Shaping Our Electricity Future (SOEF)
Advisory Council Meeting #13
Minutes

Date: March 5th, 2026
Time: 10:00 – 15:00
Venue: Sandymount Hotel, Dublin 4
Chairs: Liam Ryan (EirGrid) and Gerard Carlin (SONI)
Moderator: Nicola de Beer (EirGrid)

Council Member Attendees:

Name	Representing
Bobby Smith	Storage
Brendan Kelly	Renewables
Brian Mongan	Demand Response
David Graham	Renewables
Frank Burke	Storage
Graeme McWilliams	Large Energy Users
Jag Basi	Conv. Production
James Delahunt	Consultant
Kate Garth	Renewables
Laura Mehigan	Renewables
Lisa Foley	Consultant
Margaret Nee	Renewables
Mark Alexander	TSO
Mark Fitch	New Technology
Neil Morris	Large Energy Users
Noel Cunniffe	Renewables
Paddy Finn	Demand Response
Paul Blount	Storage
Peter Harte	New Technology
Rory Mullan	Consultant
Seamus Howard	Manufacturer
Thomas O'Sullivan	Large Energy Users
Invited Guests	
Brían Diskin	DCEE
Marie Therese Campbell	UR
Robert O'Rourke	CRU
Teresa Fallon	ESB Networks (DSO)

Apologies from:

Name	Representing
David Laverty	Academia
Harry McCracken	Renewables
John Fitzgerald	New Technology
Jonathan Wisdom	TSO
Paddy Fitzgerald	Conv. Production
Paul Lennon	Gas Networks
Seamus Howard	Manufacturing
Stacy Feldmann	Conv. Production
Invited guests	
Colin Broomfield	UR
David Hill	NIE Networks (DSO)
Fergal McParland	DECC
John Melvin	CRU
Leo Strawbridge	DfE
Linzi Hyvart	DfE
Sarah Brady	DfE
Tony Hearne	ESB Networks (DSO)
Trevor Harron	NIE Networks (DSO)
Zoe Crowe	DfE

Introduction by Moderator Nicola de Beer, Head of Stakeholder Engagement & Change Management, EirGrid

- **Nicola de Beer** introduced and outlined the day's agenda, highlighting that there would be time for Q&A throughout the session.

Opening Remarks by Gerard Carlin, Director of Networks & Innovation, SONI and Liam Ryan, Chief Technology & Transformation Officer, EirGrid

- **Gerard Carlin** in his capacity as co-chair, welcomed everyone and thanked **Liam** and the organising team for putting the day together.
- Grid acceleration progressing; timelines advancing. Strong session feedback. Upcoming focus areas flagged.
- **Liam Ryan** welcomed the attendees and provided some outlook.
- Acknowledged the ongoing conflict in the Middle-East, the impact it is having on energy prices and hopes for a timely deescalation.
- EirGrid is delivering despite major supply-chain and fuel price pressures.
- SDP tranche 1 outcomes are promising, more info later today from Niall Rutherford.
- PR6 positive impact highlighted.
- Dynamic Line Rating offers opportunity to reduce constraint.
- Offshore: Continued engagement with developers needed. We need to bring updates on Offshore progress to future meetings.
- SOEF Advisory Council performing well; membership refresh underway. New membership to be in place for September's meeting.

Presentation: "Playback of Members Insights"

Presenter: James Atkinson, Stakeholder Engagement Manager, EirGrid

- **James Atkinson** had met with 16 Advisory Council members in advance of the meeting and played back the key insights, challenges and suggestions of the Council, which included:
  - Members suggested TSO provide more challenges and questions to Advisory Council to guide discussions in order of TSO priorities
  - Members welcomed smaller working groups/sub-groups to drive input between meetings.
- **James** outlined the Member refresh timeline 2026.

SOEF Leads Panel: Strategic Workstreams Update

Panellists:

- **Stephen Gannon – Head of Future Markets, EirGrid**
- **Michael Atcheson – Head of Future Power Markets, SONI**
- **Eoin Kennedy – Director of Innovation and Planning, EirGrid**
- **David McGowan - Head of Future Power Systems, SONI**
- **Jason Kenna – Head of Network Projects Ireland, EirGrid**
- **Jason Kenna stood in for Sinead Dooley - Head of Public Engagement, EirGrid**
- **Michael McClure – Networks Team, SONI**

- Each workstream lead provided an overview of the workstreams update across Markets, Operations, Network and Public Engagement. Updates as presented are contained within the slides presented, published on Eirgrid website.

Questions and Comments from the Council: SOEF v1.1 Strategic Workstreams

- **Moderator** opened the floor for questions and comments.

- **Member (Question):** Imperfections Cost forecast this year is extremely high, over €800m. Has EirGrid completed modelling work to identify the drivers, and mitigations?
  - **Marc Senouci (Response):**

    Imperfections drivers remain the same:
    - Network restrictions
    - Operational constraints
    - Increasing renewable penetration

The main cause of volatility is wholesale fuel prices (major cause of year to year swings)

TSOs model these drivers annually and monitor performance throughout the year.

Forecasting vs. Long-Term Focus - Some industry participants argue:
- Annual forecasting adds limited value, as it is reset each year.
- More effort should be spent identifying the top cost drivers over 5–10 years and tracking mitigation actions.

- **Marc Senouci** and **Eoin Kennedy** respond that:
  - Year-ahead forecasts are a Trading and Settlement Code obligation and are the key element of setting the annual Imperfections Charge. This is essential to ensure generators can be paid for redispatch to keep the power system stable and secure.
  - Long term planning is addressed in ECP constraint forecasting analysis, network development, and EU-level planning frameworks.
  - Mitigation Efforts are underway in key areas to reduce imperfections:
    - Operational Policy Roadmap (major focus)
    - Network upgrades and reinforcements
    - Market and system service developments (SMP and FASS)
    - Trade-offs exist reducing imperfections may increase wholesale costs and vice versa.

- **Member (Question**): Can an update be given on Hybrids and in particular the possibility of Fully Integrated Hybrids (self dispatch behind the meter). Industry keen to see progress.
- **Member (Comment)**: Biggest blocker is cross-charging for batteries. Without cross-charging, co-located batteries and renewables are not financially viable.
- **Member (Comment)**: Falling battery costs recently have created urgency—developers want:
  - Self-dispatch behind the meter
  - Reduced reliance on TSO dispatch signals
  - Perception that progress has been too slow (10+ years) and fragmented.

- **TSO (Response):**
  - **Eoin Kennedy** confirmed that hybrid progress is continuing, with over-installation rules complete and MEC-sharing now awaiting a CRU decision. Once approved and implemented, it will unlock meaningful

co-located hybrid benefits. TSOs supportive of hybrids to unlock grid benefits. However, fully integrated hybrids with behind-the-meter self-dispatch are a longer-term development, requiring major market, operational, and regulatory changes.
    - **David McGowan & Michael Atcheson:** At SONI, work on hybrids will be considered as part of our planning cycle for the next business year, with a potential working group to support design. SONI will continue to liaise with EirGrid on limited aspects of the Hybrids workstream relating to markets to ensure co-ordination and alignment.

- **Member (Question):** Can an update be provided on the next step of integrating BESS into the SDP. I understand there are further updates for full BM integration?
    - **TSO (Response):**
    - **Michael Atcheson & Stephen Gannon:** Balancing Market Reform initiatives are ongoing and are part of the Strategic Market Programme. This includes the enduring ESPS. BMR will be included in future slide packs.

- **Member (comment):** raised the concern that DCEE is designing RESS auctions based on hybrid functionality that does not yet exist in the Irish market, and this misalignment needs urgent correction.

- **Member (Question): What is the timeframe for publishing the TES system needs assessment and net zero studies**
    - **Eoin Kennedy (Response):** EirGrid explained that the Net Zero / Strategic Network Design studies, which incorporates assessment of system needs, are nearing completion and that they plan to publish a report soon. While no precise publication date was provided during the meeting, they indicated that substantial work is now "coming to fruition" and that industry will be able to review the outputs in due course.

- **Member (Question):** Can an update be provided on Renewable Hubs? They were a core part of the SOEF network design, but not mentioned in the slides. Would welcome a workshop on it.
    - **Liam Ryan (Response):** EirGrid is developing the renewable hub concept as part of a wider strategic network planning process and accepted the need for further communication on this.

- **Member (Question):** Governments LEAP calls on CRU, TSO and DSO to make non-firm import capacity available to industry. How can industry apply for this?
    - **Eoin Kennedy (Response):** Industry can request non-firm import capacity today by directly engaging with EirGrid, which will assess requests individually under the existing transmission framework. More broadly, work is also ongoing to take account of CRU's recent decision on the Large Energy Users connection policy.

- **Member (Question):** Can an update be provided on the flexibility needs assessment and identifying long term non fossil fuel flexibility needs?
    - **Michael Atcheson (Response):** EirGrid & SONI confirmed that the Flexibility Needs Assessment is underway using the EU mandated methodology. Modelling work has already begun, and the assessment will be completed by July, with the results informing a new flexibility mechanism required by January 2027. They noted that industry input will be important, with workshops starting now, and that once the July report is published, the focus will shift to designing the market and system arrangements needed to deliver long-term non-fossil flexibility, aligned with the Future Markets programme.

- **Member (Question):** How close are we to being able to restart system trials for Operational Policy changes, an 80% SNSP trial for example?
    - **Eoin Kennedy (Response):** EirGrid and SONI have delayed starting an 80% SNSP trial as we actively manage the Demand Facility Fault Ride Through (FRT) issue. An 80% SNSP trial will only commence when analysis and operational studies indicate it is safe to do so.

Roundtable Breakout Sessions

- Advisory Council Members formed three Breakout Tables, each with an EirGrid/SONI facilitator focussed on a specific topic.
- **Moderator** introduced the breakout group discussions, with each table facilitated by an EirGrid or SONI representative. Participants were asked to select a notetaker to present on the views, ideas and suggestions of the members at each breakout table.

Breakout Topics:

1. **Fault Ride-through** – Facilitated by Eoin Kennedy (EirGrid), Simon Tweed (EirGrid) and David McGowan (SONI)
    - Objective: Discuss the latest around the challenge, actions taken and ways forward
    - Are the solutions appropriate, what else should be considered?
2. **Network Acceleration (Ireland & NI) -** Facilitated by Jason Kenna (EirGrid) and Michael McClure (SONI)
    - Objective: Review NDP outlook and overcoming challenges to grid delivery
    - Challenges: What are the roadblocks and challenges facing grid delivery today?
    - Solutions: How might we overcome these challenges to grid delivery?
3. **European Grids Package -** Facilitated by AnnMarie O'Brien, John Young (EirGrid) and Michael Atcheson (SONI)
    - Objective: Understand industry views on EU Grids Package proposals, such as centralised planning.
    - Core Elements: What are the key assumptions, objectives and actions within the European Grids Package?

Breakout Playback

- An Advisory Council member volunteered from each table to share their findings with the room.
- The points presented are the views, ideas and suggestions of members but not necessarily considered for action.

Table 1: Fault Ride-through
Presenter: Member
Summary of Key Points: Stakeholders stressed the need for clear communication, deeper technical collaboration, and grid level mitigation to protect both system security and Ireland's investment reputation. EirGrid has engaged extensively with industry over recent years on this issue with multiple industry webinars and bi-lateral meetings. EirGrid is actively monitoring the issue and taking extensive operational measures to manage the risk in real-time. In addition to preparing for submission of the FRT Grid Code modification proposals to CRU, EirGrid is also progressing the development of a mechanism for the delivery of more inertia and fast reserves to the power system which will assist in managing the issue.

Table 2: Network Acceleration (Ireland & NI)

Presenter: Member
Key Points:

Challenges: What are the roadblocks and challenges facing grid delivery today?

- Planning process
- Local level political engagement doesn't match national level.
- Grid – more teams needed at these groups
- Need to consider whether the preference would be Overhead Line (OHL) or Underground (UG) cables?
- Number of projects delivered
    - Delays – Overhead Line (OHL) vs Underground (UG) cables?
    - Focus on what is achievable?
- More info needed on progress
- Short-term solutions to bridge gap?
- Impact of delays on network capability analysis
- Improvements to planning (TSO / DSO)
- Supply chain logistics
    - How will we procure equipment 4-8 years?

Solutions: How might we overcome these challenges to grid delivery?

- Political lobbyist in TSO?
- More appetite for grid politically.

- Dynamic Line Rating (DLR) etc. to mitigate slow delivery.
- Be brave in comms.
- GB & IE – strategic plans linking to large infrastructure requirements.
- Advance procurement fund for equipment (i.e. state procurement). ESB – wider procurement risk.
- Standardise – equipment, layouts etc.

Summary: The breakout group discussed that planning, supply chain delays, and outage coordination are the biggest obstacles to accelerating grid delivery in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Solutions focus on political engagement, standardisation, proactive procurement, better resourcing, and transparent communication to keep projects moving and ensure the grid can support renewable targets and demand growth.

Table 3: European Grids Package

Presenter: Member
Key Points:

Core Elements: What are the key assumptions, objectives and actions within the European Grids Package?

- With grid being unique — will we fit in with wider EU plan?
- Economic impact framework — initially connection markets
- Grid being foundational
- Cheapest net zero system
- Accelerated permitting — empowerment
- Funding — lower cost to consumer
- Security of supply with interconnectors
- Where does central coordinator get info?
- Cost inflation if accelerated

Summary: Ireland needs to prioritise building grid infrastructure rather than simply adding more generation, with concerns raised that excessive interconnector development could undermine domestic security of supply. Participants also questioned how a proposed central coordinator would access reliable information and how its decisions could be challenged.

Presentation: Batteries in Focus: Control Room Operations
Presenter: Niall Rutherford

Why ESPS (SDP-02) was needed:

- Key gaps before the implementation of ESPS in the Control Room operations:
  - No formal battery-specific rules in Trading & Settlement Code.
  - Control centres couldn't optimise batteries based on state of charge.
  - No method for batteries to submit scheduled charging intentions.
  - Inaccurate monitoring of battery reserves.

What SDP-02 introduced

- "Follow PN" approach: TSOs follow the battery's market position for scheduling and dispatch unless security issues arise.
- New TSC modifications allow batteries to reflect technical limits.
- System upgrades now allow accurate state-of-charge and reserve monitoring.
- Live since 13 November 2025.

Early results (90-day comparison)

- **Energy throughput ↑ 76% (charging + discharging).**
- **Record exports** from batteries during evening peaks (multiple days >400 MW).
- On 15 Dec: instantaneous discharge of **500 MW = 7.5% of peak demand**.
- **Dispatch instructions tripled** (30/day → 100+/day).
- **Battery revenues ↑ 100%** in ex-ante & balancing markets.
- PN-following is now ~90%.

Summary: SDP 02 has transformed battery behaviour—dramatically increasing energy volumes, boosting peak exports, sharpening charging patterns, and increasing revenue for participants—while enabling closer alignment between market signals and TSO dispatch.

Presentation: Renewable Dispatch Down Working Group Update Ireland

Presenter: Marc Senouci and Margaret Nee (Statkraft)

Renewable Dispatch Down Working Group Update Ireland was set up after industry concerns about rising renewable curtailment/constraints.

The Goal: create a collaborative forum to further understand the management of renewable dispatch down and work together to identify additional actions that could help to improve it. .

Progress across the 6 working group meetings:

- Establish scope, governance, and terms of reference.
- Understanding drivers of dispatch down; walk-through of Operational Policy Roadmap.
- Deep dive into relevant TSO workstreams ; early implementation of industry suggestions (e.g., inclusion of more solar data in existing reports).
- Solutions workshop with industry presenters.
- Collating areas of focus, structuring the plan.
- Draft review of key themes; industry requested further clarity on details of actions and associated timelines.

Industry Concerns & Governance Issues Raised:

- Need for whole-system coordination: CRU, DCEE, TSO, DSO.
- Risk that ARET(Accelerating renewables taskforce) assumes the TSO working group is trying to solve all drivers of renewable dispatch down when there are things like market dynamics that are outside the control of the TSO.
- Dispatch down drivers outside TSO control need separate industry workstreams.
- Concern that public constraint forecasts discourage project financing.
- Calls for a mechanism to escalate non-TSO issues to appropriate bodies.

Questions and Comments from the Council: Renewable Dispatch Down Working Group Update Ireland

- **Member (Question):** Can you publish any outputs or inputs from the RESS 6 consultation?
  In particular, can you share analysis on the cost components (e.g., imperfections, curtailment, constraints) and how these interact with the grid? This would be very useful for industry and lenders."
  - **Marc Senouci (Answer):** The updated constraint forecasting for ECP 2.5 has a plain English summary published alongside it to assist with interpretation of the results. The ECP constraints forecast analysis is focussed on potential renewable dispatch down volumes and percentages under a range of future scenarios but not on costs. The Imperfection cost forecast is published annually as part of the imperfections charge consultation for the SEMC.

Final Comments and Reflections

- **Gerard Carlin, Director of Networks & Innovation, SONI reflected on the following:**
  - Good stakeholder engagement & transparency.
  - Dispatch-down response showed learning and progress.
  - Will aim to show progress on hybrids by September.
  - Working groups will expand;
  - Member refresh important.

- **Liam Ryan, Chief Technology & Transformation Officer, EirGrid reflected on the following:**
    - Reiterated confidence in internal technical expertise.
    - Need to retain cross-industry knowledge.
    - Critical that outputs flow to CRU and DCEE.
    - Confident FRT will be solved through coordinated effort.

- **Moderator closed with a thank you and farewell to all.**

Schedule of Advisory Council Meetings in 2026

- 14th May 2026 at The Sandymount Hotel, Dublin
- 17th September 2026 in Dublin – location to be confirmed

Meeting Actions

#	Topic	Action	Owner	Due
1	Sub-Groups in Advance of Meetings	TSO considering the possibility of hosting sub-groups.	James Atkinson	In advance of next meeting (May 14th 2026)
2	Visibility of SOEF Roadmap & Gaps	TSOs to continue providing workstream updates and find areas to highlight for industry to advise on.	TSO Workstream Leads	Ongoing at each meeting
3	Initiate Member Refresh Process	TSOs to launch Advisory Council Membership refresh process.	James Atkinson	April-May 2026