

**01 October 2008**

### **Meath needs new power supply to meet growing demand**

EIRGRID met elected members of Meath County Council today to update them on the two transmission projects planned for the north east.

EirGrid told the Council that the population of Co Meath grew more than 21 per cent between 2002 and 2006. Electricity consumption has increased by over 38 per cent, with approximately 4000 new electricity connections per year.

Andrew Cooke, Director of Grid Development and Commercial, EirGrid, opened the meeting, saying: "For EirGrid, our only motivation is to provide a safe, high quality, reliable and affordable supply for all customers, including people and businesses in Meath and the north east. Developing these vital new transmission lines is essential to securing energy supplies to the region. The new infrastructure will also support competition among providers, including renewable sources of power."

Andrew Cooke went on to reiterate the need for the proposed 400kV projects in the north-east linking the Woodlands station in Co Meath to a new station to be built near Kingscourt in Co Cavan, and on through Co Cavan, and Monaghan, into Northern Ireland. He said the projects served two key purposes, one, to provide essential reinforcement to the network in the north east and ensure balanced regional development, and secondly, to facilitate the flow of electricity between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

He also went on to explain the barriers to undergrounding these proposed 400 kV lines and referred to the recently released report commissioned by Mr Eamon Ryan, T.D., Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, which found underground cables currently do not compare to overhead lines in terms of reliability and security of electricity supply.

Tomas Mahony, Project Engineer, EirGrid, said "Due to the continued growth in demand for electricity in Meath the transmission system will need to be further developed order to ensure that the economy in the county and region can continue to grow. This work needs to be done if demand created by tourism, agriculture, local business and industry can be met.

“Much of the infrastructure in the region was built 40 years ago and there will be insufficient capacity on these lines that will simply not be able to carry the amount of power required to satisfy demand. Meath and surrounding counties urgently need additional transmission lines to ensure a reliable electricity supply for the future.”

EirGrid also informed councillors that stakeholder engagement is continuing and that information offices are now open in Navan and Carrickmacross. Andrew Cooke confirmed that: “No decision had been made on the preferred route and will not be made until all information submitted to date has been reviewed and given due consideration.”

Tomas Mahony further added: “We have met several individuals, groups and public representatives since opening our information centre in Navan and are eager to meet many more people over the coming weeks and months. It is vital there is open, factual and balanced information. We urge Councillors and members of the public to avail of the information centres to discuss the proposals, have questions answered and provide EirGrid with information which then can be considered as part of the decision making process for the projects.”

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