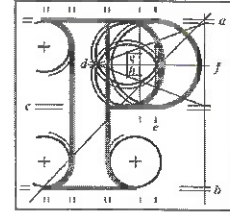


**Our Case Number:** ABP-307462-20



**An  
Bord  
Pleanála**

Áine McHugh  
Donegal National Roads Office  
Donegal County Council  
Donegal Public Services  
Drumlonager  
Co. Donegal

**Date:** 14th July 2021

**Re:** Ten-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal which improves vital improvements to three sections of the National Road Network.  
Section 1: N13/N15 Ballybofey Stranorlar Bypass,  
Section 2: N13/N14/N56 Letterkenny Bypass and Dual Carriageway to Manorcunningham,  
Section 3: N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford.

Dear Madam,

I have been asked by An Bord Pleanála to refer further to the above-mentioned pre-application consultation request.

Please find enclosed a copy of the written record of the third meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

If you have any queries in relation to the matter, please contact the undersigned officer of the Board.

Please quote the above-mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

Niamh Thornton  
Executive Officer  
Direct Line: 01-8737247

PC07

**Teil**  
Glaó Áitiúil  
**Facs**  
Láithreán Gréasáin  
Ríomhphost

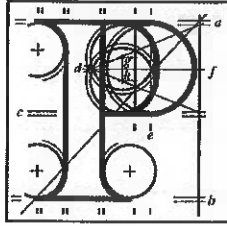
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An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting ABP-307462-20 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	ABP-307462-20 Ten-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Section 1, 2 and 3, County Donegal.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application consultation		
<b>1st / 2nd / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup>		
<b>Date</b>	06/07/21	<b>Start Time</b>	11 a.m.
<b>Location</b>	N/A	<b>End Time</b>	12.35 p.m.

<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>
<b>Staff Members</b>
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning
Sarah Lynch, Senior Planning Inspector
Maeve Flynn, Ecologist
Kieran Somers, Executive Officer
<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>
Brendan O'Donnell, Donegal County Council
Damian McDermott, Donegal County Council
Aine McHugh, Donegal County Council
Tim Patterson, RPS
Eamon Cox, RPS
Eamon Daly, RPS

Emma Coyle, RPS
Gareth McElhinney, RPS
Paula Kearney, RPS
Tatiana Kelley, RPS
Paul Murphy, RPS
Paul Chadwick, RPS
Paul Christie, Donegal County Council
Liam Ward, Donegal County Council
Patrick Duffy, Transport Infrastructure Ireland

The meeting commenced at 11 a.m.

### **Introduction**

The Board referred to its previous meeting with the prospective applicant and the record of this meeting. The Board asked if the prospective applicant had any comments it wished to make on the record of this meeting; the prospective applicant replied that it would forward comments on this record by email following the instant meeting and it was agreed that these would be placed on the file for the public record.

The Board's representatives noted that the matter of policy and objectives which pertain to the proposed road scheme would be addressed by the prospective applicant as part of its presentation for the instant meeting; the Board requested that the prospective applicant might also address the matter of the variation to the County Development Plan as part of this.

The Board's representatives also noted that the prospective applicant had undertaken to indicate its preferred schedule of meetings and topics going forward in the process. The Board stated that it would be helpful if the proposed scheme could be broken down into the three distinct sections and that topics such as biodiversity and flood risk assessment be dealt with for each section in future meetings. The

prospective applicant noted this point and said that it envisaged three or four more meetings in the instant process whereby more detail on the three sections and various planning topics could be provided. The Board welcomed this and said that it would seek to facilitate such further meetings in as timely a manner as possible.

**Presentation by the prospective applicant:**

The prospective applicant provided the Board's representatives with an update and progress on the project generally. It said that the project is nearing the completion of Phase 3 and that engagement is on-going with landowners. Assessments are continuing and one-to-one meetings with affected landowners will proceed into the third quarter of 2021.

The prospective applicant provided an update with respect to design development and environmental impact assessment. Two design freezes have been implemented to date (Design Freeze 1 occurred after the publication of the Options Selection Report and Design Freeze 2 occurred in May 2021) and a finalisation of the design and cost estimation is expected sometime in the fourth quarter of 2021. With respect to the preparation of CPO documentation and EIAR, the completion of the CPO and the finalisation of the EIAR is also expected sometime in the fourth quarter of 2021. The prospective applicant added that Design Freeze 2 had enabled the preparation of a draft CPO for the proposed scheme. The prospective applicant said that the proposed scheme is currently at the stage of design refinement.

The prospective applicant referred to the need to enhance connectivity in the context of the proposed road development and the policies and objectives which underpin this. In a European context, the prospective applicant referred to EU Regulation Number 1315/2013 which sets out key objectives with respect to the categories of cohesion, efficiency, sustainability and increasing the benefits for road users. The prospective applicant also advised that the Ten-T Guidelines review were at public consultation stage up until May 2021; this review also assessed progress made since the Guidelines took effect including digitalisation, multi-modality and alternative clean fuels. In a National context, the prospective applicant referred to policies and objectives as expressed in the National Planning Framework and National Development Plan 2018 – 2027. The prospective applicant also noted that, as per the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland – 2021, the Government

has developed its investment framework for transport investment. It was also noted that the Ten-T project for County Donegal provides for matters such as decarbonisation, the delivery of safety and efficiency, the mobility of people and goods in urban areas and enhanced regional and rural connectivity. The prospective applicant also referred to the North West Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and, in particular, objectives RPO 9.2 and RPO 6.7. With respect to the current county development plan, the prospective applicant referred to relevant sections and noted that the Ten-T PRIPD Preferred Corridors have now been adopted into the county development plan. The prospective applicant also advised that the aforementioned variation of the County Development Plan was adopted on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021; the prospective applicant added that the variation in question is effective from that date.

With respect to the overall aim of enhancing connectivity, the prospective applicant referred to the matters of Brexit and cross border travel. The prospective applicant emphasised the cross-border nature of the proposed scheme and connections to urban locations including Derry, Strabane and Letterkenny.

With respect to the A5 Western Transport Corridor, the prospective applicant provided the Board's representatives with some background information on this including the approval granted by the Board in 2012 with respect to case reference number HA0033. Work on the Ten-T project was commenced in 2017 and this included the option selection process for the Ten-T Priority Route Improvement Project. The prospective applicant noted that it had been deemed appropriate not to confirm the CPO for the N14/N15 to A5 Link. The prospective applicant informed the Board's representatives that, following project management review, risk management and assessment, it was decided to include all N14/N15 to A5 Link elements within the Republic of Ireland into the EIAR, NIS and CPO which will be produced for the forthcoming planning application. The prospective applicant also noted that transboundary effects may apply in this case and that cumulative effects will be assessed.

The Board's representatives requested clarity on the matter of the bridge crossing which occurs close to an SAC in the functional area of Northern Ireland. The prospective applicant provided some further detail on this in the context of the

previously approved scheme and interface with the current proposed development. The prospective applicant said that impacts to the river in this location would be minimised as best as possible. The Board noted this and said that it would be important to be as clear as possible regarding the extant planning permission and what is now being proposed. The prospective applicant agreed with this and noted the more stringent requirements which are now in place with respect to EIA and Appropriate Assessment. The Board noted that the proposed road development would appear to be a more complex proposal in terms of planning and greater land-take and it advised the prospective applicant to be cognisant of this and to provide a justification for the additional landtake within the application documents.

The prospective applicant referred to the matter of Active Travel Provision and said that all three sections of the project will include new proposed Active Travel facilities that will provide connection for non-motorised users to access nearby communities, schools, attractions and other trip generators. This will comprise approximately 51 kilometres within the proposed scheme. The prospective applicant also advised that an Active Travel appraisal is on-going alongside the main traffic appraisal. Progress drawings in this regard have been prepared to show the extent of proposed Active Travel provisions as part of the proposed road development, as well as highlighting existing facilities/amenities. The prospective applicant also advised that existing adjacent public lands or lands identified to be acquired under the project will be considered for their use as modal shift and park/cycle facilities. The prospective applicant provided the Board's representatives with some aspects of the proposed Active Travel provisions of the project; these included Cappry Football Pitch, the old rail corridor east, St. Patrick's School and Dunwilley Fort. With regard to Letterkenny in particular, the prospective applicant referred to the River Swilley crossing and the four-lane road into Letterkenny which facilitates approximately 33,000 motorists per day. The prospective applicant noted that provision would be made as part of the proposed scheme for flood compensation and drainage, as well as facilities to promote modal shift such as park-and-share facilities. The prospective applicant stated that any such proposed facilities in locations such as Letterkenny, Lifford and Ballybofey would comprise an integral part of the urban road network and it acknowledged that it would need to consider how to assess the impacts of any such ancillary features in the proposed scheme. The Board's representatives noted the

intended incorporation of such facilities and remarked that such provisions would constitute positive additions to the proposed scheme as a whole (in terms of positive impacts on the climate and the provision of facilities for cyclists and pedestrians). With respect to such proposals, the Board enquired as to whether there was an overall transport strategy for the urban locations in question. The prospective applicant responded that it is preparing a local transport plan for Letterkenny at the current time. The Board noted this and said that it would be important to demonstrate how the proposed scheme and any such ancillary facilities would comply with local planning policy.

With regard to the matter of connectivity generally, the Board's representatives suggested that it would be useful if the prospective applicant were to provide a list of connectivities to be severed and new connectivities to be provided as part of the forthcoming planning application. The Board added that a list of all such new provisions for connectivity would be of benefit to the proposed scheme from a public perception point of view. The prospective applicant noted this and said that such facilities will be provided throughout the proposed scheme. It also said that it would provide a list of potential future connections which are within the scope and remit of the proposed scheme.

The Board's representatives suggested that, following the meeting, the prospective applicant would consider how it wishes to schedule meetings in the instant process going forward; the Board asked that the prospective applicant revert to it with a suggested timeline in this regard. The Board's representatives said that any such future meetings could focus on specific topics and added that a walk-through of the proposed scheme would also be of great assistance. The prospective applicant indicated its current intention to lodge the planning application towards the end of Quarter 4 2021. The prospective applicant said that it envisaged 3 or 4 more meetings in the pre-application consultation process and it undertook to forward design drawings to the Board in advance of these meetings.

With respect to the matter of land acquisition, the Board referred to the record of the previous meeting and the reference therein to some 13 landowners who had not engaged to date in terms of meetings with the prospective applicant. The prospective applicant noted for the record the inclusion of new landowners now as

the CPO draft progresses and it also advised that it had managed to engage with some of these 13 landowners in the meantime. The Board noted this and requested more detail on the nature and extent of land acquisition at future meetings.

The Board also advised the prospective applicant to be cognisant of the matters of cumulative effects and in-combination effects with respect to extant and existing permissions so that the most up-to-date information can be presented at the time of the lodging of the planning application.

**Conclusion:**

The record of the instant meeting will issue in the meantime and the prospective applicant can submit any comments it may have in writing or at the time of the further meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12.35 p.m.

 8/7/21

**Ciara Kellett**

**Assistant Director of Planning**

