The Water Supply Project – Eastern and Midlands Region (WSP) is the first major comprehensive upgrade to Ireland’s “New Source” infrastructure in the region in over 60 years. It has been in development since the mid 1990s, originally under Dublin City Council as project sponsor on behalf of the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG), and under Irish Water Management since January 2014.

The research work and public consultations since January 2014 have concluded that existing supply sources and infrastructure for the Eastern and Midlands region do not have the capacity or resilience to meet future requirements in a sustainable away. Population and industrial growth will generate a demand for an additional 330 million litres of water per day by 2050 (which is the equivalent of 130 Olympic sized swimming pools) to ensure security of supply. The present infrastructure is struggling to meet current need as evidenced by a number of significant and costly outages in Dublin over the past 6 years.

As part of the planning process, Irish Water has recently completed the fourth round of non-statutory public consultation. This consultation invited feedback on the proposed development of the Preferred Scheme and on what should be considered in the Environment Impact Statement (EIS) which will accompany a planning application to An Bord Pleanála. The preferred scheme (see Figure 1) comprises the abstraction of water on the eastern shore of Parteen Basin in Co. Tipperary, with water treatment nearby at Birdhill. Treated water would then be piped 170km to a termination point reservoir at Peamount in South County Dublin, connecting into the Greater Dublin network. Supplies of treated water would be made available to Midland communities along the route from Parteen Basin to Dublin.
Project History

Greater Dublin Water Supply Strategic Study

In 1996, the Greater Dublin Water Supply Strategic Study (GDWSSS) published by the then Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG), identified the requirement for a new supply source for the metropolitan area of Dublin and surrounding areas. The need for this new source was again confirmed in a review of the GDWSSS in 2000.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the process of identifying and evaluating the significant environmental effects that are likely to result from the implementation of a plan or programme at a national, regional or local level. The SEA process gives interested parties and the general public the opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of a proposed plan or programme and to also be kept informed during the decision making process.

Dublin City Council (DCC), who led the project on behalf of the DEHLG, undertook two phases of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) between 2005-2011. The SEA assessments identified, and considered, three options initially and then subsequently ten potential new source options to cater for the projected water supply - demand deficit (see Figure 2).

In the second phase of SEA assessment, 2007 to 2011, ten new water supply options for meeting projected growth in water demand in the East and Midlands were evaluated at a desktop level. Out of the ten Water Supply Options evaluated at this ‘high level,’ four were identified as technically viable options as follows:

- **LOUGH DERG AND STORAGE**: abstraction of raw water on the north eastern shore of Lough Derg in combination with raw water storage in the Midlands.
- **LOUGH DERG (DIRECT)**: abstraction and treatment on the north eastern shore of Lough Derg
- **PARTEEN BASIN (DIRECT)**: abstraction and treatment of water on the eastern shore of Parteen Basin.
- **DESALINATION**: Abstraction of sea water from the Irish Sea in north Fingal; removal of salt by Reverse Osmosis (RO).

The phase 2 SEA Plan expressed a preference for the Lough Derg and Storage option subject to further detailed ground investigations combined with modelling simulations of water abstraction. This Plan was adopted in 2010 by Dublin City Council and the SEA Statement and adopted plan were published in 2011.

Current Phase

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) & Planning Phase

In January 2014, Irish Water assumed responsibility for the provision of public water services from 34 local authorities. This included the transfer of responsibility for the Water Supply Project - Eastern and Midlands Region (WSP) from Dublin City Council to Irish Water.

Irish Water identified four key stages of non-statutory public consultation and various ‘on-the-ground’ investigations that would be undertaken in the development of a planning application for a preferred new water supply project for the Eastern and Midlands Region. Each consultation phase allowed feedback to be incorporated into the development of the preferred new water supply scheme for the Eastern and Midlands Region. A summary of the four non-statutory public consultations (2015-2017) is provided overleaf.

Next Steps - Moving to a Planning Application

Following the conclusion of the consultation process in February 2017, Irish Water is continuing to engage directly landowners affected by the proposed pipeline route. Four dedicated Landowner Liaison Officers have been, and will continue to be available to meet face-to-face with Landowners to discuss any aspect of the proposed project.

The feedback from all consultations alongside further technical and environmental studies and engagement with landowners and the general public will inform the details of the final preferred scheme.

A full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be produced which will present the results of on-going environmental investigations and consultations and will influence the detailed development of the preferred scheme, identifying and evaluating any potential impacts and appropriate mitigation measures to be considered.

The EIS will accompany Irish Water’s Planning application to An Bord Pleanála which will be submitted towards the end of 2017 / early 2018 for their independent adjudication. At that point An Bord Pleanála will undertake all necessary statutory consultations.

Should planning permission be granted for the project construction and commissioning would take approximately three to four years.

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**Figure 2 SEA Options**
Project History

This project has been subject to extensive research, assessment and public consultation. Figure 3 outlines the chronological development of all the work undertaken on the project from 1996 to date.

1995
Greater Dublin Water Supply Strategic Study (GDWSSS) Commenced

1996
GDWSSS Report Published
- Identification of need for a new source for the metropolitan area of Dublin and surrounding areas.

2005
Commencement of Phase 1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

May 2006
SEA Environmental Report and Feasibility Study (Draft Plan) published for Public Consultation

June 2006
Public Consultation Period

Oct 2006
Strategic Policy Committee Dublin City Council Decision
- Studies to continue on Shannon Options and Desalination

2007
Commencement of Phase 2 Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Project Website Established
- 10 Options identified for assessment

2008
SEA Phase 2 Draft Plan and Environmental & Habitats Reports Published for Public Consultation (Nov 2008 – Feb 2009)

July 2010
Plan amended to incorporate feedback from consultation and submitted to Department of Environment and Local Government

Oct 2010
Dublin City Council formal adoption of Plan - Recommended option Lough Derg and Storage, subject to further investigations

2011
Dublin City Council Published Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement and adopted Plan

2011-2013
Service Provider Procurement for Current Phase – Environmental Impact Assessment & Planning

2014-2018
Current Phase - Environmental Impact Assessment & Planning

Figure 3: Project Timeline
EIA & Planning Stage Public Consultation Summary

Subject: March 2015 - May 2015 (8 weeks)
Project Need Report (PNR) & Project Road Map

The PNR draws on extensive independent expert research and recommendations in relation to population projections and economic forecasting (2015 – 2050) and it concludes definitively that a new water supply source is needed for Irish Water's Eastern & Midlands Region.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation Terms of Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has the Project Team considered all issues related to need? Have all factors been considered?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you like to be kept informed of project updates and if so would you be happy to be added to our database and to receive regular project updates?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Roadmap we propose to follow in bringing forward a solution to meet the need, is presented as part of this consultation</td>
</tr>
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Subject: June 2015 – Sept 2015 (8 weeks)
Options Working Paper (OWP)

The OWP contains an independent review of all previous studies undertaken on providing a new source of water supply for Dublin and other parts of the Eastern & Midlands Region. It concluded that the four technically viable options which emerged from the SEA process remained appropriate to be brought forward into the planning & EIA process and that all four options should be considered on an equal footing pending further detailed investigations. It also outlined the assessment criteria in options appraisal, and the proposed approach to positioning infrastructure to achieve least environmental impact, through the use of constraint mapping.


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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>What other national, regional or locally important constraints should Irish Water take into account when locating the infrastructure associated with each water supply option?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you any comments on the proposed Constraints and the approach to their use?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there any Assessment Criteria other than those proposed which should be used in the next phase of options appraisal?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How would you like to be communicated with, as the project progresses</td>
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Subject: Nov 2015 to Feb 2015 (10 weeks)
Preliminary Options Appraisal Report (POAR)

The POAR set out the detail of the assessment process for the four technically viable options. The report concluded, after undertaking ‘on-the-ground investigations’, abstraction modelling simulations and analysis of stakeholder feedback, that the two options located on the North East of Lough Derg are unsuitable, primarily for environmental reasons. The two options which remained technically viable and environmentally sustainable were desalination (from the Irish Sea) and the abstraction of water from the lower Shannon at Parteen Basin in County Tipperary. Of these two, the Report identified abstraction from the River Shannon at Parteen Basin as the “emerging preferred option”.


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<tr>
<td>Whether Irish Water has taken all relevant factors into account in reaching the findings outlined in the Preliminary Options Appraisal Report?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you like Irish Water to communicate with you on future developments in this project?</td>
</tr>
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Subject: Nov 2015 to Feb 2016 (14 weeks)
Final Options Appraisal Report (FOAR) & Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Scoping Report

The POAR confirmed that the preferred scheme for a new water supply is abstraction of water from the Lower Shannon at Parteen Basin, water treatment nearby at Birdhill and treated water piped to a termination point reservoir in Peamound, Co. Dublin, with supplies of treated water available to Midland communities along the route. The EIS Scoping Report describes any potential environmental impacts of the scheme and how these will be assessed / mitigated in the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

A report on this consultation is currently being prepared.

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<tr>
<td>Is there any additional information that should be considered in the development of the Preferred Scheme?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any additional environmental issues or alternative methodologies that should be taken into consideration in preparing the EIS?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you like Irish Water to communicate with you as the project progresses towards planning approval?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further information can also be obtained by calling 1890 252 848

Contact Us

Should you have any questions or queries about this project, wish to request hard copies of any of the publications mentioned in this newsletter or wish to be included on a mailing list for project updates, please do contact us using the details below.

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An Irish version of this newsletter is available to you if you prefer. Please contact us and we can send one to you, or alternatively you can download it from the website at www.watersupplyproject.ie or email watersupply@water.ie

Más mian leat cóip den leabhrán seo a fháil as Gaeilge, déan teagmháil linn ar an uimhir thuasluaite.