

PRESS RELEASE

Dublin Region Non-Domestic Water Metering Project



Fingal County Council Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall

INTRODUCTION

Fingal County Council, as the lead authority on behalf of the 4 Dublin Local Authorities, has today entered into a contract with Gerry McCloskey Engineering Ltd (GMC), to supply and install an estimated 42,000 automatic reading water meters on non-domestic connections across the region. The universal implementation of metering on the non-domestic water connections will represent a fairer way for non-domestic customers to pay for water services provided by their local authority.

The extensive meter installation programme is likely to uncover defects in the water supply system that may otherwise have remained unnoticed and will provide an opportunity to repair these defects leading to considerable water conservation benefits to each local authority. The Automatic Meter Reading System will also allow for better water usage data to be collected from each meter and for each area. This will allow the local authorities to detect possible leaks or unauthorised usage of water and will enable better water supply management.

BACKGROUND

The Government's National Water Pricing Policy Framework requires the charging of non-domestic customers for water services to recover the full costs of providing these services. Local authorities are required to achieve universal metering of the water supplied to the non-domestic sector. In order to implement this policy, in accordance with the application of the "polluter pays" principle and the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)

Water services in Ireland are for the most part, delivered by local authorities to both the domestic and non-domestic sectors. Local authorities must take steps to apply charges to the non-domestic sector that reflect the marginal capital costs and the average operational costs of providing both water and waste water services. The charge is to be applied on the basis of the "water in / water out" principle, i.e. recovery of the full cost of all water services provision by means of a unit charge in respect of metered water supply.

DUBLIN REGION NON-DOMESTIC WATER METER STATUS

There are estimated to be approximately 40,500 non-domestic water customers between the four local authorities in the Dublin Region under this project. While over one in three of these customers have a water meter already, surveys have shown that many of these have reached the end of their useful life. The number of meters is likely to exceed the number of customers, as some customers will have more than one connection to

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the public water supply. This project will allow for the replacement of most existing water meters and the installation of new meters on all of the previously unmetered non-domestic connections. In practical terms, this work can be carried out most cost effectively in the time allowed by a private contractor

CONTRACT PROCUREMENT

Studies in advance of procurement determined that a design build approach had the best potential to provide value for money and (technology) risk transfer, thereby enhancing the delivery of this water metering project. Gerry McCloskey Engineering Ltd (GMC) were confirmed as the preferred bidder to undertake the non-domestic water-metering project, following the usual EU procurement process. The GMC team includes international firms with specialist skills in water metering and reading, including ista Danmark a/s, PJ Keary Ltd, Hydrometer, Miltel and Campbell Carr.

SCOPE OF CONTRACT SERVICES

This project is unique within Ireland and Europe for the scope, scale and combination of technologies to be deployed. The scope of services required of GMC will include the following:

- Customer Database Validation;
- Pre-Installation Surveys;
- Installation of Meters and Meter reading technology (Automatic Meter Reading System);
- Design of Meter Installations;
- Training of Local Authority Staff ;
- Testing and commissioning including initial reading of meters for a period of 2 years;

The four local authorities will retain full responsibility for the operation of the public water supply network throughout the contract while GMC will develop and maintain a Metering Database which will collect meter readings on an ongoing basis, assisting the local authorities with customer billing and network maintenance.

Each local authority will operate and maintain their own meters and meter reading system once they have been installed and commissioned by GMC Group. The meter readings obtained initially by GMC Group for 2 years and subsequently by City and County Council personnel will be used by each local authority to prepare and issue bills to customers.

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Notes to Editors:

Atkins (www.atkinsglobal.ie) plans, designs and enables the delivery of complex capital programmes for clients in the public and private sectors across the world. Atkins is the largest multi-disciplinary consultancy in Europe; the largest engineering consultancy in the UK; and the fourth largest design firm in the world. This project has been delivered from its Irish offices in Cork and Dublin.

¹ L4/00 “Application of the Polluter Pays Principle – A Framework for Water Pricing”, Department of the Environment and Local Government, March 2000.

² Department of the Environment and Local Government Circulars, L4/00, L16/00, L11/01, L14/01, L4/02, L6/02, L7/02 and L10/02 – now consolidated into Circular L16/02.

³ Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council 2000/60/EC Establishing a Framework for Community Action in the Field of Water Policy.