

# Kildare Meath Community Forum – EirGrid upgrade

## Minutes of Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> of July @7pm

Meeting started at 7.05. Bobby welcomed everyone and asked people to be mindful of turning microphones on and off. Apologies were given and record of attendance was noted.

### **In attendance**

John Kennedy, Karen Mahon, Phillip McCormack, Una Phillips, John Lawler, Michael Gunn, Pat Lynch, Richard Muller, Rose Donovan

### **Apologies**

Anne Cowley, Fionnuala Corcoran, Liam Dolan, Aidan Farrell

**Also in attendance** – Grainne Duffy (EirGrid), Eoghan O Sullivan (EirGrid), Bobby McCormack (Independent Chair from Development Perspectives)

**Agenda** – the agenda was presented and Bobby noted that for subsequent meetings, community forum members can contribute to agenda or suggest items for discussion.

**Introductions** – Bobby gave a brief professional background and explained his role as independent chair. Bobby then proceeded to ask each attendee to state their name, where they lived and which group they represented.

Karen Mahon asked about people joining the forum in the future. Grainne D outlined how Naas in particular needed representation and that if people were interested in this work, they could contact her directly. Grainne also outlined the efforts EirGrid has gone to already in relation to establishing the forum and engaging stakeholders.

**Focus of the Forum** – Bobby read out the following as a reminder and guide for the discussion that followed - “Act as a consultative body throughout the development of the project. It will offer advice to EirGrid on key project developments such as:

- how Eirgrid communicates and engage with the public,
- what Eirgrid needs to consider in developing route options, and
- how Eirgrid can deliver meaningful community benefit to the area where our infrastructure is hosted.

The forum will also meet regularly for project updates and to ensure two-way communication is on-going”.

### **Working together – principles and agreement**

As a follow on to this point, two breakout rooms were formed where groups were asked to identify principles that will form a living group agreement in order to maximise the effectiveness and work of the forum.

### ***The following points were made by Group 1***

- Inclusivity – Be as inclusive as possible especially to those that we may disagree with. This also extended to being inclusive of those not present at the forum meetings.
- Non-judgmental – People will have varied and divergent perspectives.

- Acknowledge the time commitment – Recognise the time and energy that goes into the contribution, which is being made by forum members. Appropriate and timely responses to contributions is expected.
- Transparency about direction(s) – This was referred to in terms of process and milestones. The forum members wish to be kept abreast of updates as they emerge.

### ***The following points were made by Group 2***

- Communications – Open and transparent communications was requested
- Trust – This point was made in relation to public trust. Community forum members felt it was important that it was important that they were not used as shields or scapegoats for public consultation or as a proxy for gauging public opinion.
- Clarity – Participants needs to be clear on the purpose of the forum and the direction it is taking.
- Recognition of interest – Participants felt it was key to recognise the role and interest of the forum members.
- It was noted by Bobby that the process involved in the Community forum runs in parallel to other public consultation processes that will proceed. The work of the forum doesn't replace or hinder any other right or process in relation to the grid upgrade.
- The point was made by the group that EirGrid shouldn't rely on volunteers to do engage the public.

Bobby outlined that these principles would be presented in the form of a draft group agreement before the next meeting for the groups perusal. This would then be visited as a point in the agenda of the next meeting.

### **Tentative timeline and milestones**

Bobby outlined that there would be two further meetings in August / One in October with subsequent meetings to be decided upon. The group was asked to keep the following dates and times in their diaries. Both of the meetings listed below will be held online and Bobby will distribute links closer to the date.

- Meeting 2 – Wednesday the 11<sup>th</sup> of August @7pm
- Meeting 3 – Monday the 30<sup>th</sup> of August @7pm

### **Draft route options – principles for consideration**

Bobby asked the group to consider what principles should be adhered to when EirGrid are examining routing options. Breakout rooms were formed and the following feedback was received from Rose and Aidan respectively on behalf of their groups.

- The route needs to respect sustainability / bio diversity and the environment
- The routing needs to provide security of supply
- Flooding risk should be registered and qualified.
- Heritage factors and monuments should be addressed.
- The routing needs have been done in consultation with other stakeholders (County Council / Bord Gais / Irish Water
- Night time working needs to be considered
- Residents need to be communicated with regularly and clearly.
- The timeframe needs to be made clear to all stakeholders.
- Use available infrastructure if available and appropriate (Ducts)

- Seasonality needs to be taken into account
- Future proofing of route and plans with other stakeholders
- Minimal impact on people / property and mature biodiversity
- Consider and value archaeology
- Present legible routes to public for consideration
- Utilise plain English
- Granting way leave – This needs to be considered in the medium to long term as well as this specific project.

Bobby outlined that these principles would be given to EirGrid and also be returned to on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August for additions and clarification if need be.

### **Questions for consideration – Consultation with your group/community before the 6<sup>th</sup> of Aug.**

Bobby presented a Gdrive link and document and asked forum members to bring these questions to their communities and have a response by the 6<sup>th</sup> of August if possible.

- What events and festivals take place in your community? What time of the year?
- Are there any constraints that you want Eirgrid to be mindful of at this stage?
- What suggestions to you have for Eirgrid in communicating and raising awareness of the project?

Bobby will provide the live link to the group during the week of the 19<sup>th</sup> of July.

Rose D made a suggestion regarding EirGrid utilizing prominent local social media sites for public engagement. Bobby responded by promising to bring this idea to EirGrid for their consideration and would come back to Rose with a response.

### **Recap on action points**

- Bobby will distribute minutes of the meeting during the week of the 19<sup>th</sup> of July along with the G Drive link with questions.
- Bobby will put together the draft routing principles and group agreement in advance of the meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> of Aug and will disseminate for feedback and contribution to from the forum members.
- Forum members will engage local communities in relation to this project and gather information pertaining to the questions on the G Drive link.
- Forum members will send in suggestions for agenda of next meeting before the 6<sup>th</sup> of August to Bobby directly.

### **Date and time of next meeting(s)**

The 11<sup>th</sup> of August @7pm on Zoom. Bobby will distribute the link in advance to the forum members

### **AOB**

Bobby thanked everyone for attending and provided his mail address should anyone want to contact him directly.

Meeting was concluded at 8.45pm