

## enet invests €2.5m to deliver fibre to Loughrea, Ardee & Kilkenny

5<sup>th</sup> June 2014 - enet, Ireland's open access network operator, today announced plans to invest €2.5m in broadband infrastructure to create three new fibre towns, in Kilkenny, Loughrea and Ardee.

Celebrating 10 years operating the fibre optic Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs), enet announced that it plans to create three new 'Fibre To The Business' (FTTB) networks via their enet **fibredirect** initiative. The project will bring fibre directly into every business in Loughrea, Ardee and Kilkenny ensuring that all businesses can access superfast fibre broadband, as well as telephone services.

In April, enet announced the creation of Ireland's first fibre town in Claremorris. Currently under construction, the direct fibre link to every business will allow SME businesses to access speeds of up to 250Mbps, providing the ultimate broadband experience, free from bandwidth bottlenecks and allowing local businesses to take full advantage of digital markets and exploit online opportunities.

Crucially, enet **fibredirect** is a genuine 100% fibre service, with fibre optic cables being delivered directly into premises. Other so-called 'fibre' services connect to a local telecoms exchange or cabinet, but still rely on older copper networks to reach premises, resulting in a significant loss of performance. Bandwidth will be delivered directly into premises via enet **fibredirect**, meaning broadband speeds advertised will be guaranteed rather than the 'up to' claims made by service providers over copper networks.

Minister Pat Rabbitte T.D. commented: *"I am delighted to announce this significant investment by enet to create new **fibredirect** towns in Loughrea, Ardee and Kilkenny. It follows their creation of Ireland's first fibre town in Claremorris and shows real commitment to developing industry-strength broadband for businesses. Fibre infrastructure and high speed broadband are essential supports for digital entrepreneurship, national competitiveness and job creation."*

*"I also want to acknowledge enet's success managing and operating the MANs on behalf of the Government over the last 10 years. The MANs have helped to transform Irish telecommunications by stimulating competition, reducing bandwidth costs and accelerating Ireland's broadband position. They have also played an important role in supporting job creation and securing large scale foreign direct investment projects in regional cities and towns."*

Commenting on the initiative, David C McCourt, Chairman of enet, said: *“This is a significant day for Irish telecoms. Loughrea, Ardee and Kilkenny can look forward to gaining a significant competitive advantage in terms of keeping, developing and attracting new companies and new jobs, driving innovation and acting as a platform for economic stimulus in the localities.”*

*“We are also celebrating enet’s success managing and operating the MANs over the last 10 years. A decade ago, the challenge was to overcome the so-called “digital divide” affecting our main regional centres. Today, the MANs are being used by 55 different service providers and citizens in MAN towns have, in essence, the same choice and cost of broadband as anyone in the capital. Importantly, recent analysis has shown that over 85% of all IDA created jobs in Cork over the last 10 years are connected to the Cork City MAN.”*

Conal Henry, enet CEO said: *“We are delighted to announce our plans to invest €2.5m creating three new ‘Fibre To The Business’ towns in Loughrea, Ardee and Kilkenny. By building a fibre network directly into every business, we’ll be doing something no one else has done. The **fibredirect** network will completely replace the out-of-date copper network which has reached its end of life – remember copper networks were built to carry voice traffic and not broadband! Our fibre carries significantly more data at much higher speed without any loss in quality.”*

*“Over the coming weeks we’ll be actively engaging with businesses in Loughrea, Ardee and Kilkenny. I’d like to acknowledge the support of the local Chambers of Commerce and local authorities. Their continued support will be critical in driving these projects forward towards a successful outcome.”*

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