

2017: A busy year for Gas to the West

2017 has been an exceptionally busy year for all those in the Gas to the West project team, and significant progress has been made, right across the project.

Project summary

- Major energy infrastructure project – 190 km of high & intermediate gas pipeline
- Connecting towns of Coalisland, Cookstown, Derrylin, Dungannon, Enniskillen, Magherafelt and Omagh
- Strabane already connected and customers using gas

Planning

- Application submitted to Strategic Planning Division within the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in October 2016 – included 104 impact assessments and statements; 136 plans, maps and drawings; 39 consultations issued; 134 planning decisions and reports; 1,629 neighbourhood notifications
- Planning awarded April 2017
- Engagement with planners and statutory agencies ongoing including around secondary consents and compliance with planning conditions

Landowner engagement

- Pipeline crosses: 364 farm enterprises; 85 roads including the M1 plus 56 laneways; 215 watercourses including the River Blackwater and Upper Lough Erne
- Construction footprint: 234 hectares
- Engagement with landowners, farmers and residents ongoing
- Agricultural liaison officers working to ensure a co-ordinated approach and to try to minimise disruption as far as possible

Procurement

- Main works contractors for both high pressure and intermediate pressure pipelines appointed and work started
- Roadbridge (high pressure) and joint venture company Murphy GMC (intermediate pressure) both leading Irish companies and major players in energy / utilities sectors
- Other major contracts awarded include: high pressure steel pipe; materials for construction of AGIs and for the high pressure and intermediate pipeline;
- Upcoming procurement opportunities in 2018 around inspections services; electrical and instrumentation works and materials
- Keen to develop relations with local suppliers – supplier web portal established

Training

- South West College providing new gas training and assessment facility at its Technology and Skills Centre from 2018
- Will help local people to avail of employment opportunities in the gas industry as it develops

Gas flowing in Strabane

- 30km pipeline built from Maydown to Strabane including new Above Ground Installation at Maydown to connect to existing gas transmission network
- First gas flowing in Strabane in January 2017
- First industrial customer, LacPatrick Dairies in Artigarvan connected in February 2017
- First domestic customers connected from August 2017
- Over 20km of mains pipeline laid in Strabane and almost 4km commissioned
- Major crossing of Mourne River completed
- Additional industrial and commercial premises in process of converting to gas

Construction

- Construction underway of both high pressure and intermediate pressure pipeline
- Project teams at work across a number of locations in Fermanagh and Tyrone
- Almost 13km of pipeline in the ground on three legs of intermediate pressure network
- Teams relocated to more rural areas over Christmas to avoid impacting on busy town centres
- Preparatory work on high pressure pipeline ongoing including erection of over 15km of right of way fencing, over 5km of topsoil stripping and over 3km of pipe stringing in preparation for welding
- Archaeologists are continuing to work along the pipeline route

Support for the project

- Project has received strong support from across political parties and business community, also Consumer Council
- Benefits associated with extending the gas network recognised including role in addressing fuel poverty as well as for businesses