UISCE ÉIREANN : IRISH WATER

Ringsend Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade Project

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) & Natura Impact Statement (NIS)

Scoping Document - Public Consultation

water.ie

March 2016

Have your say on informing the EIS/NIS scoping document

The purpose of this brochure is to:

> Update you on the Ringsend Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade Project.

> Provide you with background information on the project and the proposed new planning application.

> Invite you to participate in the public consultation on issues for consideration in the new Environmental Impact Statement and the Natura Impact Statement, to be submitted with the planning application.

IW/BK/RINGSEND/0316

Safeguarding your water for your future

Project background

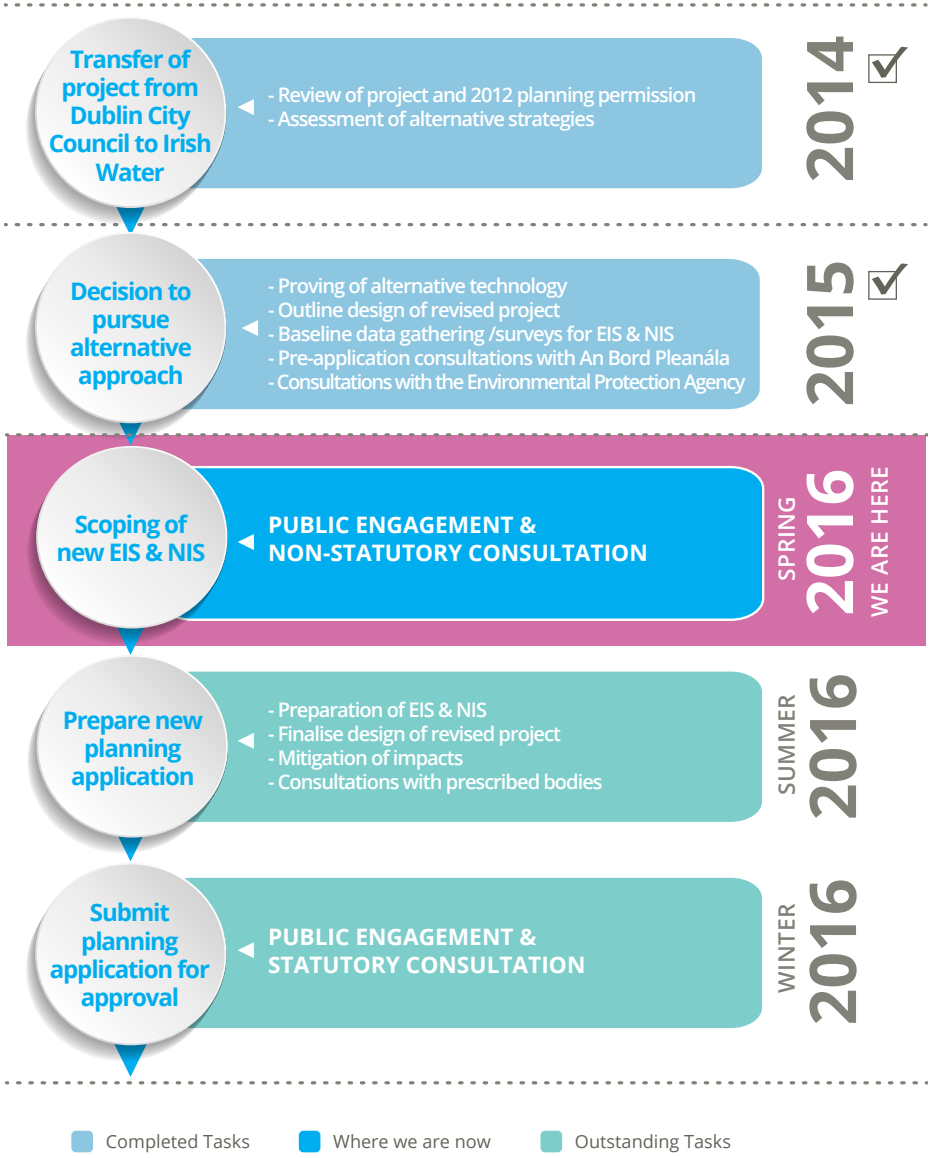
In January 2014, Irish Water assumed responsibility for the provision of public water services, which included the transfer of responsibility for the Ringsend Wastewater Treatment Plant from Dublin City Council.

The Ringsend plant has been providing wastewater treatment to the city of Dublin since 1906. The current plant is the largest treatment plant in Ireland. Since it was commissioned in 2003, the Ringsend plant has been treating wastewater from the Greater Dublin Area, including parts of Meath.

Today, the plant is operating over its design capacity and needs to be upgraded to ensure that the Greater Dublin Area has appropriate wastewater treatment to enable continued social and economic development.

Upgrading the current capacity at Ringsend and the proposed development of the Greater Dublin Drainage plant at Clonshaugh will help to meet the infrastructural requirements to treat the amount of wastewater that will be generated as the population continues to grow and the industrial needs of the area continue to expand. This will ensure that wastewater generated in the Greater Dublin Area is appropriately treated in order to safeguard human health and to protect the environment.

Project Planning Roadmap



Proposed alternative approach

In 2012, An Bord Pleanála granted permission to Dublin City Council to upgrade the plant and increase its capacity, based on technologies available at the time. The project approved in 2012 included the construction of a 9km long sea outfall tunnel to relocate the discharge of treated effluent from the Ringsend Plant out into Dublin Bay[1]. Since that time, Irish Water has been reviewing the project and an alternative solution is now being proposed.

Irish Water has identified an advanced nutrient reduction treatment technology that was not available as an option to Dublin City Council in 2012. This technology is known as Aerobic Granular Sludge (AGS) and would allow the discharge of treated wastewater to remain at its current location, thereby avoiding the need to construct the 9km long sea outfall tunnel that was proposed in the 2012 planning application.

Irish Water intends to apply to An Bord Pleanála later this year for permission to implement the alternative solution. The revised project being proposed by Irish Water is very similar to that approved by An Bord Pleanála in 2012. However, there is one major difference:

Instead of treating the wastewater to a slightly lower standard and discharging it 9km out in Dublin Bay, it is now proposed to treat it to a much higher standard and to continue to discharge treated effluent at the current location on the Lower Liffey Estuary.

1 The plant currently discharges its treated effluent to the Lower Liffey Estuary beside the ESB Poolbeg Power Station.

The revised project

The revised project being proposed by Irish Water is very similar to that approved by An Bord Pleanála in 2012. In particular, it should be noted that:

> No increase in capacity over that approved in 2012 is being proposed, and

> The revised project will meet the same stringent odour control standards as set out by An Bord Pleanála in 2012.

The revised project will maximise the treatment capacity of the Ringsend plant, increasing it from 1.64million PE[2]. to 2.4million PE. This will give the plant a 'firm'[3] capacity of 2.1million PE. The project will use most of the remaining unused space within the current site to provide additional treatment facilities and equipment. The revised project includes:

> Increasing the flow through the plant by approximately 20%, thereby increasing the amount of wastewater that can be treated and reducing the level of storm overflows which occur during heavy rainfall events.

> Provision of a new 400,000 PE extension in biological (AGS) treatment capacity, on a site reserved for that purpose within the existing boundary.

2 The amount of wastewater received at a treatment plant (and its design capacity) is measured in units known as population equivalent (or PE). The wastewater received from all sources, e.g. industrial, tourism, commercial, residential, etc., is converted into these units, with one unit of PE representing the wastewater treatment load typically generated by a single person.

3 'Firm' capacity is defined as the treatment capacity available when one of the plant's largest processing units is unavailable due to routine maintenance or repair. In Ringsend's case, an installed capacity of 2.4m PE is required to ensure that a capacity of 2.1m PE is always available.

> Installation of the AGS technology in the existing treatment tanks on site, increasing their capacity to 2.0million PE.

> Expansion of the plant's sludge treatment facilities to match the overall increase in wastewater treatment capacity.

> Provision of a new phosphorous recovery process.

> Provision of additional odour control facilities and other site works.

From an operational and visual perspective, the revised project is not expected to result in any significant change on the site of the plant from the project approved in 2012. The main change will occur outside the site due to the proposed omission of the 9km long sea outfall tunnel.

AGS technology

The AGS technology is a further development of the activated sludge process, which was first used 100 years ago and is now the main process for wastewater treatment around the world. This process will consistently produce a high-quality effluent, which can be sustainably discharged into Dublin Bay.

Irish Water has conducted trials of the technology to treat the wastewater arriving at the Ringsend plant. These trials have confirmed that the technology consistently produces a very high-quality effluent, which can be safely and sustainably discharged into the Lower Liffey Estuary.

Advantages of proposed new approach

- If approved, the use of this AGS technology would maximise efficiency, reduce risk and realise significant savings through eliminating the need to build the 9km long sea outfall tunnel.
- A much higher effluent quality would be achieved and, even at full future capacity, emissions from the plant would be significantly lower than at present.
- In addition, the impacts of tunnel construction could be entirely avoided, including the 70,000 heavy goods vehicles involved in removing material excavated from the 9km long sea outfall tunnel.
- The revised approach provides for the recovery of phosphorus (a non-renewable resource), this finite resource would otherwise be discharged to Dublin Bay with the loss of its re-use potential in agriculture.

Environmental considerations

On large scale infrastructure projects of this nature, a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) are required to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála as part of the planning process. The factors that must be included in an EIS are set out in national and European legislation.

Irish Water is now inviting comment and submissions from the public and interested parties on the issues to be considered in the EIS and the NIS, as part of an eight-week consultation process. The aim of the public consultation is to ensure that the EIS and the NIS address all issues of potential impact or concern, and that the assessments of the project are as comprehensive as possible.

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a report that contains detailed analysis of the impacts of a project on the existing environment. It also identifies possible mitigation measures to reduce the impact and includes sufficient information to allow a decision to be made on whether consent should be given to the project.

A Natura Statement (NIS) is a report that contains an examination of the possible impacts of a project on Natura 2000 sites that allows a decision to be made on whether consent should be given to a project. Natura 2000 sites comprise Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas classified under the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive.

Consultation

This consultation period will run from 14 March through to 17 May 2016.

The key elements to be considered in the EIS are:

- Population and human health
- Biodiversity
- Land, soils and geology
- Water
- Air
- Climate
- Material assets
- Cultural heritage
- Landscape

Irish Water has now published a scoping document which sets out the issues it considers should be included in the EIS and the NIS and the methodologies for examining their environmental impacts. This document is available at **www.water.ie/ringsend**

What is being consulted on?

The project team would like to hear your views on the following:

- Are there any environmental issues that should be contained in the EIS that have not been considered in the scoping document?
- Are there any additional or alternative methodologies that should be used to assess environmental impacts?
- Is there any other information or projects that you believe are relevant in the development of the EIS/NIS?

What happens next?

Once this consultation period is complete, Irish Water will gather all of the relevant comments received and ensure they are considered in the preparation of the EIS and the NIS.

The Environmental Impact Statement and the Natura Impact Statement will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála as part of the planning application. As the competent authority for assessing and determining planning applications, the Board will carry out a statutory consultation, which will provide you with a further opportunity to have your say.

Irish Water intends to apply to An Bord Pleanála in late 2016 for permission to implement the revised project. The Board will then undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment and an Appropriate Assessment of the project before making its decision on the application.

Open Day Information

Thursday, 21st April
Sutton: Marine Hotel – 10am to 2pm.
Clontarf: Clasać Centre – 4pm to 7pm.

Saturday, 23rd April
SPORTSCO, South Lotts Road, Ringsend – 10am to 6pm.

Tuesday, 26th April
Killiney: Fitzpatrick Castle Hotel – 10am to 2pm.
Dun Laoghaire: Royal Marine Hotel - 4pm to 8pm.

For further information, or to make a submission, please:

Email: info@ringsendproject.ie

Phone: LoCall 1890 989 310 or + 353 (1) 453 7063

Post: Ringsend Project, PO Box 11561, Dublin 8

Visit: www.water.ie/ringsend

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