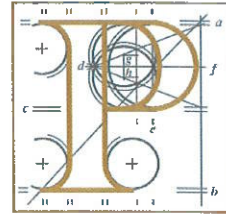


**Our Case Number:** ABP-307462-20



**An  
Bord  
Pleanála**

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

**Date:** 9th September 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 fourth meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 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,

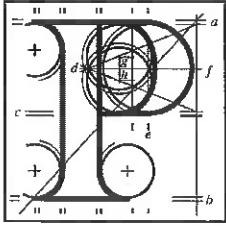
Niamh Thornton  
Executive Officer  
Direct Line: 01-873 7247

PC07

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64 Sráid Maolbhríde	64 Marlborough Street
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D01 V902	D01 V902





An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting ABP-307462-20 4<sup>th</sup> meeting

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	ABP-307462-20 Ten-T Priority Route Improvement Project Donegal.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application consultation		
<b>1st / 2nd / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	4th		
<b>Date</b>	02/09/21	<b>Start Time</b>	11:04 a.m.
<b>Location</b>	N/A	<b>End Time</b>	13:40 p.m.

<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>
<b>Staff Members</b>
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Sarah Lynch, Senior Planning Inspector
Maeve Flynn, Ecologist
Niamh Thornton, Executive Officer
<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>
Aine McHugh
Emma Coyle
John McFeely
Eamon Cox
Damien McDermot
Tim Patterson
Eamon Daly

The meeting commenced at 11:04 a.m.

The Board's representative referred to its previous meeting with the prospective applicant of the 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 and the record of this meeting. The Board's representative asked if the prospective applicant had any comments it wished to make on the record of the meeting. The prospective applicant replied that it had two comments to make that it would send in via email.

### **Project Update:**

The prospective applicant gave a brief project update. Over 300 one to one meetings have been held with landowners, the draft CPO is underway, the Environmental Assessment is progressing, and the design of the scheme is being finalised.

The prospective applicant referred to a slide which gave a breakdown of the main components of the scheme by section, including road lengths, carriageway types, link roads and numbers of interchanges, roundabouts, bridge, and underpass structures.

The presentation continued with a further breakdown of all three sections of the scheme being discussed in greater detail with the visual aid of Maps.

### **Section 1:**

Section 1 of the scheme acts as a bypass to the north of Balleybofey and Stranolar towns. It was noted that there is a lot of ribbon development in the area and as such a number of houses would be affected. There are 3 interchanges along section 1. A detailed overview of section 1 of the scheme was provided moving from south to north on the map and discussing all aspects of the development including active travel arrangements, carriageway numbers, junctions and intersections, topography, water drainage, links with local roads and proposed closures and diversions of local roads.

The prospective applicant directed the Board's representatives' attention to an existing 110kV overhead line which will have to be diverted as part of the scheme.

The prospective applicant is liaising with the ESB. The Board's representative advised that the prospective applicant make it clear on the public notices that the development includes a utility diversion.

A bridge over the River Finn will form part of section 1 of the road scheme. It was confirmed that the SAC follows the banks of the river. It was noted that the bridge is extended on both ends, on the north because of the presence of flood plains and on the south to allow underbridge access to a landholding. The Board's representative advised the prospective applicant to be very clear in the NIS and EIAR that there will be no physical impacts on the SAC, by the bridge or piers. The Board's representative also advised the prospective applicant to look at any potential effects of shading on the river. It was also advised that a detailed invasive species management plan form part of the application.

The prospective applicant stated that the proposed scheme compliments other schemes within the area, such as the Ballybofey Regeneration Plan which is relying on the implementation of the scheme to improve the roads network in the area and reduce traffic levels going through the town.

Improvements to the N15 road were discussed and the junction on the southern end was noted as having two main constraints, an old railway line and a floodplain. It was noted that flood compensation areas would be required and options are under consideration.

A brief discussion was held around the wetlands/attenuation ponds. The Board's representative queried if surface water drainage would be directed to the River Finn and if this would have an impact on flooding of the river. The prospective applicant stated that water would be released from the attenuation ponds slowly and that drainage from the proposed scheme should not have a negative impact on flooding. The prospective applicant presented sample pictures of attenuation ponds and the Board's representative noted that the landscaping and visual amenity of these ponds should be taken into consideration by the prospective applicant.

Three locations of park and share/cycle areas were observed on the map. The prospective applicant stated that these areas would include car parking, bike stands and possible service connections.

The Board's representative enquired if any consideration had been given at this point to noise mitigation, especially through built up areas, and advised that the visual impacts of any barriers etc. be considered. The prospective applicant confirmed that noise modelling is underway but that they do not have details on noise mitigation measures at this point.

## **Section 2:**

Section 2 of the road scheme is located 10km to the north of section 1 of the scheme. The primary roads in the area are the N56 into Letterkenny and leading on to north-west Donegal and the N13 which turns east towards Lifford, which leads on to the main Dublin, Belfast, and Derry routes.

The prospective applicant referred to the Dry Arch roundabout as a significant junction and brought the Boards attention to the presence and location of the River Swilly, which is tidal and includes a SAC and a SPA.

The prospective applicant stated that the new road project will take traffic going towards north-west Donegal out of Letterkenny town.

The prospective applicant guided the Board's representatives through the proposed development on the map, starting from the south, going into Letterkenny and then eastward along the N13 toward Lifford.

The prospective applicant proposes the new road, coming from the south, will replace that section of the existing N13 as a commuter and national road. It is proposed that the N13 be closed off at two points and downgraded to a local road. This has been proposed due to the presence of a school, multiple dwelling accesses off the road and the steep gradient of the road.

The prospective applicant noted that, due to the topography of the area, a lot of this new section of road will be within a cutting. It confirmed that investigations are underway into the possible effects on groundwater.

The prospective applicant highlighted its commitment to keeping local connectivity.

The prospective applicant referred to the discontinued railway line, noting that only short sections of same are still in place. When questioned by the Board's representative it was confirmed that the proposed development would not restrict access to the railway line.

The Board asked about the presence of the River Swilly SAC and whether there were feeding grounds outside of the SAC within the proposed development area. It was clarified that the area around and north of the proposed new junction is a commercialised, brownfield area, which is zoned for development. Several species have been identified but their feeding grounds appear to be confined to the estuary area. The prospective applicant clarified that research to date showed no evidence of flora or fauna of any significance in this area and that the main issues here are flooding issues.

The prospective applicant referred to the bridge across the River Swilly and informed the Board's representatives that different options of structures were being considered here. The prospective applicant hopes to have a final design for the bridge within the next month.

Two park and share/cycle areas were identified for this section of the scheme.

The Dromore area eastward of section 2 of the road scheme is primarily an online route with a new grade separated junction.

### **Section 3:**

Section 3 of the proposed road scheme terminates south of Lifford town and is 17.5km in length. This section of road is primarily rural in nature and replaces the existing N14, providing a more direct route. The Active Travel Network runs the length of the route and the connection to the Donegal Cycle Route was noted.

The prospective applicant referred to the disused railway line, noting that the section of line along this part of the route is still relatively intact. The possibility of creating a greenway amenity, as part of this application, is being investigated.

The prospective applicant referred to various points along this section where local connectivity was being maintained. The N14 is proposed to be terminated at one point along the section and the diversion route was highlighted.

It was noted that there is one archaeological enclosure along this section of the scheme. Investigation works have already been carried out and the alignment of the road has been modified as a result.

The prospective applicant stated that they have been in consultation with Inland Fisheries Ireland and the Loughs Agency regarding the rivers along the scheme. The width of the River Finn and surrounding SAC area was highlighted.

Regarding the junction at the termination point of this section of the scheme, it was noted that the junction would be designed to allow for connection to the A5 in Northern Ireland whenever this road is brought onto the network.

#### **Discussion and Conclusion:**

Locations where dwellings/land would need to be acquired were pointed out during the presentation but were not marked on maps. The prospective applicant will issue the Board with a separate map of all dwellings/lands requiring acquisition.

It was agreed that biodiversity issues would be covered in the next meeting. The record of the instant meeting will issue in the meantime and the prospective applicant can submit any comments it may have. The Board' representative advised that it will be in contact with the prospective applicant to discuss a proposed date for the next meeting

The meeting concluded at 13:40 p.m.

 9/9/21

**Ciara Kellett**

**Assistant Director of Planning**