



NETWORKS

National Network Local Connections Advisory Council 12 - Meeting Minutes



National Network Local Connections Advisory Council 12 – Meeting Minutes Explanation	
Meeting	Advisory Council 12
Time	10.00-13:00
Date	24.06.2026
Location	The Hilton, Charlemont Place
Attendees	ESB Networks (ESBN): Teresa Fallon (TF) – Co-Chair, Alan Keegan (AK) – Co-Chair, Kate Wann (KW), Fiona O'Donnell (FOD), Robert Power (RP), Aisling Walsh (AW), Aoife Bradish (AB), Gerry Noone (GN) External stakeholders in attendance: Caoimhe McWeeney (CMW – Electricity Association of Ireland), Patrick Liddy (PL – Demand Response Association of Ireland), Philip Connor (PC – Electricity Association of Ireland), Thomas O'Sullivan (TOS – Irish Energy Storage Association, Shane Prendergast (SP – SEAI), Eddie Mwangwewo (EM – CRU) Online: Ruth Buggie (RB – SEAI), Gary Purcell (GP – DCEE), Eoin Kennedy (EK – EirGrid), Ayodele Bickersteth (AyB – Viotas) Apologies: Aidan Mahony (AM – Cork City Council), Bobby Smith (BS – Energy Storage Ireland), Robert O'Rourke (ROR – CRU), Paddy Finn (PF – Viotas)
Agenda	• Welcome, Housekeeping & Actions • Flexibility Multi-year Plan 'Lite' 2026 & Refresh Blueprint & Roadmaps • Demand Flexibility Product • Flexible Demand Connections • Customer & Strategy (Local Business Flex, ITAGT, SME Flex) • Advisory Council 11 Survey Results • Roundtable Discussion • AOB • Close
Compiled By	Kate Wann

Welcome, Housekeeping and Actions

- AK welcomed everyone to NN,LC AC 12.
- TF welcomed Thomas O'Sullivan to his first Advisory Council meeting as the new IESA representative, replacing Frank Burke and all members acknowledged the input from Frank since joining the Advisory Council in 2023.
- AK conducted housekeeping and actions update.
 - AC9.1: Consider providing a more in-depth update on the NN, LC's Behind-the-Meter activities to AC members. Action now closed.
 - AC10.1: Recommend broader dissemination of insights and learnings from pilot programs. Some progress has been made on this action with new sections of the website being added for the Demand Flexibility Product and Flexible Demand Connections. However, action will remain open, with a further update to be provided at the next Advisory Council meeting.
 - AC11.1: Action to share a template for calculations and assumptions, and Article 15 of the ACER methodology on market barriers and the role of digitalisation in flexibility needs assessment. Now closed - a sample report and Article 15 request for input were shared with the Advisory Council on 16 December 2025. Thanks were extended to contributors who inputted.
 - AC11.2: Action to share the Advisory Council survey with members. Action is now closed, feedback survey shared with Advisory Council on 12th December 2025. Thanks were extended to those who gave feedback.

PR6 Developments & FNA Update:

- RP provided an update on the Price Review Six Determination, noting significant developments within ESNB and describing it as a good opportunity to sense-check plans and roadmaps given the clarity now in place on how to move forward.
- A clear outline of revenue from both an opex and capex perspective is now in place. The focus within PR6 is on growing and scaling the flexibility market, with a delivery obligation to facilitate explicit flexibility products, ensure market-ready enduring products are in place, and continue developing new products and routes to market.
- Key drivers of roadmap change were outlined: NEDS closing out current actions and influencing what comes next, with a potential NEDS 2.0; the need to accelerate on the climate action plan; facilitating new connections coming online; managing critical infrastructure; and the broader geopolitical context. All of this is prompting a review and revision of roadmaps against updated strategic objectives.
- AK remarked that the emphasis is firmly on what comes next and putting flexibility on an enduring footing, in keeping with what is set out in PR6.
- On the 'Big Ticket' Flex Market Transformation deliverables by 2030, it was highlighted that the FNA, enduring market arrangements, implementing our key requirements under the Network Code for Demand Response, flex market systems, etc. are important elements of the PR6 requirements.

- AK noted that there is a lot ESNB can do in this space and PR6 revenue has been secured to do it, but certain elements cannot be progressed unilaterally – ESNB will need to work with CRU and our industry stakeholders to progress this work collaboratively. Advisory Council members were encouraged to reflect on and articulate this through other forums and avenues with CRU. The significant interdependencies across the foundational building blocks were underlined – these are integrated systems, not standalone pilots, and understanding those interdependencies is essential to scale and implement flex market arrangements on an enduring basis.
- TF emphasised the importance of bringing customers along this journey also. She added that a lot of groundwork was done in PR5 through testing, learning and participation, and this now needs to be put on a firmer footing.
- CMW raised on the customer piece, emphasising the need for something simple for businesses – a clear and straightforward pathway for commercial and industrial customers. CMW also noted that it was taking time for customer with smart services to opt into smart services. TF acknowledged this is a long journey – approximately 700,000 MPRNs are currently MCC12 and approximately 68,200 MPRNs are MCC16 (checked this after the meeting). Work is ongoing with SEAI on customer awareness, customer engagement, and flexibility participation initiatives aimed at supporting uptake of smart services and behavioural change. The awakening is happening across customer segments including industrial, but more understanding is needed before translating awareness into behavioural change.
- FOD provided an update on the FNA. Extensive engagement has taken place with regulators over the past year looking at network and system constraints. The CRU publication is anticipated around 25th July 2026, intended to inform government policy. Even though it is an every-two-years process, work on the next FNA needs to begin in early 2027.
- TF underlined the significance – it is the first time network needs have been looked at in this way and it helps justify ESNB's plans and shows where they fit into operations.
- AK highlighted the FNA's key role in PR6, including in informing the locations for enduring products such as LBF – it is a key criterion of PR6. External comms are being planned around the publication to make it simple and digestible for those with an interest who don't want to read 200 pages. EW confirmed that it would be CRU to publish and thanked ESB Networks and EirGrid for their work and collaboration on this
- TOS asked whether feedback for FNA had gone through this Advisory Council. It was confirmed that input was requested on 16th December on FNA market barriers and this had been incorporated. It was clarified that the FNA is not an action plan – it is a starting point; the action plan will be determined by policymakers and government.

- SP asked whether the Flexibility Needs Assessment had considered the needs of all stakeholders or was focused solely on network needs. ESNB clarified that the assessment was focused on identifying network needs. SP commented that anything built solely on network needs will fall over if the needs of end users are not also considered. He noted that these are the people who ESNB is ultimately hoping will participate in flexibility services and therefore solutions should also be designed with their needs in mind. ESNB clarified that the purpose of the FNA – as set out in the ACER methodology – was to identify the network needs. However, we accept that needs of other stakeholders is also important and these are addressed elsewhere in DMSO Design.PL raised that the network need for demand arises from connection policy – load is connected based on diversification assumptions that may not always hold. The position differs for generation: wind farms are unlikely to all generate simultaneously, so the diversification expectation means there is no equivalent distribution-level need. For ESNB to have a generation-side network need, connection policy would need to change – for example to allow a battery and a wind farm to co-exist on the same connection.
- TF and FOD acknowledged this. On the distribution system, the need being identified is primarily on the demand side. However, where EirGrid has a demand-up requirement – to reduce dispatch down for example – from providers connected to the distribution system, ESNB needs to assess whether it can be accommodated on its systems.

Flex MYP POAP 2026 & Refresh Blueprint & Roadmap

- RP presented on the 2026 Flexibility Multi-Year Plan 'Lite', covering some key workstreams including FNA, market development, network access, DER operations, customer initiatives, stakeholder engagement, and the DMSO 2026–2030 roadmap refresh.
- AK explained the DMSO Roadmap Refresh exercise. The three roadmaps being refreshed are the Flexibility Market Transformation Roadmap, the Operations Transformation Roadmap, and the Smart + Retail Transformation Roadmap. The aim is to get a handle on all competing demands at European, national, and regulatory levels and identify the significant interdependencies across them.
- It was noted that last summer EAI colleagues were briefed on the Smart+Retail Transformation Roadmap. Since then, there have been considerable developments at policy level – notably the Department's Large Energy User Action Plan and the issue of affordability which is being addressed by the Department's National Energy Affordability Taskforce. A lot of these requirements will need to be factored into our planning as these competing demands to a large extent are coming into the same delivery area in ESB Networks.
- AK stated that not everything can be delivered at the same time and that priorities for now, the next six months, and the years ahead need to be established. This is a view shared by several stakeholders at the most recent meeting of the CRU's National Energy Demand Strategy Implementation Group held on 23 June 2026. The intention is to come back to this group once the internal refresh is complete.
- CMW raised the possibility of differentiated network tariffs for DG1/DG2/GG5 customers to better incentivise demand shifting. Currently the differential between day and night rates is around 10%, and a larger differential could drive more behavioural change. AK agreed there is opportunity here but highlighted the complexity – even incremental changes to retail market systems are significant given the interdependencies.

- CMW asked where the Retail Market System Development plan sits within the roadmaps. AK clarified that the Retail Market System Development plan is capturing those key changes and requirements which are known now and have firm delivery pathways and timelines and which are being progressed through the IGG.
- CMW asked where the ESNB Blueprint and Roadmaps sit within CRU. AK replied it criss-crosses multiple teams (e.g. Flexibility & System Services, Connection Policy, Electricity Networks, Retail Markets, Active Consumers & Smart Metering, etc.) which at times makes keeping us all aligned challenging. However, ESNB was very much encouraged by the recent CRU NEDS Annual Update publication which acknowledged the interdependencies across so many of these work programmes and the need to look at things holistically.

Demand Flexibility Product

- AB presented an update on the Demand Flexibility Product, outlining progress to date.
- PL asked whether all tender opportunities were filled. AB replied she could not go into full detail given where they are in the procurement process but, noted it as a success – a good volume of responses and a wide range. A strong first venture into the market with valuable learnings.
- PL asked whether there is a plan for further tender rounds. AB confirmed the intention is to go again, but a public commitment will not be made until lessons learned are agreed and the next round is scoped. Targeting end of year.

Flexible Demand Connections

- FOD presented the slides relating to Flexible Demand Connections and noted that the first offer had issued in recent weeks.
- FOD noted a key learning from the first customer engagement was that the original dynamic design proved too complex for this customer to commit to – it became clear that customers need to fully understand how they can operationally deliver flexibility before committing. However, ESNB regrouped, and revised the offering.
- TOS asked whether Flexible Demand Connections could facilitate demand-turn-up flexibility in addition to demand reduction. FOD clarified that demand-turn-up is not currently identified as a distribution system need, but that ESNB would consider it if EirGrid made such a request.
- FOD noted that current EU policy requires ESNB to offer firm capacity where such capacity is available and that flexible connections on an enduring basis should only be offered if 'network reinforcement is deemed to be inefficient. TOS observed that many flexible demand technologies neither need nor want firm import capacity and would be willing to curtail consumption during system stress hours – noting that EU policy places significant emphasis on facilitating demand flexibility, empowering consumers, and integrating renewable generation. FOD confirmed that ESNB are currently offering flexible connections on a temporary basis and as such full costs for firm import capacity apply. Flexible Demand Connections are currently designed to deliver faster access to capacity rather than reduced-cost access.

- ESB Networks stated it will continue to collaborate with our counterparts in the TSO, as part of the ongoing Joint System Operator Programme, in the event that they identify the need for demand-turn-up flexibility and will continue to engage with industry stakeholders via the Advisory Council.
- A new flexible demand connections web page went live the previous day with an option for customers to register interest.
- Next steps include engaging proactively with customers earlier in their connection journey, reviewing existing applications in the queue with the network development team and planning team, and sharing high-level principles with candidates who may be suitable.
- PL welcomed the new website and asked whether the detailed rules are clearly set out from the outset. ESNB noted that they didn't wish to be too prescriptive at this stage to allow us to work with customers.
- PL raised concern that participation may restrict involvement in other flexibility programmes (e.g. DSF). It was acknowledged this is complex and was being actively considered by the flexibility market team in DMSO Design.

Customer & Strategy

- AW presented the DMSO Customer Strategy, framed around a connected ecosystem that moves customers from awareness through to participation in Demand Side Flexibility.
- AW presented on the DSF Convince campaign – a national awareness and education campaign.
- AW presented on ITAGT, currently the strongest proof point for the behavioural change strategy, with 47,000+ active participants, 132,000 self-reported actions, and an estimated 120MWh shifted.
- AW gave an update on Weather Watch, now across 183 schools and 26 counties with 15,000 students signed up.
- AW updated the group on EV Flex – contracts were signed the previous week with the successful tenderer. The pilot tests automated smart charging with minimal manual effort from customers
- PL raised concern that this felt like a recurring pattern of never-ending pilots. PC also noted we are replicating something already done in the UK, and queried whether UK data should be sufficient. TF acknowledged the point but noted the Irish context differs materially – the market structure, supplier landscape, and scale are different, and what worked via Octopus in the UK is very much a supplier-led play. The previous ESNB pilot surfaced a key issue around simultaneous peak demand across customers, and this iteration is designed to address that.
- SP asked was there any communication technology being done as part of this. TF responded this is a behavioural trial as we got good findings from the first trial but there were only 170 customers and that was too small.
- Members discussed the proposed EV Flex trial and some concerns were raised regarding its potential benefit to the sector. In particular, some members noted that no communications technology or interoperability elements were being trialled and highlighted the limitations of involving only a single charge point operator/manufacturer. Members also noted that Ireland is behind other European countries in this area. ESNB noted the differences being adopted in other jurisdictions and also that the primary objective of this phase of the trial is to achieve participation levels of between 1,000 and 2,000 participants and build on the learnings from the previous trial.

- An action was also taken to circulate the previous EV charging pilot report to Advisory Council members.
- AW described LBF as a very exciting new product with a huge amount of interest – a strong consultation response and high webinar attendance. CRU alignment and procurement launch are the key milestones for this year.
- TOS raised industry feedback that LBF is currently scoped to address generation capacity constraints in specific locations, rather than demand-turn-up flexibility or reducing dispatch-down of renewable generation and asked whether the scope might be broadened over time. TF clarified that demand-turn-up is not currently identified as a distribution system need.
- PL asked what a Q4 launch means in practice – whether customers would be able to begin participating this year or just apply. GN replied it would be very positive to have customers active this side of Christmas, but it does depend on CRU approval and technical readiness.
- PL asked what scale of MW is being targeted at a substation level. GN explained the aim is to get to the MW level of need at particular locations – whether that comes from one large customer or many smaller ones.

Advisory Council 11 Survey Results

- AK presented the AC11 survey results and thanked everyone who responded and those who also provided free-text feedback. The results were broadly positive across all questions.
- On meeting format, a suggestion was made that time should be set aside for members to bring topics to the table. This was agreed and will be taken forward in a package of actions of improvements to the Advisory Council.
- On meeting cadence, apologies were offered for the gap of this being the first advisory council of the year. Issuing the meeting invites for the year will be taken forward in a package of actions of improvements to the Advisory Council.
- On objectives, it was noted that these are generally presented to the Advisory Council members at the first Advisory Council of each year but, had not been done to date due to challenges with holding an Advisory Council meeting in the early parts of 2026.
- AK clarified on the proposed name change that this is a branding update only – reflecting the internal move to the DMSO structure – and does not change the scope, TOR, or anything discussed at the Advisory Council. The group agreed and an action was taken to reflect the updated Flexibility Design Advisory Council branding in the terms of reference.

AOB

- AK informed Advisory Council members of two upcoming webinars: 1) ESB Networks and EirGrid Hybrid Co-Located Sites Maximum Export Capacity (MEC) Sharing Webinar – 25th June. 2) General Update on JSOP Progress and updates on TSO/DSO Operating Model – 9th July.
- AK gave an update that the engagement@esbnetworks.ie mailbox to be retired and new mailbox to be utilised: flexibilityengagement@esbnetworks.ie for all Advisory Council circulars and communications.

Roundtable

- CMW queried membership of participants and introducing observers of the advisory council going forward. AK informed that the intention is to refresh Advisory Council membership through an Expression of Interest process, potentially in early 2027.
- TOS noted that a recent EU ETS audit found that significant carbon funding already collected needs to be distributed towards decarbonisation and reducing Europe's reliance on fossil fuels. He noted that the recent €1 billion Heat Auction was undersubscribed, and Ireland did not receive any allocation. TOS suggested that industry would benefit from closer collaboration with System Operators, the Regulator, and Government to help access available European funding in support of Ireland's electrification-led decarbonisation pathway, noting that funding is available to support investment in grid towards demand flexibility deployment.
- TF thanked everyone for their time and closed the meeting.

Advisory Council Actions					
ID	Owner	Action Description	Date Raised	Date Due	Comments
AC12.1	AK / AW	Circulate previous EV charging pilot report and results to Advisory Council members	24.06.2026	AC13	AK / AW
AC12.2	AK	Introduce process for members to propose topics in advance of meetings.	24.06.2026	AC13	AK
AC12.3	AK	Set Advisory Council dates for the coming year in advance.	24.06.2026	AC13	AK
AC12.4	AK	Reflect NN, LC branding change in the terms of reference.	24.06.2026	AC13	AK