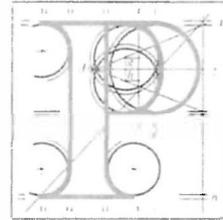


Our Case Number: ACP-323980-25

Planning Authority Reference Number:



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Chambers Ireland
11 St Stephen's Green
Dublin 2
D02 FY84

Date: 03 March 2026

Re: Proposed Water Supply Project for the Eastern and Midlands Region
in the counties of Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, Offaly, Kildare, and Dublin.

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Coimisiún Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter. Please accept this letter as a receipt for the fee of €50 that you have paid.

The Commission will revert to you in due course with regard to the matter.

Please be advised that copies of all submissions / observations received in relation to the application will be made available for public inspection at the offices of the local authority and at the offices of An Coimisiún Pleanála when they have been processed by the Commission.

More detailed information in relation to strategic infrastructure development can be viewed on the Commission's website: www.pleanala.ie.

If you have any queries in the meantime please contact the undersigned officer of the Commission. Please quote the above mentioned An Coimisiún Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Commission.

Yours faithfully,

Eimear Reilly
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737184

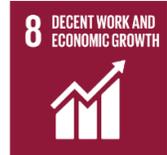
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**Chambers
Ireland**
Advancing business together



Water Supply Project Eastern and Midlands Region – Observation by Chambers Ireland to An Coimisiún Pleanála

February 2026

Case reference: PA92.323980

Applicant name: Chambers Ireland

Address: 11 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland D02 FY84

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Key Points

- It is critical that delivery of the Eastern and Midlands Water Supply Project (WSP) is accelerated, as it represents a critical addition to the State's water infrastructure.
- Ireland's projected population growth will significantly increase long-term demand, making the timely delivery essential to supporting housing, economic development and climate resilience.
- Capacity constraints in Uisce Éireann's network remain a key limitation on the delivery of the National Development Plan. This project helps to address those pressures, particularly in high-demand regions like the Greater Dublin Area.
- Significant capital investment is required to ensure that adequate and efficient water services are available in every community.
- The availability of adequate and efficient water and wastewater treatment infrastructure has a direct effect on the competitiveness of businesses, foreign direct investment and enabling our indigenous businesses to scale.
- The Project is essential to the success of the 'Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030' programme.
- While the benefits of this project are significant, it should not detract from the aim of reducing leakage in the current system or limit the application of new technologies to improve efficiency.
- The project is critical to strengthening the State's resilience to climate change by ensuring a secure and reliable water supply.

About Chambers Ireland

Chambers Ireland is an all-island business organisation with a unique geographical reach. Our members are the Chambers of Commerce in the cities and towns throughout the country – active in every constituency. Each of our member Chambers is central to their local business community and all seek to promote thriving local economies that can support sustainable cities and communities.

General

The Water Supply Project Eastern and Midlands Region is a once-in-a-generation project and is the first major ‘new source’ water infrastructure in the region in the last 60 years. It aims to deliver a safe, secure, sustainable source of water supply necessary to support our growing population and economy. If delivered, the project will enable the State to adapt to mitigate the effects of climate change by diversifying its water supply sources.

Ireland’s population is projected to continue growing strongly over the coming decades, with the CSO projecting an increase to between 5.8 million and 6.8 million people by 2050¹. This growth is expected to be most pronounced in the Eastern and Midlands Region, placing sustained and increasing pressure on existing water supply infrastructure.

The project proposes to abstract water from Parteen Basin, upstream of Parteen Weir on the Lower River Shannon, utilising a maximum of 2% of the long-term average flow at Parteen Basin. It is proposed that the water will be treated near Birdhill, Co. Tipperary and treated water will then be piped through counties Tipperary, Offaly and Kildare to a termination point reservoir at Peamount in County Dublin, connecting into the Greater Dublin Area water distribution network.

Recent regulatory assessments also emphasise that overcoming historic underinvestment and tackling capacity constraints are essential to prevent delays to national development objectives, particularly housing and regional growth². We fully support this project and in line with our point elsewhere in our submission, this much-needed investment in our water infrastructure will be conducive in achieving numerous objectives. Equally, the project will help alleviate concerns regarding security of supply for both businesses and homes in a region covering a vast area of the State.

¹ <https://data.gov.ie/dataset/pec26-projected-population>

² <https://chambers.ie/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Revenue-Control-4-RC4-Submission-by-Chambers-Ireland-04.02.2026.pdf> pg.7

In addition, the recent Accelerating Infrastructure Report and Action Plan³ highlighted the growing pressure on delivery. For businesses, the priority is execution rather than additional planning, with water supply capacity emerging as one of the most critical constraints.

Meeting Ireland's Housing Needs

Increasing our national supply of housing is contingent on holistic, long-term capacity-building of the essential infrastructure that is needed to not only deliver housing but to ensure it is serviced by reliable and clean water supplies. The WSP is a critical component of the State's combined infrastructural capacity, which is needed to meet the ongoing housing supply challenge.

There should be a continued focus on higher-density living and coordinated urbanisation, which improves connectivity and enables more efficient distribution of public services and essential resources. However, it is important that the development of regional infrastructure is not neglected across the country and that a balanced approach to investment in water and wastewater treatment is parallel with investment in transport and grid infrastructure, ensuring that all towns and regions across the country benefit.

The project feeds directly into the Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030 programme⁴. The target of building 300,000 homes by 2030 is stipulated in the 2025 Programme

³<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-public-expenditure-infrastructure-public-service-reform-and-digitalisation/publications/accelerating-infrastructure-report-and-action-plan/>

⁴The targets in the programme should be expanded in any updated version of the Plan considering the findings of the ESRI that supply required an increase of between 35,000 and 53,000 units per annum, while the Housing Commission found that an even wider range is needed to meet our housing needs from 33,400-81,400 a year. ESRI report: <https://www.esri.ie/news/between-35000-and-53000-dwellings-needed-per-year-based-on-various-projected-population-growth>; Housing Commission report: <https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.gov.ie%2F294018%2Fe1aae1ed-07c4-473d-811e3426756321ee.pdf&psig=AOvVaw0YJrtEFiKD7K2F0tUjQyRL&ust=1737648726951000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=0CAQQn5wMahcKEwio9OGK3ImLAXUAAAAAHQAAAAQBA>

for Government to meet increasing demand and constraints across the country, which compounds the reasons for how essential the project is to help meet demand.

Promoting compact growth and high-density relies on available and in-development infrastructure capacity, along with an efficient planning and consenting process. For example, long-term housing plans for the Greater Dublin Area, where approximately half of the proposed housing targets are focused, cannot be achieved without the timely delivery of the project. Equally, population growth in the affected regions reinforces the need for expedited delivery.

Capacity and security of supply

Capacity constraints continue to limit development across significant parts of the State. We consider this to be a real constraint on the effective delivery of the National Development Plan, as many economic challenges faced by businesses today are increasingly tied to these capacity issues.

Uisce Éireann's own assessments indicate that, driven by population growth, housing delivery and economic activity, the Eastern and Midlands Region will require approximately 34% more water by the mid-2040s than is available today⁵.

The security of supply is critical to ensuring Ireland can meet its housing and national economic priorities⁶. Uisce Éireann provides infrastructure which is essential to economic growth, especially in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), where high population density and ongoing growth place additional strain on utilities. Delays to nationally important projects risk leaving the State in a constant reactive position, while pressure on water capacity intensifies.

In addition, a key pillar of the National Planning Framework is the concentration of growth in areas that can support denser populations. The continued expansion of the GDA further

⁵ <https://www.watersupplyproject.ie/projects/national-projects/water-supply-project-east-1>

⁶ <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/programme-for-government-securing-irelands-future.pdf> pg.41

underscores the urgency of implementing infrastructure projects without delay. Postponing these measures would exacerbate capacity constraints on an already stretched system.

From a business perspective, the continuous supply and treatment of water is fundamental to operations. Where this is limited, businesses are severely impacted and, in many cases, threatens the viability of their business. While efficiency remains a priority, essential services like water treatment must have sufficient capacity to handle all scenarios. This is particularly relevant given the growing focus on climate resilience; businesses require a water network robust enough to withstand all potential shocks.

Competitiveness and Investment

Investing in water and wastewater treatment infrastructure has a direct impact on competitiveness, foreign direct investment and the growth of indigenous businesses.

The lack of progress in delivering key water and wastewater projects continues to affect the national water network. Contributing factors include judicial reviews, planning appeals and a congested planning system, which have frequently stalled projects of national importance⁷. In addition, historical underinvestment means that significant capital investment is required to ensure that reliable water services are available in every community and to strengthen the national network. For this reason, we welcomed the funding announced in the Uisce Éireann Strategic Funding Plan 2025–2029, which provides clarity and certainty through an investment framework necessary to advance water and wastewater infrastructure delivery⁸.

Furthermore, delays in project commencement and funding increase the overall cost and complexity of delivery. Such delays highlight the need for immediate and sustained investment to ensure a reliable water supply that supports both population growth and economic

⁷ <https://chambers.ie/wpcontent/uploads/2024/06/Submission-by-Chambers-Ireland-regarding-the-Greater-Dublin-Drainage-Project-June-2024.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-housing-local-government-and-heritage/publications/uisce-%C3%A9ireann-strategic-funding-plan-2025-2029/>

development. Facilitating such investment is therefore critical to developing an efficient, resilient national water network.

Environmental Sustainability

The WSP enables resilience through climate adaptation⁹ with more sustainable water supplies. However, we would caution against the Eastern and Midlands Water Supply Project—by diverting water from another source—being viewed as an alternative to leakage reduction.

A history of consistent underinvestment in our water and wastewater treatment infrastructure is evident in the fact that, at present, the State loses around 37% of its treated water through leaks before it even reaches our taps. While the National Leakage Reduction Programme carries out more than 2,000 leak repairs every month¹⁰, these repairs are generally reactive rather than proactive.

While the addition of a new supply for the Dublin and Midlands region is necessary and builds resilience, it should not be seen as a fundamental solution to the challenges of water supply. Nor should it impose a limit on the steps we may need to take to ensure a robust and environmentally sustainable water supply network in the future.

Addressing leakage at its core is not just a matter of efficiency but also one of environmental sustainability. Extracting, treating and distributing water requires significant energy and resources, meaning that high levels of water loss contribute to unnecessary carbon emissions and increased strain on natural water sources. By prioritising long-term infrastructure investment and

⁹ In our submission on Revenue Control 4 (RC4) we highlighted that increasing climate-driven events place growing pressure on water networks. This reinforces the need for new resilient infrastructure such as this project, alongside continued leakage reduction and system upgrades:<https://chambers.ie/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Revenue-Control-4-RC4-Submission-by-Chambers-Ireland-04.02.2026.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.water.ie/projects/local-projects/leakage-reduction-programme>

proactive leak prevention, we can reduce the environmental footprint of our water supply, minimise disruption to ecosystems, and safeguard precious water resources.

As weather patterns become more unpredictable, the State must have a system capable of adapting to these challenges. Well-planned and sustainable water infrastructure not only supports economic growth but also protects vital ecosystems by reducing the pressure on over-extracted water sources. By integrating this project with continued investment in leakage reduction and water conservation, a future-proof system can then be created that balances the needs of people, businesses and the environment.