This report represents an independent review of all responses received to the public consultation and will be considered by EirGrid as it proceeds to Step 4 of the Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project.

Contents

Glossary of Terms

AIS	Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) Substation.
ALO	Agricultural Liaison Officer
BPO	Best Performing Option
CLO	Community Liaison Officer
EBPO	Emerging Best Performing Option
EMND	East Meath North Dublin
GIS	Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation
KMGU	Kildare Meath Grid Upgrade
MCA	Multi-Criteria Analysis Guidelines
OOH	Out Of Home Advertising

1. About the Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement

1.1. About EirGrid

EirGrid is a state-owned company that develops, manages, and operates Ireland's electricity grid. They are responsible for the safe, secure, and reliable supply of Ireland's electricity, bringing power from where it is generated to the distribution network that supplies the electricity we use every day in homes, businesses, schools and hospitals. EirGrid is responsible for leading the secure transition of the electricity grid to a sustainable, low-carbon future.

EirGrid follows a 6-Step approach to Grid Development (see below) for all EirGrid's grid development projects, from their conception i.e., identification of a need to develop the electricity transmission grid through to their eventual construction and subsequent energisation. This process sets out the steps to be taken to identify and implement the best performing solution that meets the needs outlined.

1.2. Project Background

The Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement is a proposed project to accommodate the continued growth in electricity demand in the region. East Meath and Fingal are among the fastest growing areas in the country (as per Census 2022), and with this growth comes a greater requirement for electricity. Factors driving this demand include:

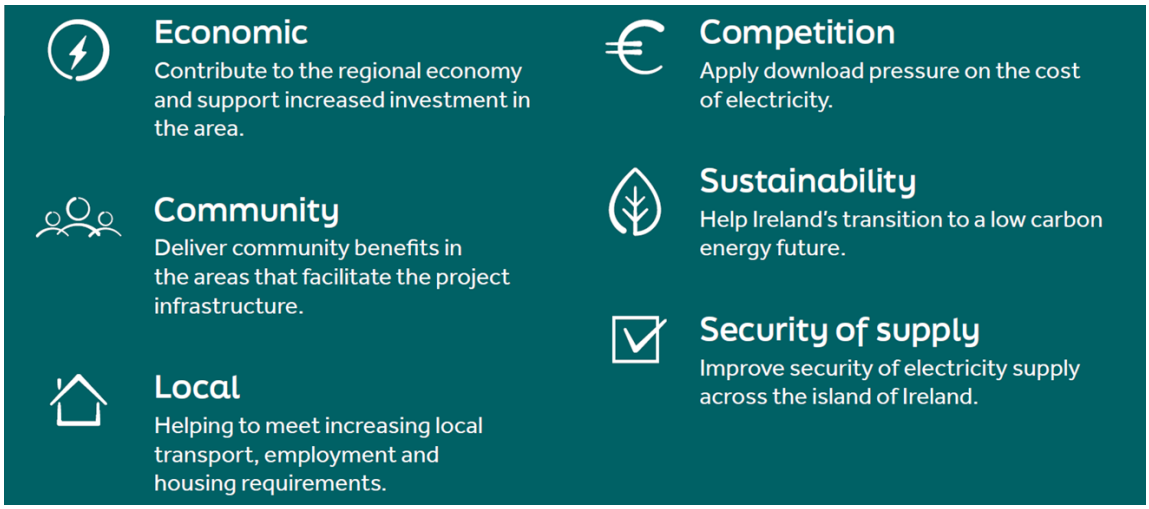
- Residential housing.
- Commercial and industrial development.
- Electrification of heat (heat pumps) and transportation (electric vehicles and public transport)
- The integration of offshore renewable energy connections.

The existing electricity infrastructure is at risk of reaching its capacity limit. To address this need, new infrastructure is required to ensure a reliable, sustainable electricity supply to communities, residents, schools and businesses in the area.

Key to this project is the development of a new transmission interface substation and associated connecting circuits in the vicinity of North Dublin which will connect to a substation in East Meath. This project is a critical addition to the electricity network, providing connectivity to the proposed CP1021 East Meath-North Dublin 400 kV underground cable and the East Meath 220 kV substation. The primary function of this substation is to facilitate power flows between the transmission and distribution systems to enable power to be distributed to where it is needed.

1.2.1. Project Benefits

EirGrid has communicated the following project benefits for grid reinforcement projects.



1.3. Step 3: What's the Best Option and What Area Might be Affected?

The Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project is currently in Step 3. The objective of Step 3 is to identify a best performing technology solution and associated study area, to meet the identified need from the shortlist of options identified previously in Step 1 and Step 2. This selection process happened following EirGrid's Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) Guidelines, scoring sub criteria to evaluate risks and determine overall performance for each option. The study area extends from the outskirts of Dublin city over the border into east Meath.

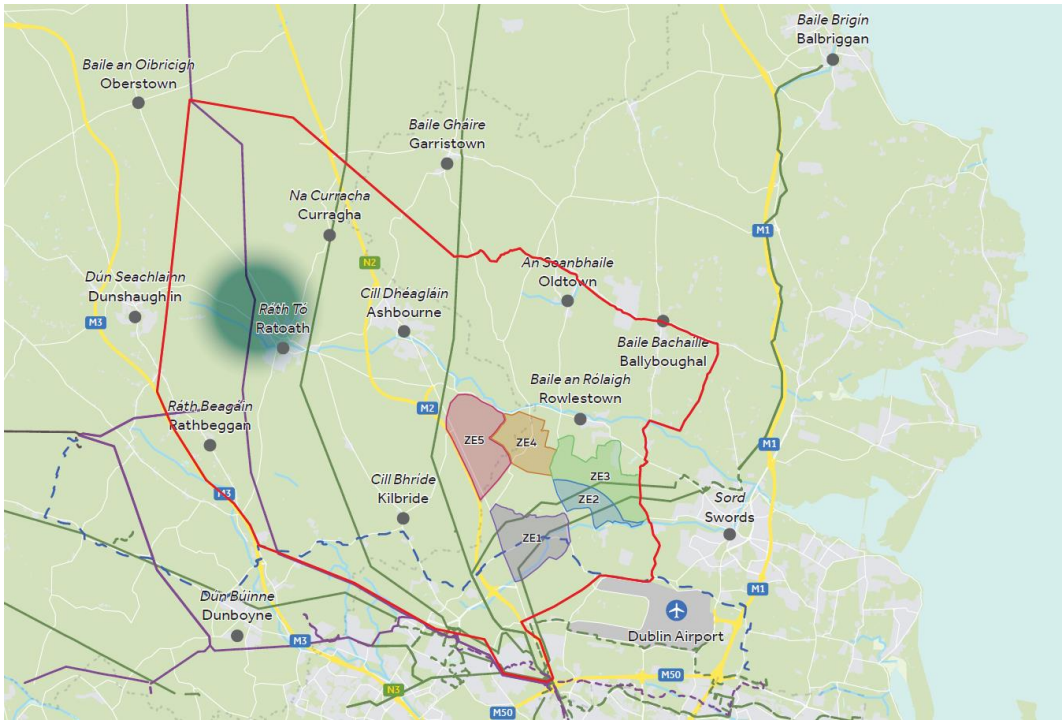


Figure 1: Study Area

1.3.1. Technology Context:

The following two substation technologies have been considered as part of this consultation:

1. **Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation**, which uses sulphur hexafluoride gas (SF6) to insulate the switchgear of an electrical substation. This allows for reduced spacing between conductors (in comparison to AIS technology). Typically housed indoors in dedicated buildings.
2. **Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) Substation** uses atmospheric air to insulate the switchgear of an electrical substation.

Both technologies have distinct characteristics making them suitable for different scenarios based on land availability, future connection requirements, and regulatory compliance. Information on the nature of this technology, it's advantages and disadvantages were shared with the public through published information.

Figure 2. Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation

Figure 3: Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) Substation

Relevant to this project is that a 220 kV substation was being proposed for development by a private entity in the vicinity of Ratoath. In the public interest and to minimise disruption to landowners and communities, a collaborative approach is being considered where the developer will progress with the provision of a 220kV substation in that region which will then facilitate a connection for the proposed EirGrid's Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project. The proposed substation in the vicinity of Ratoath does not therefore form part of this EirGrid consultation process and a separate consultation

process is being undertaken by the relevant developer. When this substation is completed, it will be handed over to the ESB as asset owner.

1.3.2. Location Context

There are five substation zones under consideration in the East Meath and North Dublin area. These were chosen following a multi-criteria assessment process, starting with five larger study areas, from which two sub-study zones were selected for further evaluation based on land suitability and connectivity to key infrastructure. Within these two sub-study zones, the current five substation zones were then identified following EirGrid's Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) Guidelines, which evaluated risks and determined the overall performance for each option.

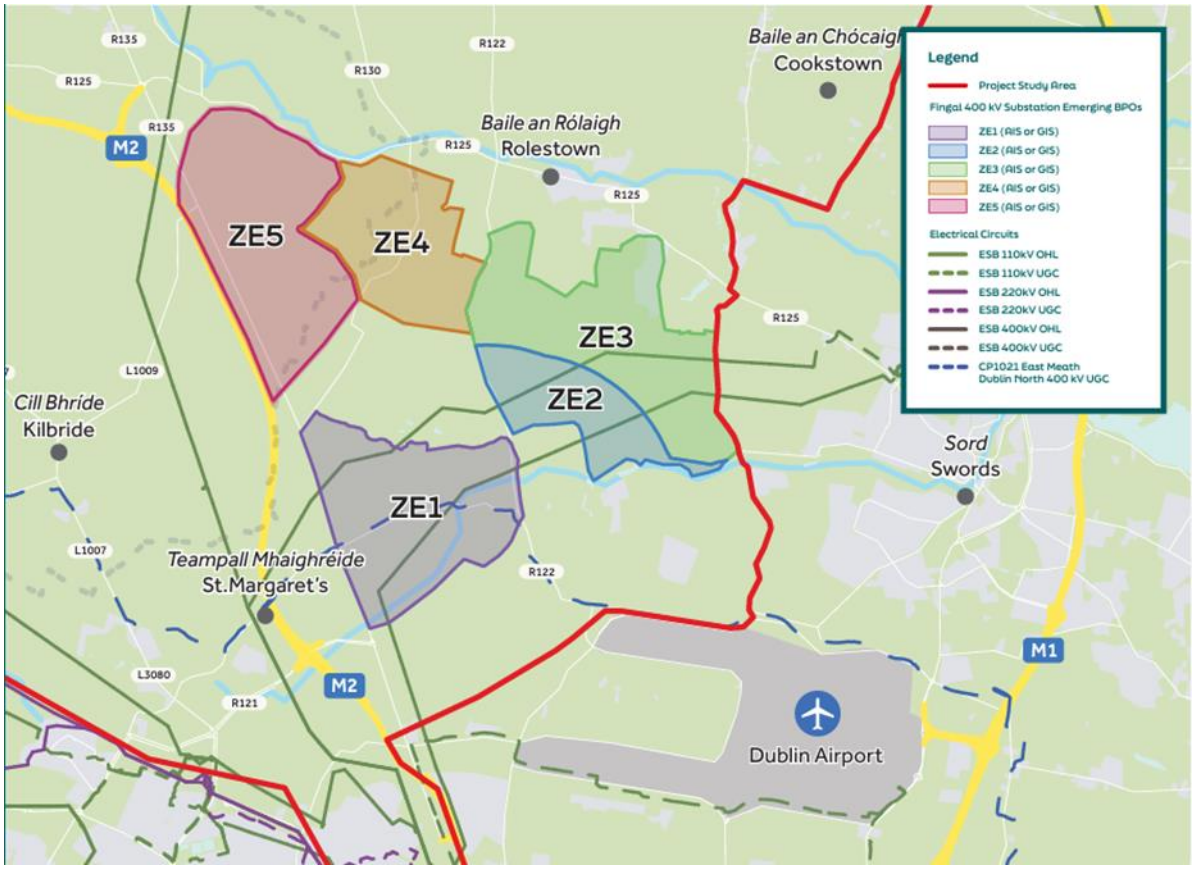


Figure 4: Potential Substation Zones

Zone	Description of Zones
Zone 1	The boundaries of Zone 1 are defined by the following constraints which are situated just outside of the proposed zone: • To the North: Wetlands and amenity grasslands. • To the South: Dublin Airport Safeguarding Zone. • To the East: Wetlands, high-pressure gas mains, St. Margaret's Golf & Country Club, bordered by R122. • To the West: Bordered by R135.

Zone 2	The boundaries of Zone 2 are defined by the following constraints which are situated just outside of the proposed zone: • To the North/East: 2 km buffer from the EirGrid's Proposed East Meath-North Dublin 400 kV Underground Cable development. • To the South: Dublin Airport Safeguarding Zone. • To the West: Wetlands, bordered by R122.
Zone 3	The boundaries of Zone 3 are defined by the following constraints which are situated just outside of the proposed zone: • To the North: Residential areas and the town of Rath. • To the South: 2 km buffer from the EirGrid's Proposed East Meath-North • Dublin 400 kV Underground Cable development. • To the East: Edge of the Study Area (Greenbelt zones near Swords). • To the West: Bordered by R122.
Zone 4	The boundaries of Zone 4 are defined by the following constraints which are situated just outside of the proposed zone: • To the North: Flood risk areas and proximity to the EirGrid's Proposed East Meath-North Dublin 400 kV Underground Cable development, bordered by R125. • To the South: Residential zones. • To the East: Bordered by R122. • To the West: Shared border with ZE5
Zone 5	The boundaries of Zone 5 are defined by the following constraints which are situated just outside of the proposed zone: • To the North: Flood risk areas and proximity to the EirGrid's Proposed East Meath-North Dublin 400 kV Underground Cable development, bordered by R125. • To the South: Residential areas and existing solar farm. • To the East: Shared border with ZE4. • To the West: Bordered by M2 and R135 (within boundary).

1.3.3. Options Under Consideration:

There are ten options being considered in this consultation, which represent a mix of location and technology options. All five substation options can host both technology options, resulting in ten options to consider. These are:

- Zone 1 – AIS (Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) Substation)
- Zone 1 – GIS (Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation)
- Zone 2 – AIS (Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) Substation)
- Zone 2 – GIS (Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation)
- Zone 3 – AIS (Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) Substation)
- Zone 3 – GIS (Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation)
- Zone 4 – AIS (Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) Substation)
- Zone 4 – GIS (Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation)
- Zone 5 – AIS (Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) Substation)
- Zone 5 – GIS (Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation)

2. Engagement and Consultation Process

EirGrid's vision for engagement is to ensure that stakeholder perspectives inform decision-making; engagement is conducted in a consistent, transparent and accessible way; and that engagement is tailored to suit the needs of stakeholders. To do this, EirGrid engages with many stakeholders throughout the lifecycle of projects. This engagement is crucial for informing and capturing feedback and knowledge that will influence the design and decision-making processes of projects. Effective public engagement ensures that stakeholder concerns and suggestions are considered, fostering transparency and trust in the project's outcomes.

At Step 3 for the Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project, EirGrid delivered a programme of communications, engagement and consultation under the banner "Powering up Fingal to East Meath". This programme took place between June 2024 and November 2024. For many members of the public, this was there first time being made aware of the project, however the primary period of close interest in the project is expected to be when more defined locations are identified and it is clear how this project may directly affect them. The purpose of this engagement and consultation was to:

1. Inform local stakeholders about the project.
2. Seek feedback on the zones and identify the best and most deliverable site from within the proposed substation zones.
3. Seek feedback on the proposed technology options.

The targeted stakeholders included

- Landowners, residents, businesses, schools, and voluntary groups within study area.
- Road users and industry that might be affected.
- Local authorities and other utilities.
- Ecological, environmental and conservation groups.

2.1. Communications Activities

Communications for Step 3 started in June 2024 in advance of the consultation period. The purpose was to provide initial information and to notify local stakeholders that a public consultation will be happening in the coming months.

A subsequent awareness phase was launched on the 23rd of September which included digital, print and OOH (Out of Home) Advertising, as well as the distribution of printed collateral. The consultation was then launched two weeks later, on the 8th of October, with a press release, a social media campaign, a webpage, video release and continued paid advertising. A webpage and an online consultation portal published project collateral, an interactive map of the study area and relevant consultation and contact materials.

2.1.1. Leaflet Drops to local Residents

On the week of the 10th of June, a leaflet campaign distributed information leaflets to 25,232 homes in the study area. This leaflet introduced EirGrid, outlined the nature of the upcoming project, provided a link to the project webpage and contact details for the Community Liaison Officer with whom they were

invited to contact to find out more about the project or to share feedback. This ensured that those who did not have preceding experience with EirGrid working in their area had a substantial lead-in time prior to the consultation process.

2.1.2. Microsite

An online information page at www.eirgrid.ie/fingaleastmeath was created which detailed the scope of the EirGrid project including maps of the study area; information on how to provide feedback and a link to the consultation portal; information on the EirGrid community forums; and a registration form for those who wished to stay updated on the project. Published documents on this website included:

- The Step 3 report, which details the process of selecting the current study areas and technology options.
- The Environmental Constraints Report, which details key information gathered and outlines how it has been collected. It contains detailed maps which illustrate how each constraint impacts on the study area (the search area within which the project will be located).
- A Technical Feasibility Study Report, which provides a detailed analysis and makes recommendations for the substation study areas.
- A video was created which visually communicates the key messages of the project. It featured an introduction from Sinead Dooley, Head of Public Engagement in EirGrid. It also included local community members, including the Chair of Fingal Chamber and a member of East Meath North Dublin Community Forum.
- A second video was created to conclude the consultation, thanking communities and members of the public for their contributions.

2.1.3. Project Brochure

A detailed project brochure was developed and distributed to key public venues, notably local post offices and libraries across Fingal and East Meath. This brochure detailed the scope of the EirGrid project including the aspects of the project that were being consulted on as well as providing information about upcoming information events and instruction on how the public could provide feedback.

2.1.4. Social Media

Twenty-eight posts were shared between four platforms creating 16,904 impressions and 1225 engagements.

2.1.5. Media Coverage

Media coverage about the consultation included Dublin Live, the Dublin People, the Meath Chronicle; the Northside People; LMFM (online); LMFM (news bulletins); an Interview on LMFM and an interview with the Irish Times.

Paid media coverage included 98FM; Spin 103.9; FM104; Sunshine radio, LMFM, the Dublin Gazette, the Meath Chronicle and the Dublin Herald

2.2. Engagement Activities

A broad range of engagement activities took place preceding and during the public consultation period, with the objective of providing multiple avenues for communicating information and inviting feedback. These activities were led by EirGrid's Public Engagement team, including Public Engagement Specialists, Community Liaison Officers and Agricultural Liaison Officers. The Public Relations (PR) team were involved in drafting online materials and printed collateral a well as developing and delivering a communications plan.

The Project Manager and cross-functional team members were also present and engaged during in-person and the online event and were available to support the PE team in responding to requests for information in a timely manner. The name and email address of the Community Liaison Officer was printed on widely distributed materials, to ensure members of the public had direct access to support they might require in understanding information or engaging with the consultation process.

2.2.1. Public Information Events

Three open days were held during the consultation period. The venues were chosen to ensure a geographical spread across the study area.

- Wednesday 16 October from11am - 7pm at St Margaret's GAA
- Tuesday 22 October from 11.00am – 7.00pm Coolquay Lodge
- Tuesday 29 October from11.00am – 7.00pm Roganstown Golf and Country Club

The aim of the open days was to inform people of the project and how to make an online submission. There was an exhibition of maps and information panels and a chance to speak to EirGrid staff about the project, concerns and general queries. Information about the setting up of the Community Forum was shared and the Community Liaison Officer gathered expressions of interest for joining.

2.2.2. Webinar

An online webinar was held on the 24th of October 2024 at 7.00-8.00pm. The objective of the webinar was to provide information to those who attended and provide a forum through the chat function for those who wished to direct questions to the three EirGrid team members who were facilitating the webinar.

2.2.3. Stakeholder Meetings

The Public Engagement team proactively engaged with key stakeholders in the study area. Email communications were shared with:

- County Council elected representatives, TD's and Senators.
- Council Executive and Management Team Fingal County Council and Meath County Council
- Meath PPN and Fingal PPN for distribution to all community groups
- Fingal and Meath Chambers for distribution to business members
- East Meath and North Dublin Community Forum (EMND)
- Kildare Meath Grid Upgrade (KMGU) Community Forum

- EMND and KMGU email distribution list – circa 100 people.

One-to-one briefings were given to:

- Ashbourne Municipal District
- Ratoath Municipal District
- Swords/Balbriggan/Rush/Lusk Area Committee
- Fingal County Council Chief Executive and Executive Team
- Meath County Council Chief Executive and Executive Team

2.3. Landowner Engagement

As part of the overall project delivery and to inform the public consultation, the Agricultural Liaison Officers (ALOs) from EirGrid's landowner engagement team met with landowners within the study area and substation study zones to develop an understanding of the 'on the ground' situation at potentially suitable site locations. The purpose of this engagement was to identify relevant land practices and local issues which pertain to potential landholdings, and to understand landowner sentiment. During all engagements, the ALO team provide landowners with project information and listened to feedback.

The ALOs have met with a variety of landowners, ranging from those with standard agricultural landholdings, those with semi commercial landholdings which comprise a mix of standard agricultural and renewable farming and those with commercial landholdings which have commercial or residential zoning. The landowners engaged with the ALO team to identify both risks and opportunities on their landholdings. This information is then fed back to the project management team to analyse as part of the overall substation zone selection process.

2.4. Consultation

As part of the public consultation, members of the public were invited to respond to the following questions, which were communicated through the online consultation portal and through printed material available for postal or drop-box submission during information events.

Q1. Please provide any comments you may have on the five substation zones being considered (Zones 1-5 presented in this consultation)

Q2. Please provide any comments you may have on the two substation technology options being considered: 1) Air-Insulated Switch Gear and 2) Gas-Insulated Switch Gear:

Q3. Please provide any comments you may have relating to the substation zones and/or study area illustrated in the map below such as environmental and biodiversity constraints/ cultural and/or heritage considerations:

Q4. Which substation technology is your preference?

Q5. Which zone is your preference and why?

Q6. Please provide any further comments you may have in relation to this project.

The following feedback channels were used to capture the views of the public during the consultation period.

2.4.1. Consultation Portal

Members of the public and stakeholders were invited to provide their feedback via the online consultation portal. The portal also provided detailed information on the projects, the types of technology options, and details of the next steps. The contact information for the Community Liaison Officer was also provided.

2.4.2. Submission Box at Public Events

Members of the public attending information events could pick-up a physical submission form and return it via a submission box in the venue.

2.4.3. Post

Members of the public who had received a hard-copy submission form, or who had drafted their own response, could send them via free post to the following address:

Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement Consultation,
EirGrid plc,
Freepost FDN 5312,
160 Shelbourne Road,
Ballsbridge,
Dublin 4,
D04 FW28

2.4.4. Email

Email submissions could be sent to FEM@EirGrid.ie, and this email was printed in published and online materials.

3. Analysis of Feedback

3.1. Overview of Responses

Members of the public could send formal responses through an online consultation portal or through a separate form, which could be sent via email, post of submitted at in-person events. There were no responses to the online consultation portal, or at collection points at information events.

Format	Number of Responses
Consultation Portal	0
Email	2
Post	3
Hard Copy at events	0
Total	5

3.2. Summary of Responses Written Consultation Form Questions

Responses were provided in writing using hard copies of the EirGrid consultation form and sent via email and post. The headline concerns were regarding the natural environment, over-development, a desire for community consultation and the broader context another semi-state company undertaking development in the area.

Consultation Question	Summary of Responses
Q1. Where Are You Based? (tick box) Co. Dublin; Co. Meath; Other (please note)	Four respondents were from Dublin. One did not respond to this question.
Q2. If you are in any of the counties listed above, what is your specific town/village/area	Respondents that completed this question were from Coolquay Common, St Margarets and The Ward, which are in zones 1 and 5.
Q3. Which describes your interest in the project? (Local resident; Local business owner; Community group; Environmental group; Community representative; Public representative)	Four respondents were local residents. One did not respond to this question.
Q4. Which substation technology is your preference? (tick box)	One respondent stated no preference. Two respondents selected “Gas Insulated Switchgear” while one selected “Air Insulated Switchgear”. One did not complete the question.

Q5. Which zone is your preference? (tick box)	Two respondents did not complete this section. One selected Zones 1 and 2. One selected Zones 4 and 5. One person selected zone 4 only.
Q6. Please provide any comments you may have on the five substation zones being considered	Two respondents did not complete this question. One respondent stated not enough information presented to locals. This respondent also stated that locals are having serious issues with another semi-state body (named). Another respondent also referenced the disruption linked to this named semi-state body, and stated it not was not fair to have further disruption in the vicinity of St Margarets. One respondent said that zones 1 and 2 are more remote and away from residential area, while another asked to avoid zone 1 due to Kilcoscan National School being located there.
Q7. Please provide any comments you may have on the two substation technology options being considered: 1) Air-Insulated Switch Gear and 2) Gas-Insulated Switch Gear	Two respondents did not complete this question. One responded stated they need to know more information in this and that many locals are unaware that the consultation was in progress, and that they did not receive leaflets. One respondent stated that their preference, for GIS, would, would have a smaller footprint. One respondent was concerned about the impact on local flora and fauna.
Q8. Please provide any comments you may have related to the substation zones and/or study area illustrated in the map below, such as environmental, biodiversity, cultural or heritage considerations:	Three respondents did not complete this question. One respondent stated the need to engage more with locals and that extensive environmental reporting need to be done. One respondent stated that substations are an eyesore, they requested that landscaping and tree-planting be undertaken to camouflage it and to encourage biodiversity.
Q9. If you have any further comments in relation to the Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project, please provide here:	Two respondents did not complete this question. One respondent was concerned that this project would lead to further development in the area, such as more housing. One respondent stated they would be open to dialogue and that transparency is key for locals. One respondent stated that planning granted should be adhered to.

3.3. Common Themes and Issues Arising

In addition to the online consultation portal, feedback was received and recorded by EirGrid staff through the engagement activities, at events, via email and in response to stakeholder briefings. Common concerns were recorded by the public engagement team through these processes. Given that the project was in the early phases, there was limited feedback on the technology options. Due to the broad scope of the study area, location feedback was not-location specific but focused on broader

themes of habitat and site management. A large concern in the area is the concentration of infrastructure and development projects.

Themes recoded included:

- **Community Impact of Major Projects:** The burden on the community of multiple infrastructure and development projects and its impact on the sense of community, with some people leaving the area and others concerned about the material impact on the area.
- **Coordination of Major Projects:** Feedback included a desire for more coordination between infrastructure projects to reduce disruption given the recent number of infrastructure projects in the area. There was a perception of a lack of coordination between state bodies on this.
- **Electro Magnetic Fields (EMFs)** are the magnetic fields that are produced where an electric current is present. Concerns in relation to potential impact on health from EMFs were noted by some people at the information events. EirGrid staff were able to direct them to factual online information regarding this.
- **Land and Road Reinstatement**: An elected member voiced his concern regarding land and road reinstatement, that it is undertaken in an appropriate manner.
- **Flooding:** This area has recently been affected by flooding, and there was a concern that this and other infrastructure projects may exacerbate this flooding issue.
- **Natural Habitat:** There were concerns raised over the impact of infrastructure projects on the natural habitat, and the importance of protecting of flora and fauna.
- **Overdevelopment:** There is a concern that further infrastructure provision in the area could lead to permission being given for additional development in the area, which is already the fastest growing area in Ireland.

3.4. Stakeholder Support for the Project

Feedback from Local Government was received through engagement with elected representatives via emails and briefings, as well as in-person interactions at information events. A letter of support from Meath County Council was sent to EirGrid outlining support this project. This was supportive of the project, stating that it represents a crucial investment in the future of the region, and naming the beneficial impact on supporting economic growth, sustainable development and ensuring energy security for future generations.

3.5. Queries and Responses

Frequently asked questions from stakeholders and the responses given were tracked by the public engagement team.

Question	Response
Q. Do EirGrid operate and develop renewable energy projects?	A. EirGrid operate, develop and manage the electricity grid on behalf of the State. We are responsible for bringing power from where it is generated (e.g. solar, wind, offshore renewables) to where it is needed. While we do not generate electricity, we do and are legally obliged to provide renewable projects

	with connections to the grid. Renewable energy developers must apply to the relevant local authorities for planning permission.
3: What is the size of the proposed AIS and GIS substations?	The size of the substation will largely depend on whether the technology selected is GIS (Gas-Insulated Switchgear) or AIS (Air-Insulated Switchgear), as each have different design requirements. The site chosen may also influence the design. A typical GIS site for this scope would be circa 4 hectare and a typical AIS would be circa 16 hectares. Determining technology choice is done by using a multi-criteria assessment approach including Economic, Technical, Environmental, Deliverability and Socio-Economic factors. EirGrid expect to announce the preferred technology for the Fingal to East Meath Project by mid-2025.
4: Will the project benefit communities outside of the study area?	East Meath and Fingal are among the fastest growing areas in the country (as per census 2022). The project benefits will extend further covering North Dublin and Meath by providing a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity meeting the growing demand for additional housing, businesses, electrification of transport and the facilitation of renewable energy to help meet the Government's Climate Action targets.
5: Will there be local impact and disruption during construction?	Any future development impacting the road infrastructure would carefully consider the impact on traffic flow and local communities. Collaboration with communities, the local authorities and roads authorities will be vital in managing the construction's impact on transportation and local infrastructure. The HV forum presents a further opportunity to engage with other stakeholders and authorities operating in the area. By working together, we strive to reduce overall disruptions and explore common solutions. For example, the option of advanced ducting (i.e. installation of electricity transmission ducting should there be an opportunity if roads are opened up as part of works by another utility) can be explored as a forward-thinking measure to minimize future disruption if any authority or council is doing works in the area.
6: How do EirGrid safeguard Substations in relation to flight paths and fire hazard?	EirGrid is collaborating closely with the DAA to ensure that the siting and development of the proposed substation zones align with their guidance. We are obliged to ensure compliance with DAA regulations and ensure that there is no impact on flight paths. Substation buildings are designed to comply with technical Guidance Document B - Fire Safety - Volume 1 Buildings other than Dwelling Houses and applicable international standards for example ISEN 61936. Regulatory interface – It is highly likely that a SID planning application would be required as we are developing new infrastructure, however the exact planning requirements, including whether a SID designation is needed, will not be confirmed until after the preapplication consultation with An Bord Pleanála has taken place.
7: Why is this project needed as well as the East Meath North Dublin Grid Upgrade?	The existing infrastructure in the area is at risk of reaching capacity and will not be capable of meeting future energy needs. Both the East Meath-North Dublin Grid Upgrade and the Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project are needed to meet the growing demand for electricity in the east of the country, driven by increased economic activity and population growth in recent years in Meath and Dublin.

	The East Meath-North Dublin Grid Upgrade is proposing a high-capacity 400 kV underground electricity circuit between Woodland substation, near Batterstown in Co Meath, to Belcamp substation, near Clonshaugh in north Dublin. When delivered, it will improve the transfer of power across the existing transmission network. A planning application was lodged to An Bord Pleanála in April 2024. The Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project will focus on the development of a new transmission interface substation to the west of Swords, which will be linked to a substation in the East Meath area. This will allow power to be taken from the transmission system and distributed to homes, schools and businesses in the north county Dublin and east Meath regions.
8: Do Gas Insulated Substations burn fossil fuel?	The substations under construction are transmission substations, which typically step up or step-down voltage levels to facilitate efficient power transmission over long distances. Transmission substations do not generate power, nor do they burn fossil fuels. In GIS substations, the gas is used for insulation purposes, similar to how PVC insulates low voltage wiring in households. AIS substations use ambient air as the insulator. A transmission station is distinct from a power station which serves a different role in the generation and distribution of electricity. Power stations generate electricity from various sources including natural gas.
9: Will the connecting circuits between the substation be Overhead line (OHL) or Underground cable (UGC)	The decision between OHL or UGC has not been made at this stage of the project. As part of EirGrid's Framework for Grid development, we will start developing route and technology options in the next step of our process which will commence early in 2025. There are five key criteria that are evaluated in the development process, which comprise of technical, environmental, economic, deliverability and socio-economic criteria. As part of this process, EirGrid will consult and engage with stakeholders with all feedback taken into consideration in the determination of the technology and route.
10: The plans for a proposed 220kV substation will be developed by a private entity in the vicinity of Ratoath.	In the public interest and to minimise disruption to landowners and communities, a collaborative approach has been considered where the private entity will progress this substation which will then facilitate a connection to the North Dublin proposed substation. Once the project is delivered this new substation will be transferred to EirGrid as the operator of the transmission grid and to ESB as the asset owner.

4. Conclusions and Next Steps

4.1. Conclusions

The aim of the public engagement process at this stage is to identify and address any local concerns early and maintain two-way communication with transparency and clarity. This approach enables the project team to take the feedback received into consideration during the early project development stage and helps mitigate the number of issues arising at later stages of the development, which can at that stage be more difficult to address. The presence of the cross-functional team at public information events ensured that technical queries could be immediately addressed and that the technical team could receive this feedback directly from the public. This step in the public consultation was also useful in communicating the role of the Community Forum and inviting expressions of interest.

One of the objectives of this consultation was to build community awareness of the Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project at an early stage so that residents are fully aware of the project and understand how they can engage during key moments. At this early stage of the process many of the queries could be addressed quickly by EirGrid staff at information events, in briefings, or via direct email and phone contact. When the project proceeds into Step 4, EirGrid will be inviting members of the public to consult on more specific geographic locations which may result in an increase of consultation responses.

Developments by a different Semi-State body were referenced at public information events and named in one of the written submissions. While these projects are unrelated, this is notable in terms of the impact on public openness for further development work in the locality.

4.2. Next Steps

Now that the public consultation is completed, the feedback and submissions are used in the progression of the project from Step 3 to Step 4 – “Where Exactly Should We Build”. This happens through the following steps:

1. Feedback and submissions are given to the Project Manager and cross-functional team, where it is used to help to select technology options and identify potential substation zones and sites for the Fingal 400 kV substation.
2. A further assessment will then narrow the options down to two or three sites.
3. Subsequently, assessments on connecting circuits will be conducted including proposed connecting circuits and technologies and potential corridors/routes.
4. These options will undergo a detailed multi-criteria assessment to identify the Emerging Best Option, which will then be subject to public consultation in Step 4.

4.2.1. Community Forum

During the Step 3 Consultation, information was provided regarding the establishment of a community forum, and expressions of interest were gathered at public information events and via an online expression of interest form. Community Forums allow community members and local stakeholders to engage with EirGrid on key project developments, give feedback on how to communicate and engage with the public, and support the delivery community benefit to the area where infrastructure is hosted.

EirGrid will establish now this Community Forum for the Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project. The purpose of this forum is to make sure that the voices of the local communities, and those impacted most by EirGrid's infrastructure, are listened to. The forums provide for open dialogue between the project team and stakeholders interested in the project. The Community Forum for the Fingal East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project will be chaired by an independent facilitator and will function as a consultative body.

4.2.2. Community Benefit Fund

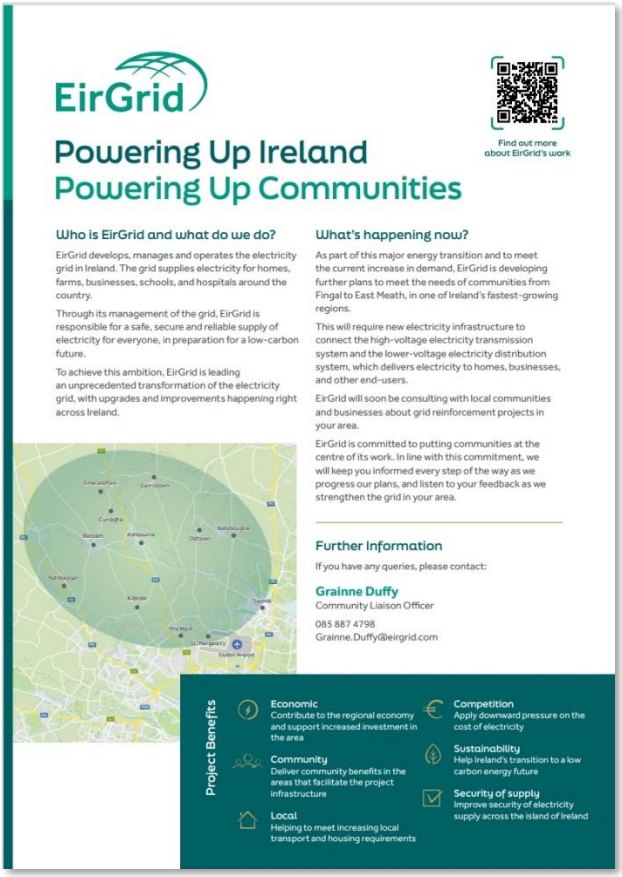
Should the Fingal East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project be granted planning permission, a dedicated fund will be made available which will commence disbursement when construction starts during Step 6, in line with a Community Benefit Policy. Under this initiative, EirGrid creates a community benefit scheme in proportion to the scale of the project. An independent fund administrator will be appointed and work with Community Forum to co-develop the Community Benefit Fund strategy, so that local priorities are met. These funds will provide support to local community groups, not-for-profit organisations and social enterprises that operate in or service communities in Fingal and east Meath, near the new infrastructure.

Appendices

Appendix A: Designed Materials and Printed Collateral

Information Leaflet

Leaflet campaign distributed information leaflets to 25,232 homes in the study area in June 2024.



EirGrid

Powering Up Ireland
Powering Up Communities

Find out more about EirGrid's work

Who is EirGrid and what do we do?

EirGrid develops, manages and operates the electricity grid in Ireland. The grid supplies electricity for homes, farms, businesses, schools, and hospitals around the country.

Through its management of the grid, EirGrid is responsible for a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity for everyone, in preparation for a low-carbon future.

To achieve this ambition, EirGrid is leading an unprecedented transformation of the electricity grid, with upgrades and improvements happening right across Ireland.

What's happening now?

As part of this major energy transition and to meet the current increase in demand, EirGrid is developing further plans to meet the needs of communities from Fingal to East Meath, in one of Ireland's fastest-growing regions.

This will require new electricity infrastructure to connect the high-voltage electricity transmission system and the lower-voltage electricity distribution system, which delivers electricity to homes, businesses, and other end-users.

EirGrid will soon be consulting with local communities and businesses about grid reinforcement projects in your area.

EirGrid is committed to putting communities at the centre of its work. In line with this commitment, we will keep you informed every step of the way as we progress our plans, and listen to your feedback as we strengthen the grid in your area.

Further Information

If you have any queries, please contact:

Grainne Duffy
Community Liaison Officer
085 887 4798
Grainne.Duffy@eirgrid.com

Project Benefits

- **Economic** – Contribute to the regional economy and support increased investment in the area
- **Community** – Deliver community benefits in the areas that facilitate the project infrastructure
- **Local** – Helping to meet increasing local transport and housing requirements
- **Competition** – Apply downward pressure on the cost of electricity
- **Sustainability** – Help Ireland's transition to a low carbon energy future
- **Security of supply** – Improve security of electricity supply across the island of Ireland

EirGrid

Éire á Cumhachtú
Pobail á gCumhachtú

Faigh tuilleadh eolais faoi obair EirGrid

Cé hiad EirGrid agus cad a dhéanaimid?

Is é EirGrid a fhorbraíonn, a bhainistíonn agus a oibríonn an eangach leictreachais in Éirinn. Soláthraíonn an eangach leictreachas do thithe, d'fheirmeacha, do ghnólachtaí, do scoileanna agus d'ospidéil ar fud na tíre.

Tríd an eangach a bhainistiú, tá EirGrid freagrach as soláthar sábháilte, slán agus iontaofa leictreachais do chách, ag ullmhú do thodhchaí ísealcharbóin.

Leis an spriocseo a bhaint amach, tá claochlú ar an eangach leictreachais á stiúradh ag EirGrid. Tá uasghráduithe agus feabhsuithe ag tarlú ar fud na hÉireann.

Cad atá ag tarlú anois?

Mar chuid den mhóraistriú fuinnimh seo agus mar gheall ar an méadú atá tagtha ar an éileamh faoi láthair, tá EirGrid ag forbairt pleananna breise chun freastal ar riachtanais na bpobal ó Fhine Gall go dtí Oirthear na Mí, ar cheann de na réigiúin is mó fás in Éirinn.

Beidh bonneagar nua leictreachais ag teastáil chun an córas tarchurtha leictreachais ardvoltais a nascadh leis an gcóras dáileacháin leictreachais ar voltas níos ísle. Soláthraíonn seo leictreachas do thithe, ghnólachtaí, agus úsáideoirí deiridh eile.

Beidh EirGrid ag dul i gcomhairle le pobail agus gnólachtaí áitiúla go luath maidir le tionscadail atreisithe eangaí i do cheantar.

Tá EirGrid tiomanta do phobail a chur i gcroílár a chuid oibre. Ag teacht leis an ngealltanas seo, coinneoimid ar an eolas tú ag gach céim den phróiseas, agus muid ag forbairt ár bpleananna agus á gcur chun cinn. Éistfimid le do chuid aiseolais agus muid ag neartú na heangaí i do cheantar.

Tuilleadh eolais:

Má tá aon cheist agat, déan teagmháil le:

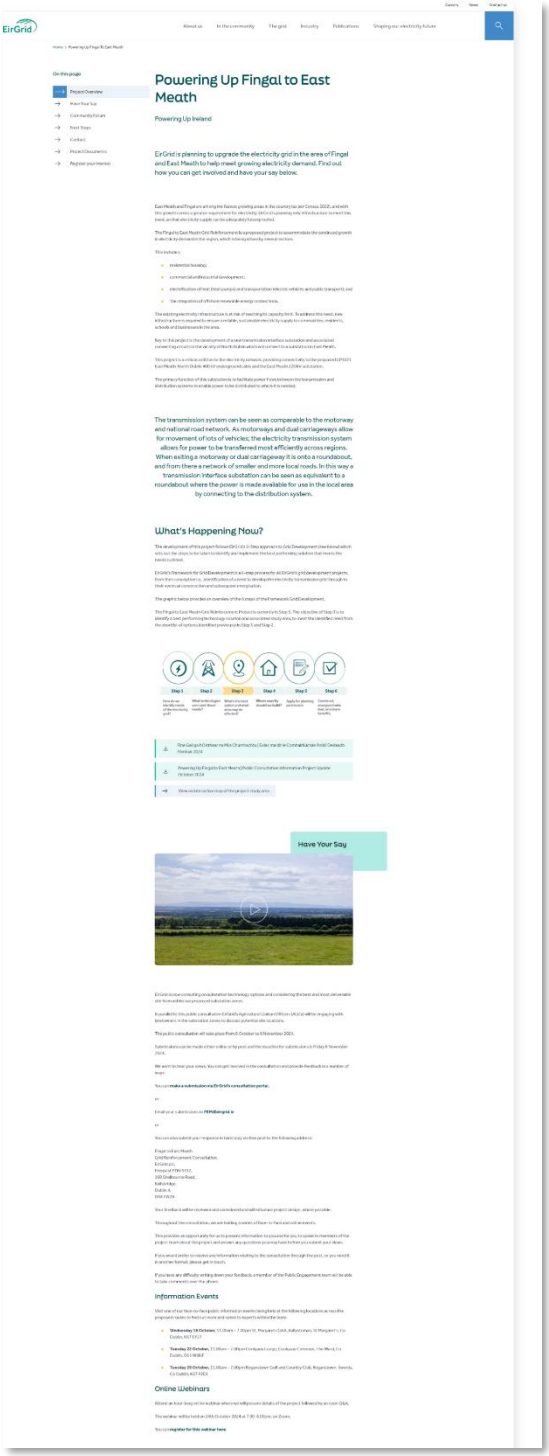
Grainne Duffy
Oifigeach Idirchaidrimh Pobail
085 887 4798
Grainne.Duffy@eirgrid.com

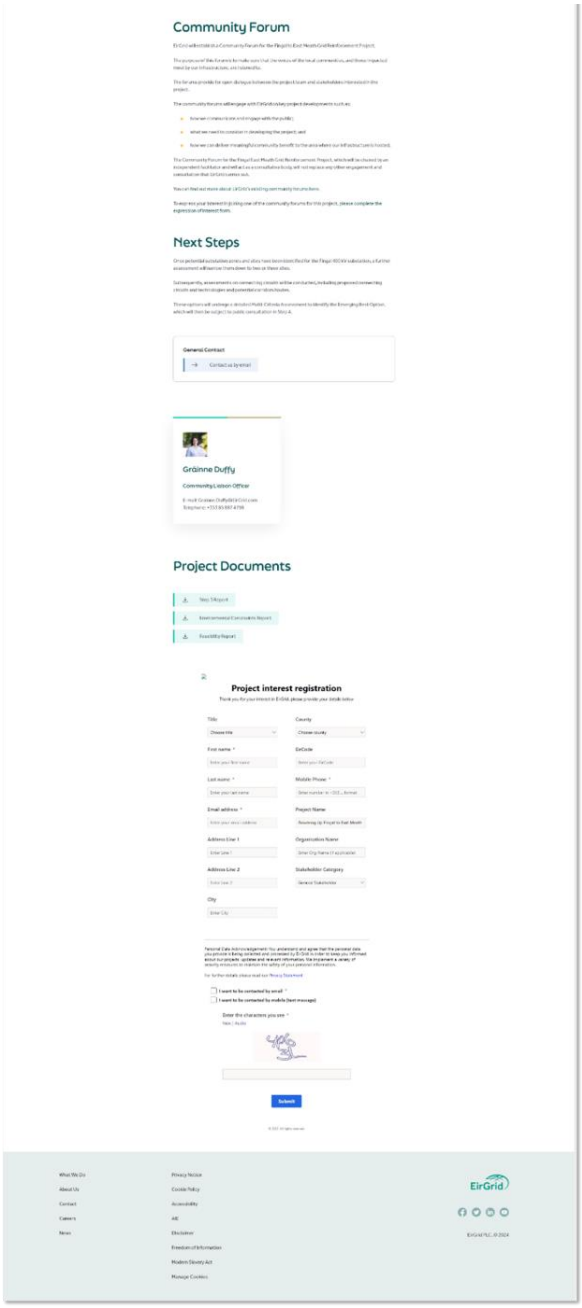
Buntáistí an Tionscadail

- **Eacnamaíoch** – Rannchuidiú leis an ngeilleagar réigiúnach agus tacú le hinfheistíocht mhéadaithe sa cheantar
- **Pobal** – Sochar pobail a chur ar fáil sna ceantair a éascaíonn bonneagar an tionscadail
- **Áitiúil** – Cabhrú le freastal ar riachtanais iompair agus tithíochta áitiúla atá ag méadú
- **Comórtas** – Brú anuas a chur ar chostas an leictreachais
- **Inbhuanaitheacht** – Cabhrú le hÉirinn aistriú chuig todhchaí fuinnimh ísealcharbóin
- **Slándáil an tSoláthair** – Feabhas a chur ar shlándáil an tsoláthair leictreachais ar fud oileán na hÉireann

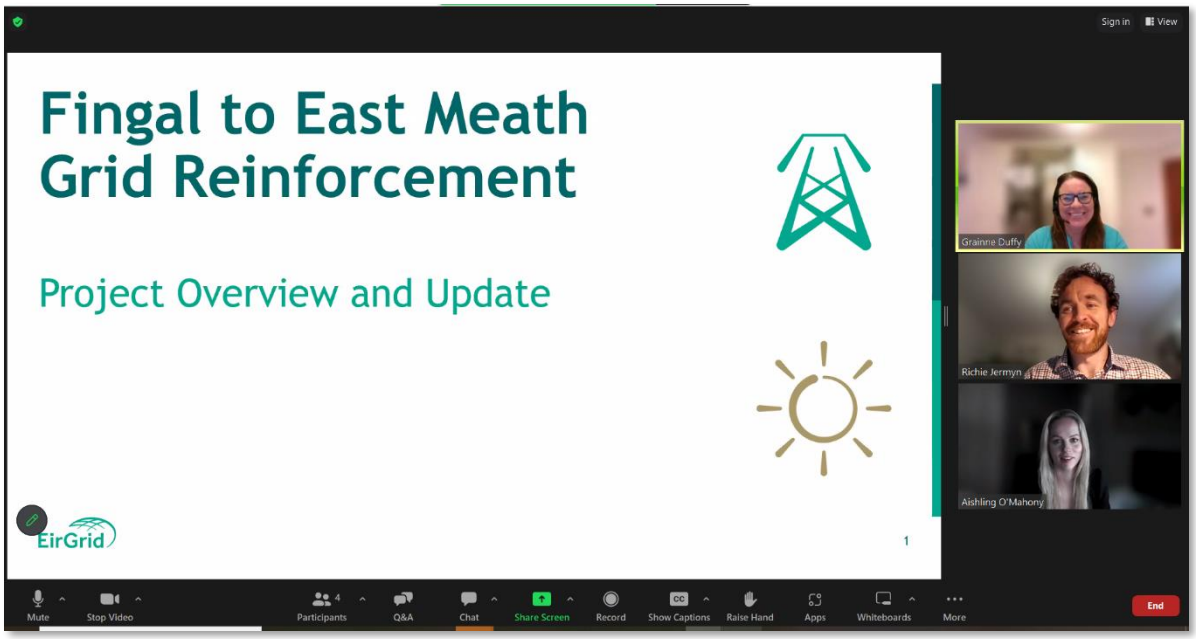
EirGrid Website

Project page for Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project





Webinar Screenshot



Information Events Exhibition Materials and Documentation


Fine Gall go hOirthear na Mí a Chumhachtú
Powering Up Fingal to East Meath
Fóram Pobail
EirGrid


ZE5
ZE4
ZE3
ZE2
ZE1
Kilbride
St. Margaret's
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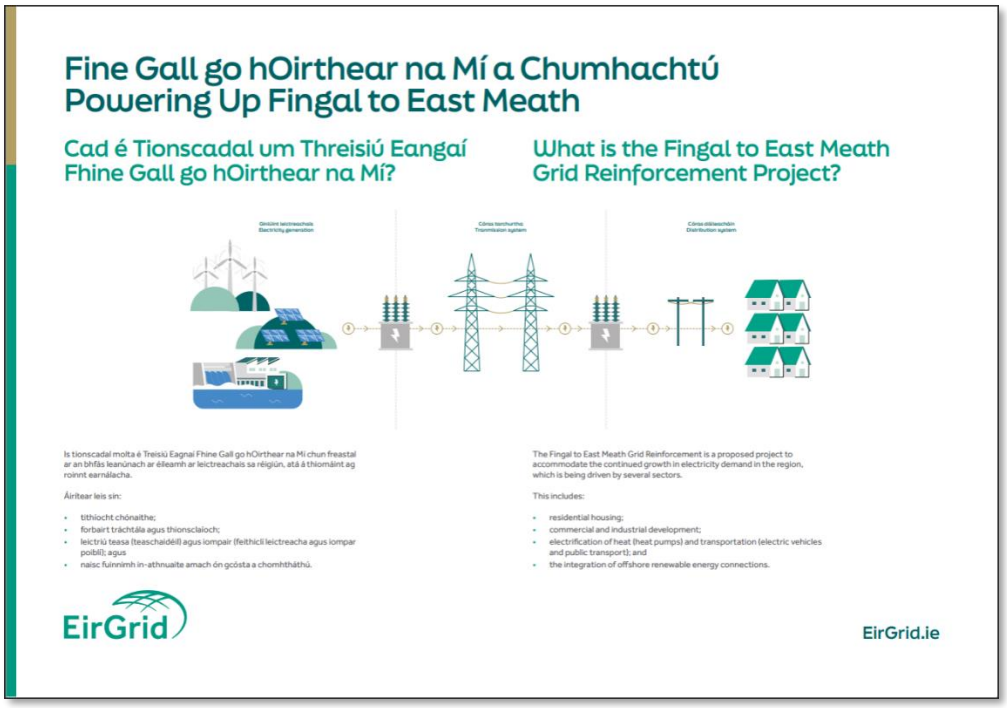
Details from Information Panels



Fine Gall go hOirthear na Mí a Chumhachtú
Powering Up Fingal to East Meath

Cad é Tionscadal um Threisiú Eangaí Fhine Gall go hOirthear na Mí?

Is tionscadal molta é Treisiú Eagnaí Fhine Gall go hOirthear na Mí chun freastal ar an bhfás leanúnach ar éileamh ar leictreachais sa réigiún, atá á thiomáint ag roinnt earnálacha.

Áiritear leis sin:

- tithíocht chónaithe;
- forbairt tráchtála agus thionsclaíoch;
- leictriú teasa (teaschaidéil) agus iompair (feithiclí leictreacha agus iompar poiblí); agus
- naisc fuinnimh in-athnuaite amach ón gcósta a chomhtháthú.

What is the Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project?

The Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement is a proposed project to accommodate the continued growth in electricity demand in the region, which is being driven by several sectors.

This includes:

- residential housing;
- commercial and industrial development;
- electrification of heat (heat pumps) and transportation (electric vehicles and public transport); and
- the integration of offshore renewable energy connections.

EirGrid

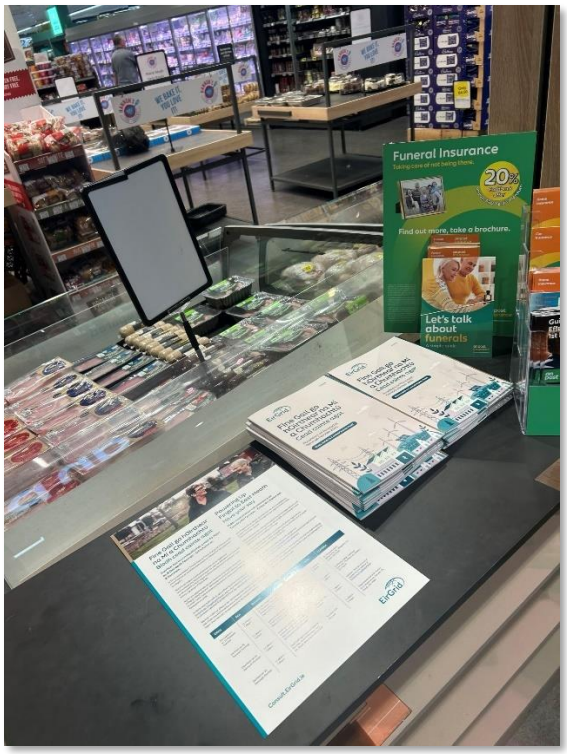
EirGrid.ie

Printed Collateral and Distribution

Project information brochure – Distributed to libraries, post offices and shared at public information events.


Fine Gall go hOirthear
na Mí a Chumhachtú
Powering Up
Fingal to East Meath
Have your say
EirGrid


gaelcon
Male Advice Line
Fine Gall go hOirthear na Mí a Chumhachtú
Powering Up Fingal to East Meath
Have your say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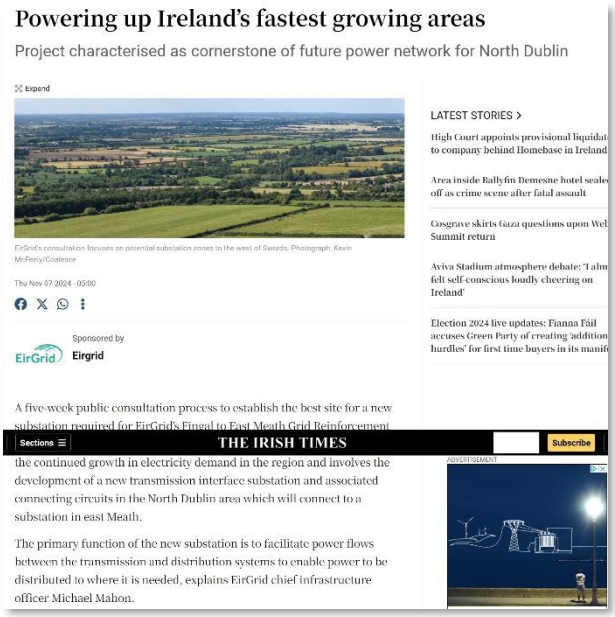

Powering up Ireland's fastest growing areas

Project characterised as cornerstone of future power network for North Dublin

Expand

EirGrid's consultation focuses on potential substation zones to the west of Swords. Photograph: Kevin McFeely/Coolesce

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A five-week public consultation process to establish the best site for a new substation required for EirGrid's Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement

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the continued growth in electricity demand in the region and involves the development of a new transmission interface substation and associated connecting circuits in the North Dublin area which will connect to a substation in east Meath.

The primary function of the new substation is to facilitate power flows between the transmission and distribution systems to enable power to be distributed to where it is needed, explains EirGrid chief infrastructure officer Michael Mahon.

ADVERTISEMENT

Eirgrid launch public consultation on grid upgrade in Fingal and East Meath

EIRGRID has launched a public consultation for a critical electricity grid upgrade to improve the power system in the Fingal and East Meath region.

This initial consultation will focus on the development of a new transmission interface substation to the west of Swords, which will be linked to a substation in the East Meath area.

This will allow power to be taken from the transmission system and distributed to homes, schools and businesses in the north county Dublin and east Meath regions.

Eirgrid says that with the existing electricity system in the area at risk of reaching its capacity limit, new infrastructure is required to ensure a reliable, sustainable electricity supply to communities, residents, schools and businesses in the area.

Communities and stakeholders in the area are now being asked to give their feedback on the initial plans.

The consultation, which will run over a five-week period until 8th November, will give communities, residents and businesses in the area an opportunity to give their feedback on the proposed plans.

Submissions can be made online or by post, and public information events will also be held in-person and online to allow those interested to speak to Eirgrid representatives and learn more about the proposals.

Chief Infrastructure Officer with Eirgrid, Michael Mahon said: "This development will be key to ensuring a continued secure energy supply in the Fingal and East Meath area.

"Not only will the project enhance the local grid, providing capacity to support increasing electricity demands to enable local economic growth and housing, it will also help the country reach its renewable energy targets."

Head of Public Engagement with Eirgrid, Sinead Dooley, said: "We at Eirgrid are committed to putting communities at the centre of our work to transform our electricity system for future generations, and we will continue to not only actively engage with all stakeholders to ensure their views are heard, but also collaborate with public bodies."

For more information and to have your say, visit www.Eirgrid.ie/fingaleastmeath.

NEWS

Public consultation launched for critical electricity grid upgrade in north Dublin

The Fingal to East Meath Grid Reinforcement Project aims to improve energy infrastructure in the region

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Powering up Ireland's fastest growing areas

Project characterised as cornerstone of future power network for North Dublin

Powering up East Meath
Powering up Ireland

EirGrid is upgrading Ireland's electricity infrastructure. As the operator of the electricity grid, we are now exploring the best ways to do this and will be in your area shortly to get your input.

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Powering up Fingal
Powering up Ireland

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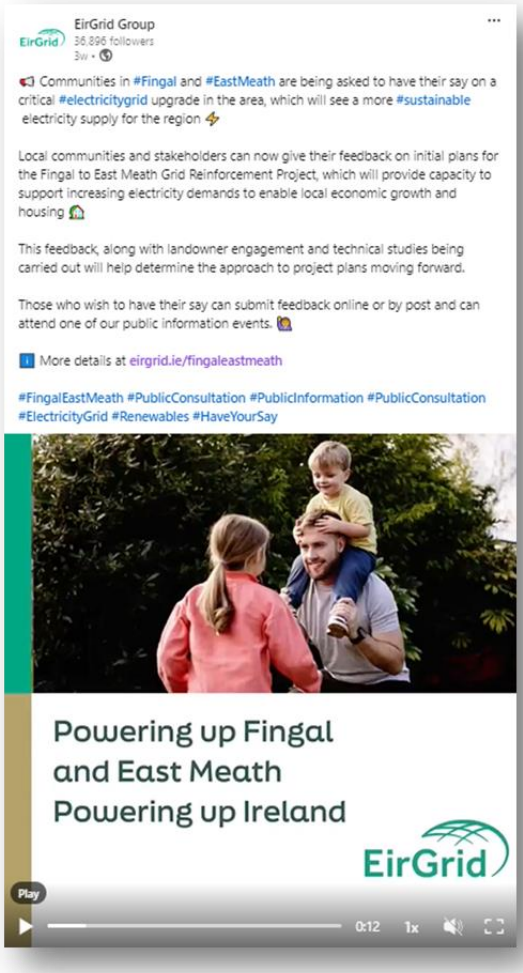

THANK YOU

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