



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL 07.HC0004

Development

M6 (M17/M18) Motorway Service Area

Location

South of M6, Lisheenkyle West,
Oranmore, County Galway

Prospective Applicant

Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Planning Authority

Galway County Council

Inspector

Kevin Moore

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) requested Pre-Application Consultations under Section 51A of the Roads Act 1993, for the development of a new Motorway Service Area on the M6 Motorway. One Pre-Application Consultation meeting took place between An Bord Pleanála (the Board) and the prospective applicant on 30th January, 2017.
- 1.2. This Report is prepared following the request by the prospective applicant to close the Pre-Application Consultations between the applicant and the Board. This Report provides an overview of the proposed project, a summary of the meeting and the advice provided by the Board, the legislative provisions, and recommends a list of Prescribed Bodies who should be forwarded copies of the application.

2.0 Background

- 2.1. TII propose a Motorway Service Area (MSA) on the M6 Motorway between M6 Junction 17 (Athenry) and M6 Junction 19 (Oranmore) approximately 5.5km north-east of Oranmore in line with its *Service Area Policy* (NRA, August, 2014)
- 2.2. The primary purpose of the MSAs is to improve the road safety of the national road network, providing areas where road users can park, rest and access facilities. The *Service Area Policy* is required to implement relevant European Regulations and Directives. The Policy identifies the preferred strategic locations of these facilities. The TII Policy identifies the need for a service area to be located between M6 Junction 17 (Athenry) and M6 Junction 19 (Oranmore), servicing both the M6 and M17/M18 traffic (i.e. two motorways currently under construction). The M17 and M18 connect with the M6 via a grade separated interchange at Rathmorrissy.

3.0 Proposed Development

- 3.1. The proposed scheme includes:

- Areas for commercial vehicles to park to allow for mandatory breaks and rest periods,
 - Areas for all road users to park and rest, and
 - Access to facilities for road users, including, fuel stations, toilets, showers, shops, restaurants, tourist information and play areas for children.
- 3.2 The scheme would be designed in accordance with NRA TA70 “The Location and Layout of On-line Service Areas”. The development would include a wastewater treatment plant, rising main and water main, controlled local road access, landscaping, and a Garda / Road Safety Authority Enforcement Area.
- 3.3 A site selection study considered six alternative sites, two sites at the Rathmorrissy Interchange, two on the north side of the M6 between Rathmorrissy and Oranmore and two on the south of the M6 between Rathmorrissy and Oranmore. The preferred site is stated to be chosen primarily for reasons relating to road safety and reduced impact on sensitive receptors.

4.0 Pre-Application Consultation

- 4.1. One Consultation Meeting was held on 30th January, 2017. The prospective applicant provided details of the nature and extent of the proposed motorway service area, set out the policy context for it, addressed the options considered, outlined consultations undertaken to date, and gave an overview of the structure proposed for the Environmental Impact Statement to be submitted with the application. Site selection criteria were described to provide the key rationale for the site option chosen.
- 4.2. The Board’s advice included the requirement for the prospective applicant to address the alternative locations considered and the justification for the preferred option selected, with particular reference to the proposed location sited away from Rathmorrissy Junction, where the M6, M17 and M18 intersect. It was further advised that the applicant should provide clear justification as to how the proposed scheme would serve the traffic streams of each of the motorways it seeks to serve. The relevance of the Motorway Service Area policy and the existence of the Galway Plaza motorway service area at Junction 16 on the M6 were also matters which the

prospective applicant was advised to consider in any upcoming application. It was further advised that due consideration should be given to in-combination effects on the environment with other proposed road developments.

- 4.3. The Consultations also addressed potential indirect effects of the proposal on Galway Bay SAC (approximately 3.5km away) arising from proposed drainage, with a presumption that a Stage 1 screening assessment would be required.

5.0 Roads Act – Legislative Provisions

- 5.1. The Roads Act of 2015 inserted Section 51A into the Roads Act of 1993. Section 51A provides for consultations with An Bord Pleanála before making an application under Section 51.
- 5.2. The Act provides that the Board may give advice in relation to the procedures involved in making the application, and what may have a bearing on its decision in relation to the application in respect of the effects of the proposed road development on the environment, or an area, site or land, and proper planning and sustainable development.
- 5.3. Section 51A of the Roads Act consultations differ from other strategic infrastructure legislation. The Act does not require the Board to provide an opinion on whether the project is strategic infrastructure or not. Following the completion of any consultations between the Board and the applicant, the Roads Act states that the applicant may apply to the Board for the approval in relation to a proposed road development.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 Following the insertion of Section 51A into the Roads Act, a Road Authority or Authority as the case may be, can enter into consultations with the Board prior to submitting an application under Section 51(2) in relation to a proposed road development. The Board may give advice to the Authority regarding the procedures involved and what considerations relating to the effects of the proposed development on the environment or the proper planning and sustainable development may have on

its decision in relation to the application. During the meeting held, advice was provided as noted on the file attached.

6.2 The applicant now wishes to close the consultation stage and, following this stage, the applicant may apply to the Board for the approval of the roads project.

6.3 A recommended list of Prescribed Bodies, who should be forwarded copies of the application documentation, is as follows:

Section 51(3)(b) lists the following bodies:

- (i) The Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland,
- (ii) Bord Fáilte Éireann,
- (iii) An Taisce – the National Trust for Ireland,
- (iv) Any other prescribed body or person.

It is considered that the following prescribed bodies should also be notified:

- (i) An Chomhairle Ealaíon
- (ii) Galway County Council
- (iii) Northern and Western Regional Authority
- (iv) Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- (v) National Transport Authority
- (vi) Health Service Executive
- (vii) Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment.
- (viii) Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport

Kevin Moore
Senior Planning Inspector

3rd August 2017