

EirGrid commits to improving its public consultation

EirGrid has committed to improving the organisation's approach to public consultation in the future.

Last week, EirGrid announced details of its new approach to consultation arising from a comprehensive review of existing consultation process for grid development projects.

The review found that while significant consultation measures had been undertaken by EirGrid, changes are required to improve the process for future engagement in line with international best practice.

Speaking about the new approach to consultation, EirGrid CEO Fintan Slye said: "The implementation of these commitments will strengthen EirGrid's approach to consultation. Our primary goal is to restore trust and enable greater participation in the decision-making process as part of future consultations."

He continued: "The commitments require a change within EirGrid, and we are fully committed to achieving this as quickly as possible. We believe this is critical if we are to deliver the grid, on behalf of all electricity users, to meet the needs of people, communities, businesses, the economy and society overall now and in the future."

The public will be given the opportunity to comment on the approach until January 30th 2015.

EirGrid has largely accepted the conclusions of the two independent studies which were conducted and has compiled a set of commitments based on all of the inputs into the consultation review.

These commitments include plans to "develop a participative approach", "change our culture and processes", and "encourage leadership and advocacy".

EirGrid has set out a timeline for the implementation of all of the commitments, the majority of which will be implemented within the next six months.

In a statement issued last week, EirGrid also provided a brief update in relation to other initiatives announced earlier this year.

On the Grid Link Project, which affects large parts of County Waterford and surrounding areas, EirGrid is working to identify a potential underground route which it says will be published alongside an overhead option for the project in mid-2015.

Both options will then go out for public consultation before being presented to the Independent Expert Panel.

The company also said it had proposed a Community Gain Fund for localities and for residences located close to new pylons and stations.