



The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

MEDIA WATCH

18/09/2015 - 25/09/2015

21 September 2015

Electricity connector: councillors to be briefed

NORTHERN Ireland's electricity operator SONI is set to brief Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Council on plans for the long-awaited proposals for the north-south electricity interconnector.

The planning application for the £204m interconnector project has been referred to a Planning Appeals Commission Public Inquiry, so will not be approved by the Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Council.

Given that the majority of the transmission line is proposed within the council area, tonight's special council meeting will brief councillors about the project and the public inquiry process.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, SONI general manager Robin McCormick said the project was "vital to the security of electricity supply for Northern Ireland" and added that if given the go-ahead, the project was expected to reduce electricity prices for consumers across the island by at least £14m each year.

He said: "A strong, reliable and secure electricity network is vital to help Northern Ireland's economy grow, to attract foreign investment and create new employment opportunities. "All the main business organisations in Northern Ireland recognise the need for this project, including Manufacturing Northern Ireland and local businesses in Co Armagh."

Source: <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/business/news/electricity-connector-councillors-are-to-be-briefed-31542799.html>

22 September 2015

Powersharing of a different sort

Making sure the lights stay on in Stormont might seem like a tall order at the moment, given the current gloomy political backdrop in the North.

But for Robin McCormick and his team, it is all in a day's work. McCormick heads up the organisation that manages the North's electricity transmission system.

He is the director of operations with System Operator Northern Ireland (Soni) which is responsible for matching demand with supply for electricity users in the North. Soni is also in charge of the wholesale electricity market, juggling Northern Ireland's myriad of suppliers from older generation power stations to renewable energy sources.

For the last six years the company has been part of EirGrid - the Irish State-owned energy company which does exactly the same job in the South - and both operate the Single Electricity Market on the island.

This, according to McCormick, delivers benefits for electricity users across the island because it creates economies of scale and a concentrated focus on investment priorities.

He says the advantages of a unified approach which recognises the different requirements on the island but also appreciates the ongoing need to build the right infrastructure to meet future demand is vital for both economies on the island.

McCormick says a second **North-South** electricity interconnector is an important step in helping to create a more efficient electricity market. Plans for a second £250 million interconnector have been in circulation since 2007 but various planning hurdles have delayed the process.

Reduced prices

Both Soni and Eirgrid have again this year made fresh submissions in relation to the proposed Tyrone-Cavan interconnector which McCormick says would deliver "benefits for every customer on the island".

He estimates it could reduce overall electricity prices by £14 million per annum.

"Our first priority is security of supply - we have to make sure the lights don't go out - but we are very aware that when it comes to electricity, price is always an issue for everyone and we are keen to maximise the benefits we can deliver for every customer," McCormick says.

"We have to ensure we have adequate generation on the island because we have to be able to anticipate and deliver on demand in Northern Ireland.

"A strong and reliable electricity network is vital; it will help grow the economy, it is important when it comes to attracting new investors who will create job opportunities in Northern Ireland."

He says one of the other benefits of further interconnection is the potential opportunity to sell any excess capability to neighbouring markets.

This could, according to McCormick, create new opportunities to reduce costs, and the cost of electricity is definitely one of the issues which will be high up the agenda for delegates at the 10th annual EirGrid group conference in Belfast next month.

Just before the latest local political crisis paralysed the Northern Ireland Executive, the issue of electricity pricing and grid connections was also high on its agenda.

Local businesses

The Assembly's Committee for Enterprise recently published details of its inquiry into growing the economy and, according to its chairman the SDLP's Patsy McGlone, many local businesses, particularly large energy users, remain unhappy with the North's electricity market, with some claiming they pay the highest electricity prices in Europe.

"More urgency needs to be given to the critical matter of electricity policy and how it impacts on businesses," McGlone says.

"It is essential that the potential for future economic development is not curtailed because of a failure to consider important economic factors in the development of electricity policy."

First though politicians at Stormont need to figure out this week how to keep the lights on themselves because there is the very real prospect of the entire Northern Ireland economy being plunged into a period of darkness if political agreement cannot be reached.

Source: <http://www.irishtimes.com/business/energy-and-resources/belfast-briefing-power-sharing-of-a-different-sort-1.2360529>

23 September 2015

The 1916 centenary: what's in it for the young?

Proclamation for a New Generation This is to help students gain a deep understanding of the Proclamation through an "action learning" project which will invite all primary and post-primary schools to write a new proclamation for 2016

to reflect the values, hopes and aspirations of the generation of 2016. For more information see pages 14-15.

1916 Ancestry Project

An invitation to all primary and post-primary pupils to trace a family tree back to 1916 using resources such as the 1911 census, military archives and church records - and to forge links with local historical societies, active retirement groups, relatives of those who participated in the 1916 Rising, and other local groups. For more information see pages 16-17.

Proclamation Day 2016

Proclamation Day will take place in all educational institutions on March 15th, 2016, including pre-schools, schools, further- and higher-education institutions. Schools will

use the occasion to display the results of their 'Proclamation for a new Generation', the '1916 Ancestry' projects, along with other arts and drama initiatives and invite parents and the community to come along. For more information see pages 14-15.

Flag presentations

A national flag will be presented by a member of the Defence Forces to every primary school and special school in the country beginning in the second week of September 2015. Post-primary schools will receive a flag from the Thomas Francis Meagher Foundation at a special event in Waterford in March 2016. For more information see pages 12-13.

Schools' Collection 2016

Primary school students will be invited to gather local and family history and folklore from their community in a wide variety of formats, including written essays, artwork, video or audio files. This is a digital age follow-up to the Irish Folklore Commission's Schools' Collection, which collected material from 50,000 primary school children in the 1930s.

All-island schools' history competition

This **all-island** competition is run by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland and the Department of Education and Skills in the Republic, with support from Mercier Press, and will focus next year on the events of 1916.

Ireland 2016 all-island schools' drama competition

Primary and post-primary schools are invited to write a short drama based on any aspect of the events of 1916, film their performance and submit a short video. Shortlisted entries will be available via RTÉ and the winners, by public vote, will be invited to perform in the Abbey Theatre in spring 2016.

Ireland 2016 all-island art competition

Another **all-island** competition for primary and post-primary schools: this one calls for an image based on an imagined Ireland of 2116. The winners (by county) will be displayed in the National Gallery of Ireland in September 2016.

Ireland 2016 all-island song competition

An invitation to write a song inspired by the modern, multi-cultural Ireland of 2016. The finalists will be invited to perform on stage at the National Concert Hall in May 2016.

Ireland 2016 film award

Primary school pupils are invited to submit a short film based on any aspect of 1916. Prizes will be awarded to two winning schools as part of the Film in School awards.

'Me, Mollser' tour for primary schools

The Abbey Theatre will give performances of *Me, Mollser*, a drama based on a character from Seán O'Casey's *Plough and the Stars*, to 5th and 6th classes in primary schools across the country.

Poetry competitions

The Libraries and Post Primary Schools 1916 Poetry Competition invites students to submit a poem on the wide-ranging topic 'Your Ireland'. There will be county competitions and a national final.

The all-Ireland poetry speaking competition, organised by the National Library of Ireland and Poetry Ireland, will encourage poems that relate to 1916 themes.

Ireland 2016 award for achievement in Junior Certificate History

There will be seven prizes, with one for each of the 1916 signatories, for seven students who perform exceptionally well in History in the Junior Certificate in 2016. The prizes will be awarded on a geographical basis.

Ireland 2016

history lesson plans The Royal Irish Academy (RIA) in conjunction with the Department of Education and Skills is developing post-primary history lessons based on the Irish Times/RIA History of Ireland in 100 Objects series.

Ireland 2016 transition year module The National Military Archives and

Maynooth University are developing 'Ireland in Transition' a transition year unit and resource centred around material from 1916, which will be available later this year.

Politics and Society: a new Leaving Certificate subject

To ensure that 2016 promotes a legacy of interest in politics and active citizenship, 'Politics and Society' will be trialled as a new Leaving Certificate subject in a number of schools across the country in 2016.

RTÉ

young people's programmes Thirty short films made specifically for RT

É Junior and seven-11 year-olds will look at life in the early 1900s. A reality documentary will show a group of children forgoing modern comforts and living the lives of poor families struggling to survive in 1916 tenement conditions.

Education for

sustainable development 'portal' To promote active citizenship, equality and respect for human rights, and sustainability, a web-portal will be created that will allow teachers to exchange and debate ideas and share resources and best practice, with a view to strengthening implementation of these issues in

schools.

'An Claidheamh Soluis'

Conradh na Gaeilge will be digitising *An Claidheamh Soluis*, the Irish literary revival newspaper founded by Eoin Mac Neill in 1899 which was published up to 1932. Schools will be able to research articles from their area -www.cnag.ie.

Se

óBóthair (Road Show) Conradh na Gaeilge's S

eó Bóthair (Road Show) in 2015-16 for transition year students will include games, discussions, debates and role-play, showcasing Gaeilge as a living community language.

Consultations with

children and young people Eight regional Ireland 2016 consultations with 40-50 participants will be held, four for children aged

eight-12 and four for people aged 13-17, on the theme *Imagining Our Future*.

Children's event

The outcomes of the above consultations will be compiled in a report to be presented by children and teenagers to ministers and decision-makers at a major children's event in April 2016. This event will also commemorate children who died during the Rising.

National

cultural institutions-led collaborative education project A set of 1916 lesson plans for schools that tell the story of 1916, through the major cultural objects of the

State that are relevant to 1916, is being developed.

Also watch out for

The GPO Interpretative Centre A new facility to host a 1916 interpretative and exhibition centre showing the role of the GPO in 1916 and also in the history of the foundation of the State.

Richmond Barracks A Dublin City Council and local community restoration of parts of Richmond Barracks, in particular the building where the 1916 leaders were interned and court-martialed and the creation of an exhibition and interpretative space.

Teach an Phiarsaigh, Ros Muc A cultural centre providing an introduction to the Irish language and the local Gaeltacht, and focusing on Pádraig Pearse and his relationship with Ros Muc.

The Tenement Museum, No 14 Henrietta Street, Dublin A living oral history initiative providing an insight into the lives of the people of Dublin around the time of 1916.

Kilmainham Gaol and Courthouse The refurbishment of Kilmainham Courthouse for use as a new Gaol Visitor Centre, and improvements to the existing museum.

The National Museum Exhibition The museum will put on a major 1916 exhibition at Collins Barracks opening in early 2016, to examine the events of Easter Week in detail.

The National Library of Ireland The National Library has a large programme of commemorative events for 2016 including a major digitisation project exploring the signatories of the 1916 proclamation, with more than 20,000 items to be made available.

nEvery local authority

is developing its own 2016 plans which will link in to the national programme for schools. Details will be on the county pages of Ireland.ie, on county council sites and scoilnet.ie/ireland 2016.

Online resources: Scoilnet.ie covers schools initiatives. Ireland.ie contains the full Ireland 2016 programme

Source: <http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/1916-schools/the-1916-centenary-what-s-in-it-for-the-young-1.2355579>