

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE OF DUNGANNON AND SOUTH TYRONE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2007 IN THE COUNCIL OFFICES, CIRCULAR ROAD DUNGANNON

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| MEMBERS PRESENT: | Councillor R Burton (Chair) Councillors Badger, Cavanagh, Daly, Gillespie Greenaway (7.40 pm), McGuigan, McLarnon and Monteith |
| OTHERS: | Councillor Molloy |
| APOLOGY: | Councillor Hamilton |
| OFFICERS PRESENT: | Messrs Burke, Mrs F McClements and Mrs M Grogan |
| CONSUMER COUNCIL: | Ms Sinead Dynan |
| NORTHERN IRELAND ELECTRICITY: | Mr Billy Graham Mr Ken Harvey Mr Michael Hewitt Mr Yaris Minn |

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm.

1. NORTHERN IRELAND ELECTRICITY - NORTH SOUTH INTERCONNECTOR

The Chairman welcomed representatives from Northern Ireland Electricity and invited them to address the meeting.

Mr Billy Graham thanked members for their invite and proceeded to give an overhead presentation on the benefits of the North South Interconnector (appendix 1).

Councillor Greenaway entered the meeting at 7.40 pm.

Councillor Monteith left the meeting at 7.50 pm.

After completion of presentation, Councillors/Officers made the following comments/questions:

- 1) What would the benefits be to the Consumer if Interconnector goes ahead?

- 2) Concern that some cables are next/beside some dwellings, could these be sidelined a little?
- 3) Why are cables not laid underground?
- 4) Biggest concern would be the implications to long/short term health risks, report is somewhat vague, what would realistically be a safe distance?
- 5) What is the distance required between pylons, width of cables and the required height for lines?
- 6) Would landowners be compensated?
- 7) At what voltage is the new line going to be transmitting electricity?
- 8) What are the costings and who would pay for the project? Is there any additional funding for this new interconnector?
- 9) What is the view of the Consumer Council to proposed new interconnector?
- 10) How long has the Dublin to Limerick line been operational and were there any health studies carried out?
- 11) What impact would the interconnector have on the environment?
- 12) At what stage is the process at now?
- 13) Is there any way of knowing what the pylons may look like?

In response to the following, NIE representatives and Ms Dynan answered the required information:

- 1) The benefits of the Interconnector to the Consumer would be:
 - a) Competition
The interconnector capacity will facilitate greater competition, as power stations throughout Ireland will sell to a central pool. Generating companies will compete with each other to provide electricity at the lowest price. In a competitive market, these price benefits will be passed on to the consumer.
 - b) Cost Savings
Always necessary to have reserve generating capacity available in case technical problems occur at a power station. Interconnectors allow for the sharing of generating reserve between two systems. Once construction costs have been met, the interconnector will deliver long-term infrastructure cost savings in both Northern and Southern Ireland.
 - c) Stronger Electricity Supplies
Interconnector enables both utilities to support each other in the event of a major fault.
 - d) Renewables

Renewables or “green” electricity is increasing. The variable nature of wind causes significant challenges in the levels of wind that can be connected to an electricity grid. Necessary to have conventional generation sources, such as fossil fuel, in reserve and ready to run to make good any shortfall in renewables, when the wind is not blowing.

2. Cables realistically should be placed in the best route as possible, but to complete the line, some angles do have to be put in place.
3. Cables are not laid underground because of, technical reasons, land and the cost. The high cost is because of:
 - The cost of the cable itself
 - The cost of excavation, cable laying and land reinstatement
 - The cost of all the jointing required, including terminals
 - The cost of additional substations
 - The cost of overcoming the technical issues associated with using underground cable.
4. EMFs (electric and magnetic fields) are a naturally occurring phenomenon. There is no proven link between EMF's and any illness, something confirmed in a recently issued World Health Organisation report. Over £300m has been spent worldwide over a period of 25 years, investigating the subject. The new interconnector will be designed to comply fully with Government policy and guidelines. A 60 metre line is thought to be more than a safe distance from any dwelling.
5. The distance between pylons are in the region of 300m to 500m, the width of the cables are 600 mm and the required height for overhead lines are 20 metres, so as anyone working on roofs etc would be at a safe distance.
6. Landowners will receive compensation as appropriate to the rights granted to NIE in respect of their land and reflecting the activities of NIE on their land.
7. The new line will be transmitting electricity at 400kV, rather than the old voltage of 275Kv. This will be first of its kind in Northern Ireland.
8. The project is expected to cost approximately £120m, depending on the final route selection and subsequent design decisions. Up to 50% funding of the design phase is being provided by European Union Trans-European Networks for Energy. The remainder of the design cost will be funded by NIE

and is ultimately paid for by electricity consumers. The biggest cost associated with the interconnector will be the construction cost. It is highly unlikely that any grant aid from Europe will be available, so it is likely that electricity consumers will fund the cost.

9. Ms Dynan advised that the Consumer Council would be in favour of the proposed Interconnector, at present gathering a lot of information regarding the passing on of costs to the Consumer. When information is compiled, would then be in a better position to make a firm recommendation.
10. The Dublin to Limerick line has been operational for approximately 20 years. Not aware of any health studies being carried out as it is a relatively rural area.
11. NIE is currently undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), as this is an essential requirement of planning law and must accompany any major planning application for both public and private developments. The EIA will be made available for inspection by the public.
12. The project is at the stage that the final preferred route has been identified and the consultation process is underway.
13. Agreed that NIE send digitally enhanced photographs of what the pylons would look like on site to the Council.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from Northern Ireland Electricity and the Consumer Council for their attendance and advised that the matter would be discussed at the Public Services Committee meeting due to be held on Tuesday 27 November 2007.

2. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm and concluded at 8.47 pm.

MAYOR _____

CHIEF EXECUTIVE _____
(Acting)