

## Moving towards a final decision

Consultation Newsletter No.3



NOVEMBER 2015

### The story so far

Irish Water's remit includes the delivery of a sustainable and resilient Water Supply nationally. One of the key elements in the successful delivery of that remit is finding a major new source of water supply for the Eastern and Midlands region of the Country. This will represent the first major comprehensive upgrade of "new source" infrastructure in over 80 years and it will meet the domestic and commercial needs of over 40% of Ireland's population into the medium to long term future.

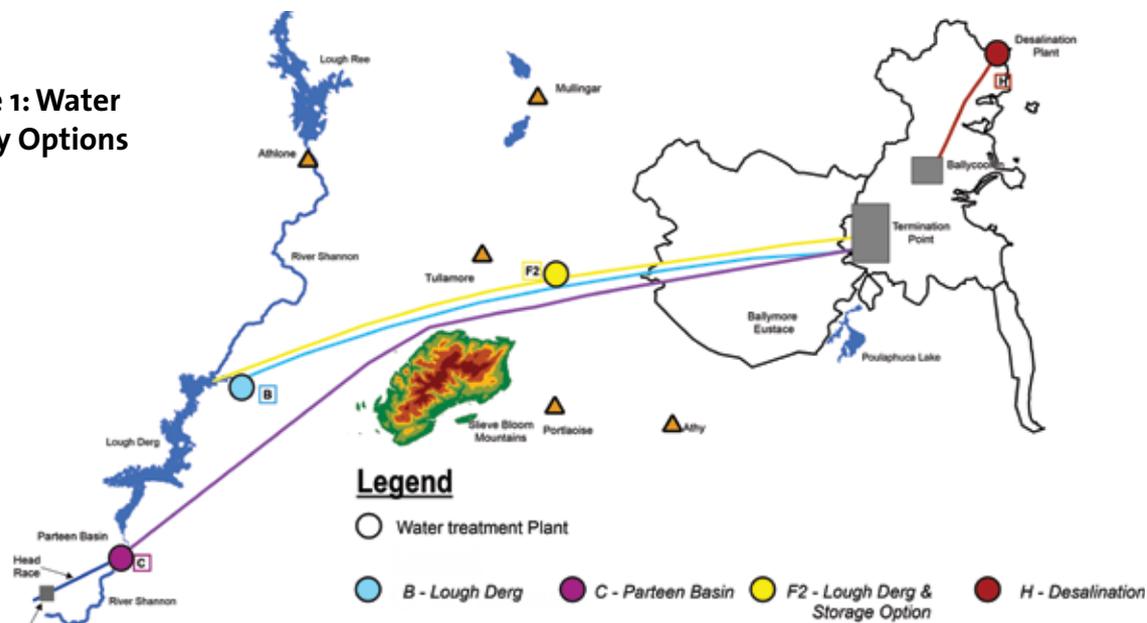
Over the past two years Irish Water has, through extensive research and two phases of public consultation, established that there is a need for a new source of supply. Simply fixing leaks, important though that is, will not deliver the additional 330 million litres of water a day this region will need by 2050.

Four technically viable potential options for a new source of supply have been identified. Newsletters 1 and 2 in this series provide details of those first two phases of the project and are available for download at [www.watersupplyproject.ie](http://www.watersupplyproject.ie).

Phase three has now begun with the publication of the Preliminary Options Appraisal Report (POAR), which sets out the detail of the assessment process for the four

options, three of which are located on the Shannon with the fourth being desalination. The report concludes that two of the four options located on the North East of Lough Derg are unsuitable, primarily for environmental reasons. The two which remain viable are desalination (from the Irish Sea) and the abstraction of water from the lower Shannon at Parteen Basin in Tipperary. Of these two, the report identifies Parteen Basin as the "emerging preferred option". Irish Water is now entering a 10 week period of public consultation on the Preliminary Options Appraisal Report. All interested parties are invited to take part and their submissions will inform the next phase of the decision process which will result in a Final Options Appraisal Report, confirming the Option to be brought into the formal Planning Application process involving An Bord Pleanála.

Figure 1: Water Supply Options



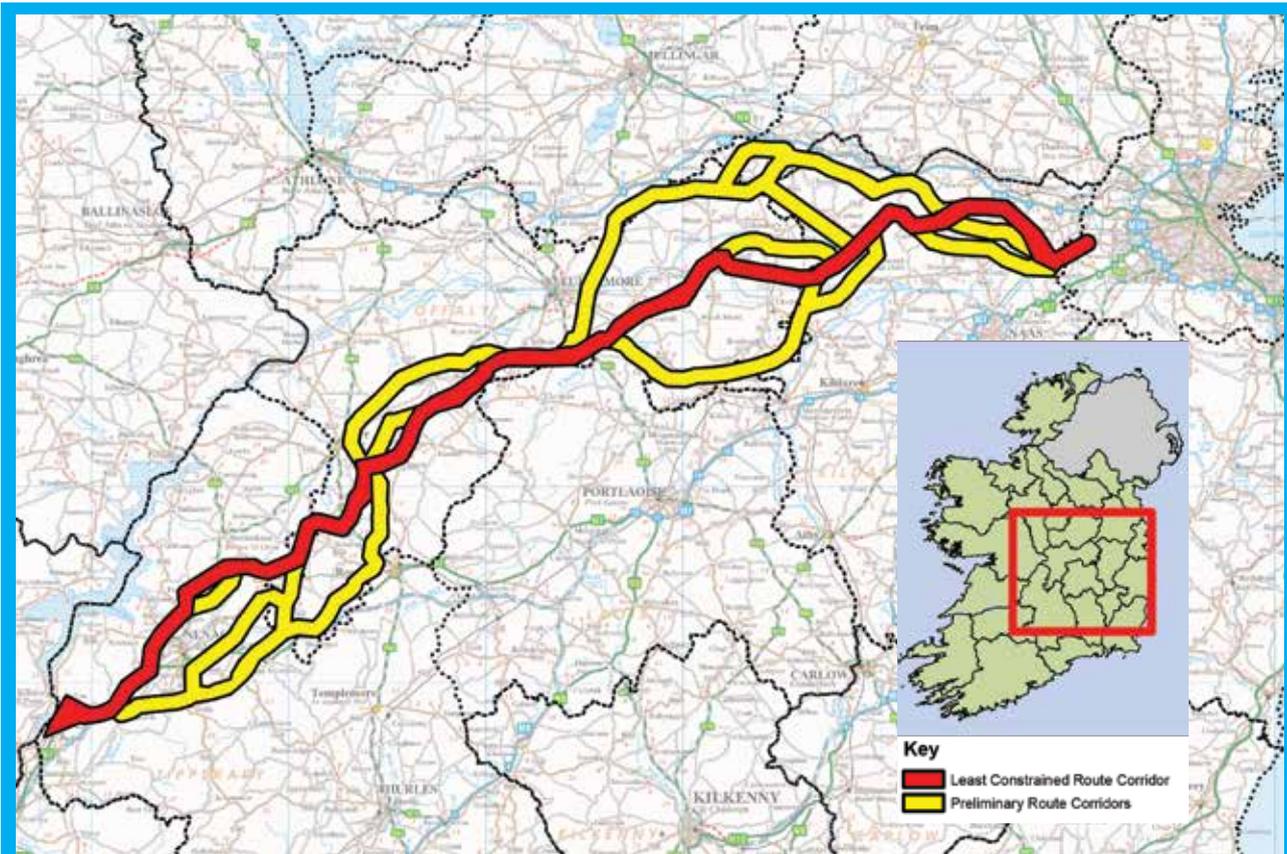


Figure 2: Preliminary Corridors and Least Constrained Corridor

## Identifying the preferred option

Each of the four viable options have been assessed under wide ranging and stringent criteria.

### Environmental factors:

- Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna
- Fisheries
- Water
- Air/Climatic Factors
- Material Assets (Energy)
- Cultural Heritage (including Architecture and Archaeology)
- Landscape and Visual
- Material Assets (Land Use)
- Tourism
- Population
- Human Health
- Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology

### Technical and Risk factors:

- Safety
- Planning Policy
- Engineering and Design
- Capital and Operating Costs
- Sustainability
- Risk (including technical, environmental, planning, financial and socioeconomic)

## Why Parteen?

**At this point the two options located at the North East sector of Lough Derg have been ruled out as the assessment process has shown them to have a significantly greater potential to negatively impact on the Shannon water system than abstraction from the Parteen Basin. The Parteen option also provides additional local benefits along a more extensive underground pipeline corridor running 165km from Parteen to Dublin.**

Despite having the longest pipeline corridor, the Parteen Basin option has the least environmental impact of all the four options for the following reasons:

- The location of the facility for taking and treating the water is close to the mouth of the river Shannon. This limits any impacts upstream, and also removes the possibility of introducing invasive species into other rivers.
- The hydroelectric scheme in the river already regulates the lake levels and river flow. Taking hydro power water from Parteen Basin, while operating within the existing water level operating band, means that the Parteen Basin Option will not negatively impact lake levels or river flows.
- It offers the opportunity for many communities along the route to benefit from the new water supply.

## Shannon v Desalination

While desalination from the Irish Sea still remains a possibility under the assessment criteria, the Shannon downstream of Lough Derg at Parteen Basin is emerging as the most suitable source of new water supply for a number of key reasons;

- It provides treated water, delivered in a way which brings the greatest availability and economic advantages to the widest group of communities in Irish Water's Eastern and Midlands Region. Towns and communities along the proposed 165km pipeline route through the Eastern and Midlands Region will gain a secure water supply to meet future domestic, commercial and industrial water requirements and therefore the opportunity to develop and grow their economies. All consumers will have a reliable and sustainable water supply to international standard of service.
- It enables the delivery of a more efficient and up to date supply infrastructure by facilitating the development of fewer and more modern water treatment plants to replace the numerous small, inefficient and outdated plants currently operating across the region.
- It is less expensive by a factor of 1.5, with a lower carbon footprint than the desalination option, the only other remaining technically viable option.

## Moving to a final decision – public consultation process. How to have your say

While the Parteen Basin option is emerging as the preferred new water supply source for the Eastern and Midlands Region of Ireland, more research and assessment needs to be done to ensure that all possible relevant factors are examined in reaching a final decision.

That process includes a 10 week period of public consultation which began with the publication of the Preliminary Options Appraisal Report on 26 November 2015 and concludes on 4 February 2016. All contributors are asked to give their views on:-

1. "Whether Irish Water has taken all relevant factors into account in reaching the findings outlined in the Preliminary Options Appraisal Report.
2. "How you would like Irish Water to communicate with you on future developments in this project."

If you want to contribute to the consultation process, contact us either by email or by post using the details provided below. Irish Water will consider all submissions that it receives from the consultation as it moves towards announcing a 'final' preferred option in Spring 2016.

Following the announcement of the preferred option, Irish Water will again hold a public consultation before making a final decision and submitting its planning application in Q3, 2017.

## Why not Desalination?

Desalination has come through the assessment process carried out to date, as the only other viable option but is much less suitable than the Parteen Basin option for a number of reasons;

- It is a Dublin-centric solution, so it does not deliver the widespread benefits to towns and communities throughout the Eastern and Midlands Region.
- It is a less environmentally friendly option than the Parteen Basin option because the provision of desalinated water requires a high energy input leading to a greater carbon footprint.
- The cost of water delivered is at least one and a half times as expensive as other proposed options.

## Community Gain

As with all strategic infrastructure projects, the planning process requires that due consideration of community gain is undertaken by the planning applicant. Irish Water has set out its approach to Community gain in Section 10 of the Preliminary Options Appraisal Report. Section 10 indicates that there is potential for a significant element of community gain for those living and working in the area selected for the new Eastern and Midland Region water supply.

In addition to improved and sustainable domestic and commercial water supplies, the communities along the route of the pipeline are also in a position to gain some specific additional benefits.

Many products and services needed during construction will be sourced from local businesses; the construction phase of the project will provide a range of employment opportunities for local people; Irish Water, working with Local Authorities and other relevant bodies, propose to provide financial support for training schemes to enable as many local people as possible to work on the project and Irish Water also propose to support the development of environmental education and protection initiatives, sports and leisure facilities.

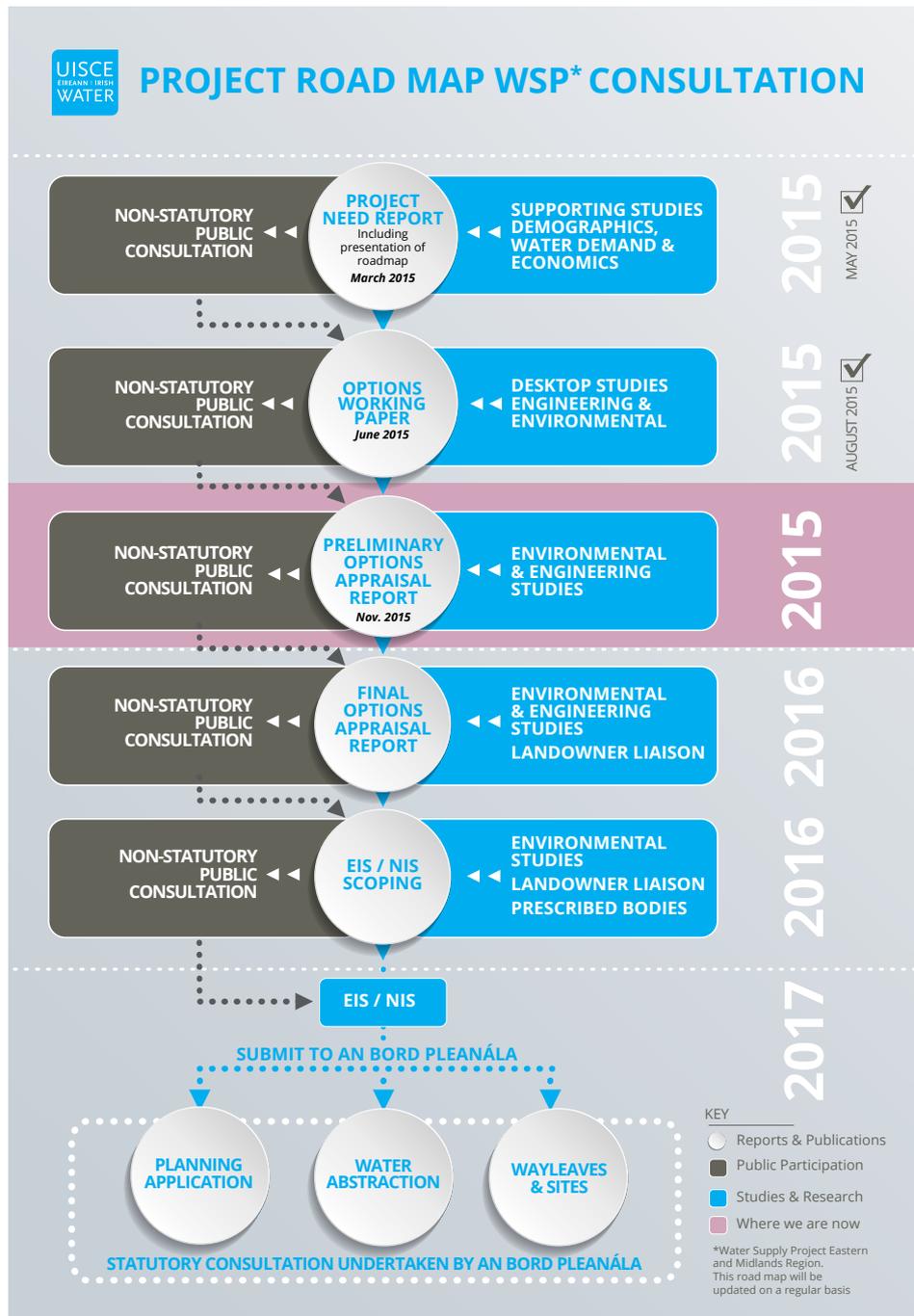
Of the two remaining water supply options under consideration, the Emerging Preferred Option (Parteen Basin) has the potential to give rise to the greatest breadth and variety of community gain as its 165km pipeline (See Figure 2) crosses several counties en-route between the Shannon and Dublin. The Desalination Option benefits a much smaller area.

More detailed information on community gain can be found in Section 10 of the Preliminary Options Appraisal Report and in the FAQ section of the project website at [www.watersupplyproject.ie](http://www.watersupplyproject.ie). All interested parties now have an opportunity to give their views.

## If you want to find out more

This newsletter gives an overview of the project to date but if you want to read about it in detail all relevant documentation, including the full Preliminary Options Appraisal Report, is available at: [www.watersupplyproject.ie](http://www.watersupplyproject.ie).

Or if you would prefer a hard copy of a report, contact us on the numbers below and we will send it to you.



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](http://www.watersupplyproject.ie) or email [watersupply@water.ie](mailto:watersupply@water.ie)

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