

*Aras an Chontae,
Portlaoise,
Co Laois.
R32 EHP9*

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Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act.

From: Allen. Brendan (Engineering and Major Projects)
Sent: Friday 3 June 2022 16:48
To: Simon Walton <swalton@laoiscoco.ie>
Subject: Laois Kilkenny Coolnabacky Substation

Simon

As discussed on the phone please find attached the letter which issued to LCC yesterday 2nd June 2022.

Regards,

**Brendan Allen | Planning Team Leader Civil Environmental & Renewable Engineering |
Engineering & Major Projects | ESB**



Ms. Irene Delaney,
Laois County Council,
Aras an Chontae,
Portlaoise,
County Laois.
R32 EHP9

2nd June 2022

Dear Ms Delaney,

Thank you for your letter dated 27th April outlining the motion passed by the elected members of Laois County Council in relation to the construction of the Coolnabacky substation.

Firstly, it is important to clarify the roles and responsibilities between EirGrid and ESB Networks. EirGrid was responsible for obtaining planning permission for the project. In common with all transmission system developments, there was a handover to ESB Networks post-planning for the detailed design and construction stage. EirGrid carries out the long-term planning of the transmission system and operates the transmission system 24/7, 365 days a year. The Laois Kilkenny Reinforcement Project is needed to address quality and security of electricity supply in Laois and the south eastern region. Without this project being developed the electricity supply will gradually worsen for domestic and business users in Laois and counties in the south east.

The project has already been fully environmentally assessed as part of the planning process with An Bord Pleanála granting permission for this project in April 2014. Comprehensive environmental assessments were undertaken as part of the planning submission. The environmental reports and planning documents are all available at www.eirgridlaoiskilkenny.ie.

In addition, an independent environmental assessment and report was commissioned following the appointment of Irish Rural Link (IRL) in October 2019 to undertake an independent engagement process with the local communities. This report was procured and prepared independent of ESB Networks and EirGrid. The report is publicly available on both EirGrid and ESB Networks respective websites (https://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/ie2219-5242_tufa_spring_assesment-rev_1.4-combined.pdf or <https://www.esbnetworks.ie/docs/default-source/publications/tufa-spring-assessment-coolnabacky-sub-station-site.pdf>) and includes an independent assessment of the hydrogeology and hydrology at the site. ESB Networks has, and will continue to, implement the recommendations as set out in this independent assessment. ESB Networks are fully committed to ensuring that the construction of the substation is completed to the highest standards. ESB Networks are working and will continue to work closely with Laois County Council regarding;

1. Planning compliance, and
2. Environmental monitoring, including groundwater and surface water monitoring by an independent hydrogeologist.



NETWORKS



ESB Networks will also continue to liaise closely with Laois County Council throughout the construction phase of this project. ESB Networks plan to commence construction of the 110kV side of the substation in Q3 of 2022. The transformer bunds and 400kV building will be built in the second phase of the project.

An updated Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be submitted by ESB Networks to the local authority in advance of construction. The CEMP is a document which details the extent to which environmental effects, impacts, and risks exist and will be mitigated during the construction phase, and this will be reviewed independent of ESB Networks by Laois County Council as per standard processes. The CEMP will set out how the mitigation measures specified in the approved Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in the planning application will be delivered during the construction phase of the project. ESB Networks have also committed to provide full design details of the transformer bunding once the procurement process for the transformers is complete.

Work is progressing on the overall Laois Kilkenny Reinforcement Project. In addition to works in Coolnabacky, a new 110 kV/ 38 kV substation in Ballyragget is at electrical fitout stage, the uprating of a 110 kV line from Kilkenny to Ballyragget is now 90% complete, the construction of a new 110 kV line between Ballyragget and Coolnabacky is due to commence in Q3 2022, and upgrade works at Kilkenny 110kV stations are well advanced. This project overall is of strategic importance to the supply of electricity and the further wider economic development of the south east region.

We would like to assure you that the construction of this project will progress fully in line with the environmental requirements contained in the planning conditions set out by An Bord Pleanála, together with any associated requirements set out by Laois County Council.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Foley
Chief Executive
EirGrid plc

Nicholas Tarrant
Managing Director
ESB Networks