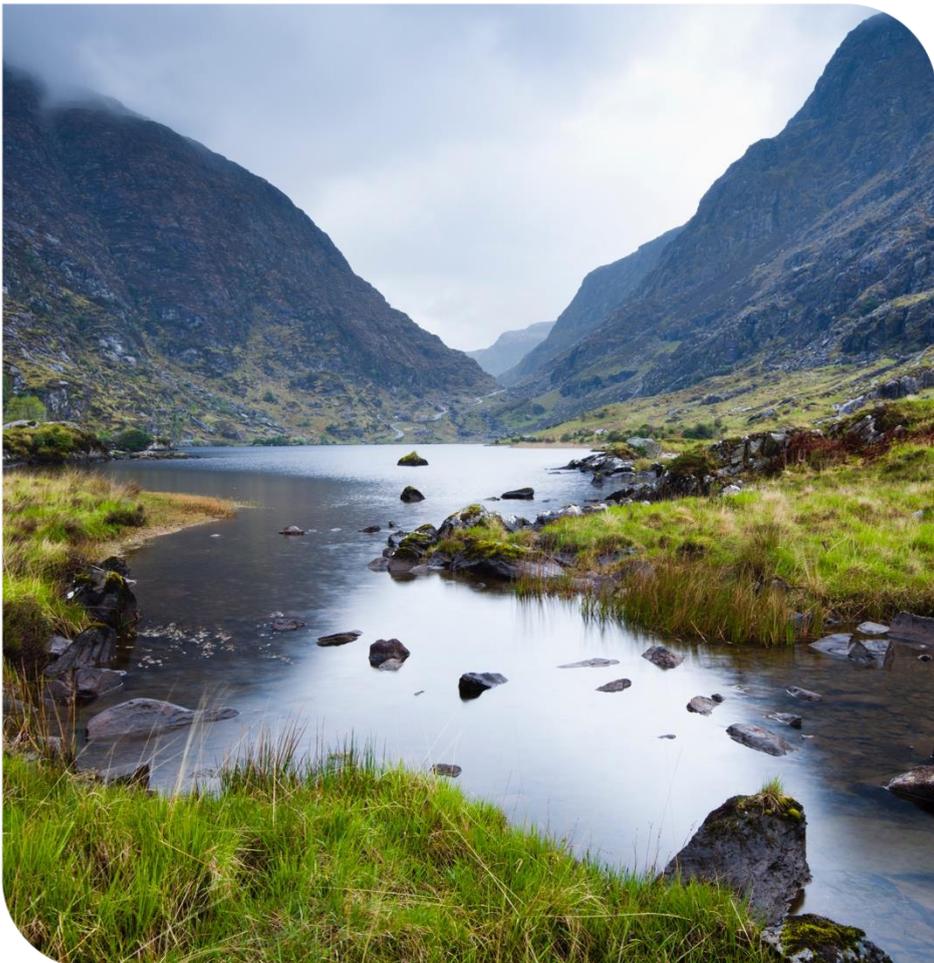


Water Supply Project

Eastern and Midlands Region

Project Update December 2017



Project Update

Overview

Irish Water has a remit to deliver secure, reliable and sustainable long-term water supplies which facilitate domestic and economic development. To do that we must plan decades in advance and across future generations.

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.

In 1996, the Greater Dublin Water Supply Strategic Study (GDWSSS) was published. This 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.

In 2014, Irish Water assumed responsibility for the provision of public water services from 34 Local Authorities, and expanded the project scope to cover the entire Eastern and Midlands Region, which includes Dublin and comprises over 40% of the nation’s population.

Why is the project needed?

The need for the WSP is real and growing. Short term fixes cannot work. We must take the bigger step and we must take it now if we are to meet future demand in a timely manner.

Irish Water has been tasked with taking action to ensure our water supply meets future demand. Ireland has failed to adequately invest in its water infrastructure for over half a century. This action is now vital and urgent.

Our water infrastructure is already struggling to meet the current need which is why there have been several significant and costly outages in the region in recent times.

We know that raw water sources for the Greater Dublin Area will be at capacity by 2026, and we know that water saved from fixing leaks will not be enough to meet future demand. The rest of the Eastern and Midlands Region faces similar challenges.

To achieve a truly sustainable water supply we must take bigger steps and apply the sort of forward thinking our ancestors showed over 150 years ago when they developed schemes such as the Vartry reservoir. That wasn’t about

meeting existing and short-term need, it was about thinking generations ahead. If Ireland is to have the capacity for future domestic and economic development, we must do likewise.

If this investment is not made now, then regular water outages are likely to become a feature of everyday life for the region in the future.

The evidence and assessments clearly show that a long-term and sustainable source of water is needed for the Eastern and Midlands Region to provide future generations with a secure water supply. This has been further confirmed by the preliminary results of the 2016 Census which shows population growth in the East of Ireland exceeding forecast targets.

By 2050, population and business growth in the Eastern and Midlands Region will require an additional 314 million litres of water per day - equivalent to 125 Olympic sized swimming pools.

The existing domestic, commercial and industrial consumers in the region need to be confident that their water supply will meet their needs from now and into the future. Neither indigenous business nor FDI will grow if we cannot guarantee a sustainable water supply.

We cannot afford not to deliver this project because there is no other realistic way of meeting the long-term need in the region in a sustainable manner.

Water Leakage

Reducing leakage alone is not sufficient to meet the water supply needs of the region.

Irish Water is undertaking a national programme of works to reduce leakage and improve our water supply. The targeted savings from this programme have been factored into the assessment of need for the Eastern and Midlands Region.

It is clear, that no matter how successful Irish Water is at fixing leaks and addressing existing service issues it still won't be enough to meet long-term demand. A new source is needed in addition to an aggressive programme of leakage reduction.

Assessing options

After confirming the need for the project (2015), Irish Water embarked on a four stage process to identify a suitable new source of water supply. **Extensive studies and research have been undertaken to identify and assess all possible realistic supply options to meet the future water supply requirements of the Eastern and Midlands region.** In total ten options were identified and examined in detail.

These ten options were thoroughly assessed on a demographic, technical, geographic, environmental and economic basis, and four options were identified as technically viable and suitable for further assessment, three of which were based on Lough Derg as the supply source with the fourth being desalination.

Following further research and public consultation these four were reduced to two – Abstraction of water from Parteen Basin on the lower River Shannon, with water treatment nearby or desalination from the Irish Sea in North Co Dublin (Fingal).

After further research and public consultation, the Parteen Basin option was identified as the preferred scheme because via its treated water pipeline route to Dublin it delivers the widest benefit to the greatest number of people with the least environmental impact and in the most cost effective manner. Desalination would primarily serve the Dublin Region only and would not address the objectives of Irish Water's 25-year plan to provide a high quality, long-term and sustainable supply to the Eastern and Midlands Region.

The Preferred Scheme

Irish Water has identified and intensely examined every reasonable option for meeting the future water supply needs of the Eastern and Midlands Region. Abstraction from the Parteen Basin has been identified as the option which delivers the widest benefit to the greatest number of people with the least environmental impact.

The Parteen Basin scheme comprises the abstraction of water from the lower River Shannon at Parteen Basin in Co. Tipperary, with water treatment nearby at Birdhill. Treated water would then be piped 170 km 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 Birdhill to Peamount.

All research, assessments and public consultations have been undertaken in line with best international practice for the identification of need and determination of optimum new supply options. The outcome of this process identified that the Parteen Basin scheme is the best option, and is the only option that meets the project's objective of providing a long-term and environmentally sustainable water supply for the Eastern and Midlands Region in a cost effective manner.

Benefits

This is a long-term strategic investment that will bring economic benefits to the whole country, and growth in the region, supporting job creation, improved standards of service and quality of life.

Water is essential in every single person's daily life, from turning the taps on in our homes and businesses, to industry who use water to create, construct and deliver.

The entire population of the Eastern and Midlands Region, and all sectors of the economy, will benefit through augmentation and diversification of water supply sources and strengthening of their connectivity to provide a reliable, secure water supply. It will provide all consumers in the region with a consistent, high standard of water supply.

A robust and sustainable new water resource will ensure that the region's water supplies will have the capacity to support future growth and encourage both indigenous and foreign investment.

Furthermore, the construction phase of the project will provide a range of employment and business opportunities.

Public Consultation

Public participation has been an integral part of the Water Supply Project, Eastern and Midlands Region since its commencement and has informed the development of the preferred scheme.

Over 1,000 stakeholders participated in the latest consultation stage on the preferred scheme. All feedback received has been considered by the Project Team and will be summarised in the Consultation Report.

Irish Water has sought, listened to and responded to public feedback at every stage of the WSP's development, from assessing the need right through to identifying the preferred scheme. We have highlighted this in our reports, which show where public feedback has directly influenced the project.

Irish Water will continue to stay in close and active contact with stakeholders at every part of the process.

Landowner engagement

Irish Water is committed to ongoing engagement with landowners, and currently there are four dedicated LLOs working on the WSP. The role of the LLO is to provide landowners with a dedicated point of contact throughout the project, and to address any issues related to the project which may be of concern to individual landowners regarding the proposed pipeline route, construction impacts and future operations.

Next steps

Irish Water is currently updating the Project Need Report to reflect all relevant new data available since 2015, including information from Census 2016 and feedback from the National Planning Framework.

A full Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is currently being prepared. This will present the results of ongoing environmental investigations and consultations and will influence the detailed development of the Parteen Basin scheme, and evaluate any potential impacts and identify appropriate mitigation measures.

The EIAR will accompany Irish Water's planning application to An Bord Pleanála which is planned for submission circa Q4, 2018. At that point An Bord Pleanála will undertake all necessary statutory consultations. Should planning permission be granted for the project, construction and commissioning will take approximately three to four years with a view to water delivery by 2025 to the Eastern and Midlands Region.

ervia



Gas
Networks
Ireland

