

Water Supply Project

Eastern and Midlands Region

The Preferred Scheme for a New Water Supply for the Eastern & Midlands Region

Consultation Newsletter No.4

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Irish Water is launching the fourth public consultation phase on the Preferred Scheme for a New Water Supply for the Eastern and Midlands Region (WSP). This will represent the first major comprehensive upgrade of 'new source' infrastructure in over 60 years and will meet the domestic and commercial needs of over 40% of Ireland's population into the medium to long term future.

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 new source of water supply for the Eastern and Midlands region of the country. Simply fixing the leaks, important though that is, will not deliver the additional 330 million litres of water a day this region will need by 2050.

In order to identify a new Source for the Eastern and Midlands Region, Irish Water has, over the past few years, carried out extensive research, environmental and technical assessments of various options and three rounds of public consultation.



Parteen Basin - Photo courtesy ESB

What is happening now?

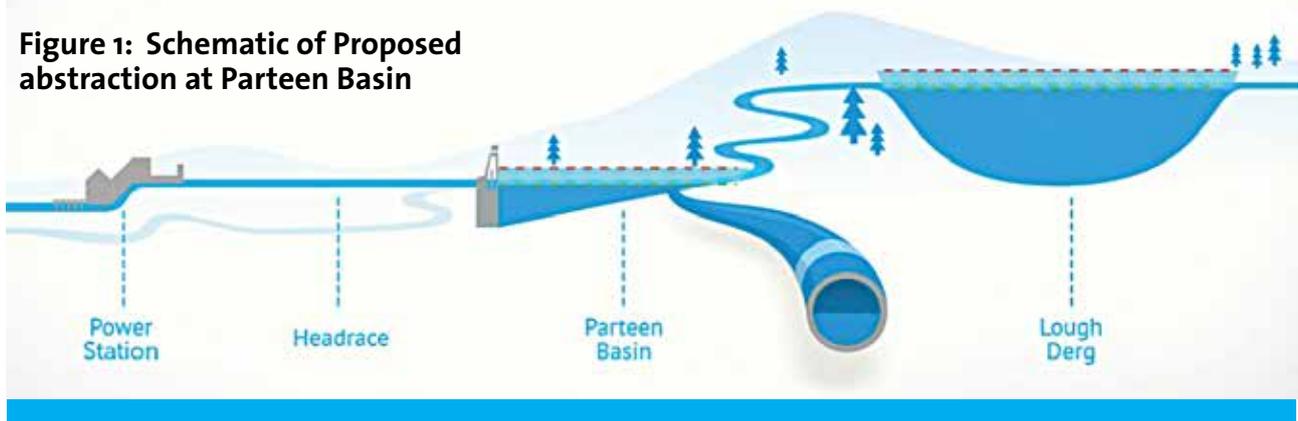
Phase Four of the consultation process has now begun with the publication of the Final Options Appraisal Report (FOAR) and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Scoping Report. The FOAR confirms that the preferred scheme is:

- Abstraction of water from the Lower Shannon at Parteen Basin
- Water treatment nearby at Birdhill
- Treated water piped to a termination point reservoir at Peamount in South County Dublin, with supplies of treated water available to Midland communities along the route.

The EIS Scoping Report considers potential issues which may arise from the preferred scheme and describes how any impacts will be assessed.

We are now undertaking a **14 week** non-statutory public consultation on these two reports and invite submissions from the general public and key stakeholders.

Figure 1: Schematic of Proposed abstraction at Parteen Basin



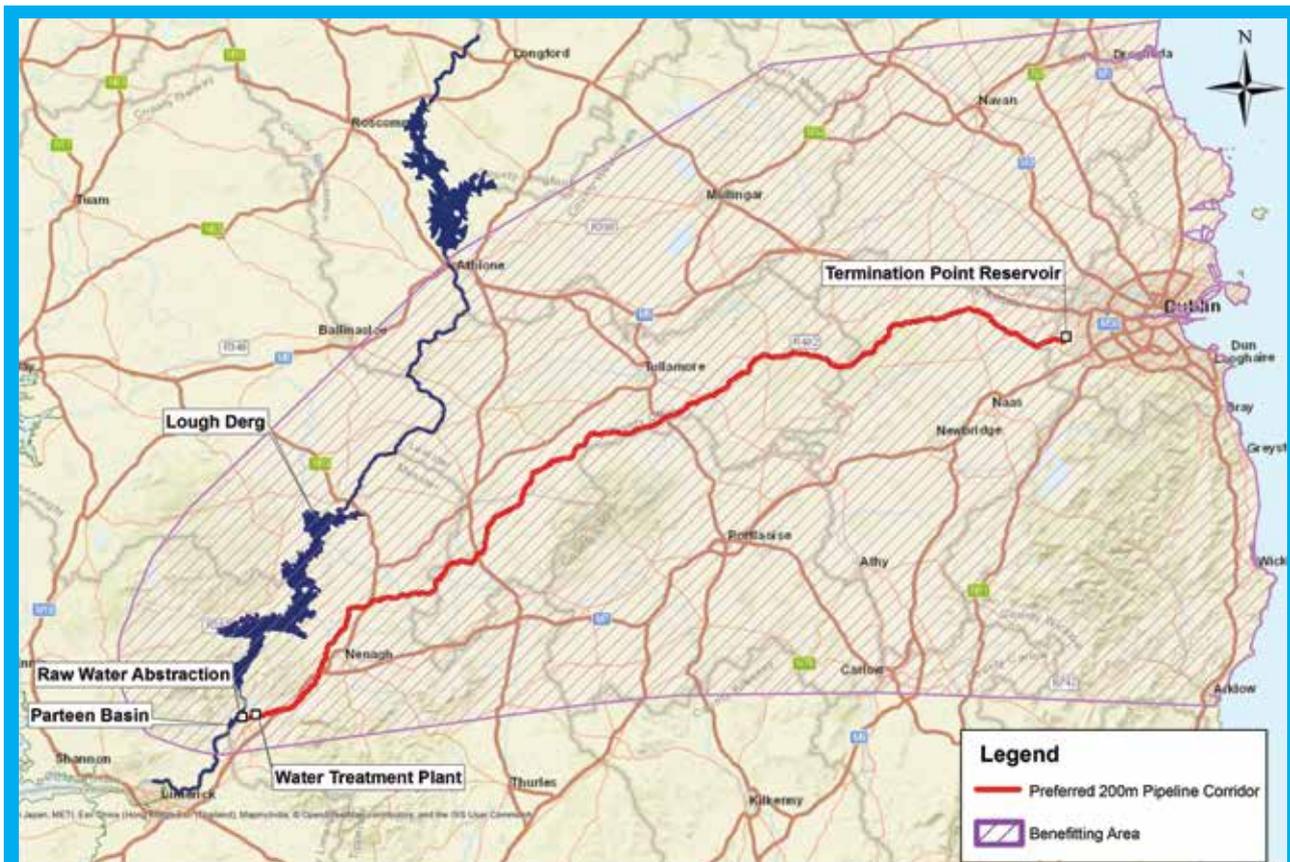


Figure 2: Water supply overview

The Preferred Scheme

The preferred scheme involves the sustainable 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 to a termination point reservoir at Peamount in South County Dublin. Supplies of treated water would be made available to Midland communities along the route from Parteen Basin to Dublin.

This would provide a reliable and sustainable water supply to present and future domestic, commercial and industrial consumers along the proposed pipeline’s 170 km route.

The water abstracted from Parteen Basin would comply with the normal water level range operated by ESB in Lough Derg. Minimum statutory flow requirements along the Shannon which are maintained by the ESB would also remain unaffected.

The FOAR identifies a preferred 200m pipeline corridor and an indicative 50m pipeline corridor within which environmental, technical and geographical constraints can be accommodated.

How was the Preferred Scheme Identified?

After three rounds of public consultation and over two years of technical and environmental assessments the preferred scheme was identified as the most appropriate and widely beneficial, out of the initial ten, and subsequent four technically viable options examined.

The other options which had been under consideration were two options based in North Eastern Lough Derg and also a Desalination option located on the East coast. All options were assessed on a number of Environmental, Economic, Socio-Economic and Technical criteria and the preferred scheme has emerged following this detailed analysis. Earlier Reports concluded that the abstraction from North East Lough Derg had the potential to negatively impact the Shannon system from an environmental perspective and were therefore set aside.

Why is this the Preferred Scheme?

While Desalination is technically viable it is significantly more expensive than the Parteen Scheme, which also offers greater benefits across a wider area in accordance with Irish Water's 25 year Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP). Desalination would also be Dublin focussed, and would not address problems with existing, small and vulnerable Midland water supplies, which is an objective of the WSSP. Desalination also posed a potentially greater negative environmental impact through its use of chemicals and high energy consumption.

Therefore abstraction of water from the Shannon at Parteen Basin (Lower Lake) has been identified as the option which best meets the objectives of the WSSP because:

- It has, by far, the least environmental impact of any of the Shannon options which have been under consideration. It is the closest location to the river estuary with all of the water having already flowed through the Shannon to Parteen.
- The pipeline from Parteen has the potential to serve treated water to more locations, towns and communities along the route from Shannon to Dublin than any other option.
- Parteen Basin is already highly regulated because of the presence of the hydro-power plant, and water abstracted for supply, will be counterbalanced by a corresponding reduction in water used in power generation. The proposed abstraction of water is, in essence, an abstraction of water from the hydro-power scheme. Abstraction of water from hydro-electric power schemes is commonly employed worldwide to enable environmentally sustainable availability of drinking water.

What is the EIS Scoping Report?

The EIS Scoping Report describes any potential environmental impacts of the scheme and how these will be assessed in the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The EIS will present the results of environmental investigations and feedback from on-going consultations and will influence the development of the final 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.

Moving to a Final decision-What Happens Next?

This is the fourth phase of non-statutory public consultation on this project. The feedback from this consultation period alongside further technical and environmental studies and engagement with landowners and the general public will inform the selection of the final scheme. This will be detailed in the EIS and will accompany Irish Water's planning application to An Bord Pleanála.

During the consultation period a number of landowner evenings and eight public open days will be held at various locations along the proposed pipeline route where members of the project team will be available to answer any questions.

Following on from the conclusion of the consultation process in early 2017, Irish Water will be in direct contact with landowners affected by the proposed pipeline route.

The planning application will be subject to a period of statutory consultation which will provide the public with an opportunity to have their say, following which An Bord Pleanála will determine whether consent should be granted.

Where planning permission is granted for the project, construction and commissioning would take approximately three to four years. Typically construction activity would be limited to the pipeline corridor and would be of approximately 18 months duration in any landholding during which the land would be fully reinstated to its original condition. The new water supply would be made available along the pipeline at the end of the 3 to 4 year period.

Community Gain

As with all Strategic Infrastructure Projects, the planning process requires that due consideration of community gain is undertaken by the applicant. 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 additional specific benefits.

Many products and services needed during construction would be sourced from local businesses and the construction phase of the project would provide a range of employment opportunities for local people.

Irish Water, working with Local Authorities and other relevant bodies also propose to provide financial support for training schemes to enable as many local people as possible to work on the project. Irish Water also propose to support projects that contribute towards achieving the conservation objectives of the Lower Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the objectives of the River Basin Management Plans and the development of environmental education & protection initiatives and sports & leisure facilities.

The importance of Public Consultation

Public participation and consultation forms a key part of the decision making process being undertaken by Irish Water. To date the Project has consulted on a number of factors and incorporated relevant feedback into the development of each subsequent phase of the project.

The three previous public consultations have addressed:-

- The need for the Project and the Project Roadmap.
- The constraints that should be examined and the methodology used to identify an emerging preferred option from the four technically viable options available.
- The factors considered in the identification of the Emerging Preferred Option.

How can I get involved?

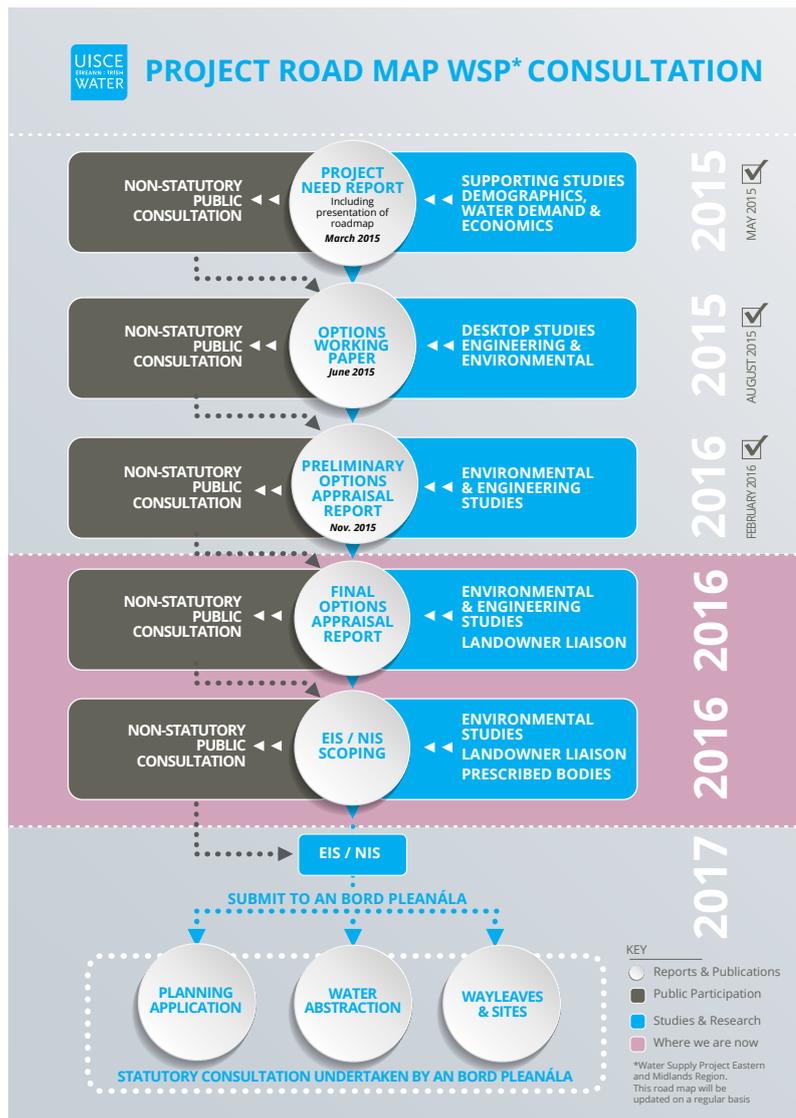
We are now undertaking a 14 week non-statutory public consultation on the Preferred Scheme for a new water supply for the Eastern and Midlands Region (as presented in the FOAR) & EIS Scoping Report and invite submissions from the general public and key stakeholders. We would like to invite your views on:

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

Where do I send my Submission?

Submissions can be sent either by email to watersupply@water.ie or by post to Water Supply Project, Merrion House, Merrion Road, Dublin 4.

Closing dates for receipt of submissions is 14 February 2017.



Where can I get more information?

Hard copies of the FOAR and EIS Scoping Report are available to view in County Libraries and at Local Authority Planning Counters across the area or can be downloaded from www.watersupplyproject.ie or contact us on **1890 252 848**

Public Open Days in the study area will be advertised on local radio and press. Check out the website or call for more detail.

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