



16 Oct 2024

## Re: ESB Submission to the Draft Longford Town Local Area Plan 2025-2031

A Chara,

This submission by Electricity Supply Board (ESB), 27 Lower Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2, is in response to an invitation by Longford County Council for submissions to the Draft Longford Town Local Area Plan 2025–2031. ESB is a landowner and employer in Longford with property and infrastructural assets throughout the County serving Longford Town and its Environs.

ESB acknowledges the aim of the Draft Plan to set out a framework for the sustainable physical development of Longford Town ensuring the conservation and protection of the built and natural environment over the life of the plan to 2031. We recognise that the Draft Plan was prepared in the context of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.

### ESB Property in Longford

ESB owns and operates an Engineering Depot within the boundaries of the proposed Local Area Plan. This forms a critical element of ESB operations locally and regionally.

ESB Networks provides an essential service building and maintaining the electricity networks in Longford Town and throughout Co. Longford from its Engineering Centre, located off Connaught Road. From this location, ESB is responsible for constructing all the sub-transmission, medium and low voltage electricity network infrastructure in the county. Its central location supports the delivery by ESB of capital works programmes and operational activities in an energy efficient and cost-effective manner where key performance targets and emergency response times can be delivered. Good access to the main road network and areas of potential growth is essential to provide an economic service and to meet emergency response times for Longford and its environs.

ESB supports the current Land Use Zoning, **Town Core**, on the Engineering Centre at Connaught Road, as set out in the Draft Plan, which protects the integrity of existing operations whilst also allowing future expansion of the existing site to meet future demand.

### Energy Infrastructure

ESB Networks is unique in that it is in direct contact with all electricity users. The electricity network extends to over 233,000km across the Island of Ireland and in 2023 over 41,000 new residential and business connections were completed, along with the installation of over 1.5 million smart meters. We welcome the recognition in Section 13.2.1 of the Draft Plan of the importance of electricity infrastructure and we suggest including distribution infrastructure would be helpful.

*“...Enhanced development of secure and reliable electricity transmission **and distribution** infrastructure is recognised as being a key factor for supporting economic development and attracting investment to any area...”*

ESB supports the inclusion of Energy Objectives **EC 01, EC 02 & EC 03** as set out in Section 13.2.5 – *Energy, Communications and Waste Objectives*. It states that it is an objective of the Council to.

### **EC 03**

*“Seek the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables within the town, whenever possible, while taking into consideration landscape, residential amenity, and environmental considerations.”*

ESB Networks would welcome the opportunity to work with Longford Co. Co. to facilitate the aim of the above Objective by undergrounding of electricity cables, when opportunities arise. Early engagement at design stage of key public infrastructure projects, e.g., new roads, public realm upgrades, and greenways, offer opportunities to provide ducting/underground cabling in the most economically efficient way and limit disruption to local services. Please contact the local ESB Office to ensure input from ESB Networks at an early stage of project design.

### Electric Vehicles

ESB eCars builds, owns, and operates Electric Vehicle Charging Networks for public use in Ireland (ROI), Northern Ireland (NI) and Great Britain (GB). Our public charging network comprises of over 2,000 charge points with a customer base of 85,000 at the end of 2022. Approximately 75% of all EV drivers in Ireland are eCars customers. Twenty-one new High-Powered Charging (HPC) hubs have been commissioned in ROI with a further 20 in various stages of construction. These hubs are primarily located on motorway or primary routes and will provide 100km of range in six minutes. In the Climate Action Plan (2023) the Irish Government has set stretching targets for EV adoption in Ireland in order to address energy demand and emissions from transport. To help meet this increase in electric vehicles, ESB, with the support of the Government's Climate Action Fund, is rolling out high power charging hubs across the country. These hubs will be capable of quickly charging between two and eight vehicles simultaneously and will facilitate vehicles travelling longer distances across Ireland's National and Motorway routes.

In this regard, ESB notes the inclusion of Policy Objective **ST 18, ST 19 & ST 20** which aims to facilitate the roll-out of additional electric vehicles charging points across Longford at appropriate locations. We would like to note that provision of EV charging points should be in accordance with the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025.

ESB welcomes the above Policy, however it is very important to note that the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive calls for an increase to 20% for the number of parking spaces which should have provision for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Therefore, to ensure that the Longford Local Area Plan increases the usage of electric vehicles to the levels required, we request that the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive standard is considered in the Final Plan.

### Conclusion

ESB, is building a truly sustainable company by investing in smart networks, renewable energy and modernising the generation portfolio. ESB is implementing energy strategies that support the transition of Ireland to a low-carbon and ultimately post-carbon economy to become a competitive, resilient, and sustainable region. In this regard, we support the ambition of the Draft Plan to deliver a vision statement for the development strategy and sustainable development of the Longford area. We request that due consideration is given to the issues raised in this submission, most particularly, that the final Local Area Plan includes clear policies in relation to:

- Ensuring that the long-term operational requirements of existing utilities are protected. The importance of existing infrastructure and the level of operational activities managed from our Engineering Centre at Connaught Road, are protected.
- The final Plan should maintain the planning policies which protect Longford's future capacity for the improvement and development of energy infrastructure. This will enable ESB to develop and maintain a safe, secure, reliable, economical and efficient electricity Transmission and Distribution System with a view to ensuring that all reasonable demands for electricity are met having due regard for the environment,
- Promoting, encouraging, and facilitating the use of sustainable modes and patterns of transport, including electric vehicles, with appropriate Parking Standards that will set minimum levels of parking provision for EVs.

If we can be of any further assistance, or if you wish to clarify any of the points raised, please do not hesitate in contacting the undersigned.



Energy for  
generations

[esb.ie](http://esb.ie)

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith O'Brien'.

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