

Major milestone reached in Grid West project

EirGrid brings forward potential corridors for new transmission line

EirGrid has today (5 March 2013) published a significant report on the Grid West project, entitled the Stage 1 Report, and is now encouraging feedback and engagement from the public and communities in the west on the work which has been done to date.

Grid West Project Manager, Alan McHugh said *“This is a key milestone for the Grid West project as today, for the first time, we bring before the public a number of potential corridors which can accommodate this new transmission line to provide 21st century electricity infrastructure for the west of Ireland. With this information we are also starting a new round of focused public consultation so that individuals and communities in the region can engage and interact with the project team”.*

The €240m Grid West project will develop a new high capacity power line linking the Bellacorick area in County Mayo to a strong point on the transmission grid at either Flagford in County Roscommon or Cashla in County Galway. By connecting the electricity generated by the region’s huge renewable energy resources, the project will facilitate significant job creation and investment as well as contributing to national recovery and growth. Grid West is part of EirGrid’s Grid25 plan to upgrade the national grid between now and 2025 to deliver a sustainable, competitive and secure electricity supply to homes, businesses and industries.

According to Alan McHugh, “This Stage 1 Report marks the culmination of the initial information gathering stage of the project. This focused on mapping the key features including towns, villages and settlements, national monuments, landscapes, areas designated for conservation and all existing infrastructure which may have a bearing on the project. Using detailed information on these constraints and the feedback which we have received from the public and other stakeholders, our consultants have identified a number of indicative 1km wide corridors which could accommodate the new transmission line.”

The report analyses in detail how various constraints impact on these corridors and identifies a corridor from Bellacorick to Flagford as being the “least constrained” to meet the needs of the project. The least constrained corridor is considered by our consultants to be the corridor which best avoids the environmental and other constraints or limitations which have been identified by the project to date. It also identifies potential locations for the necessary new substations at Bellacorick and Flagford or Cashla. At each stage of refinement we gain more detailed information about the constraints that might affect a particular route.

“We are making this report accessible to the public through a number of channels and we urge the public and communities to engage with us at this important stage of the project. Feedback on all the indicative corridors is very important at this stage and it can influence the next step in the project which is the identification of a preferred corridor for this new development.” concluded Mr. McHugh.

Alan McHugh stressed that no decisions regarding the final corridor or route have been made about the project *“We are asking the public and communities to view the work which has been carried out to date and to share their views with us on all the potential route corridors that have been identified including the least constrained corridor and on any aspect of the project and findings of the report.”*

- Eight open days will be held across the region (see details below) at which the public can meet the project team, view the work which has been done and give their feedback.
- The report can be accessed on the dedicated Grid West project website www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest.
- The project's Information Centre in Castlebar will be open Monday to Friday (9am to 5pm) until 16th April where the report and all related maps can be viewed.
- The public can call to call 1890 940 802 to discuss the project or email the team at gridwest@eirgrid.com.
- An Information Brochure will be available from a range of public offices, libraries, etc in the region.
- The project has introduced a Community Liaison Officer who will facilitate the flow of open and simple information to and from communities to the EirGrid project team.

Ends