

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal Chapter 7: Population



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EIAR

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Table of Contents

7	POPULATION	7-1
7.1	Introduction	7-1
7.1.1	Competent Experts	7-2
7.2	Methodology	7-2
7.2.1	Relevant Guidelines	7-2
7.2.2	Defining the Scope of Assessment	7-2
7.2.3	Data Sources	7-5
7.2.4	Proposed Development Area	7-6
7.2.5	Assessment Criteria and Assignment of Significance	7-7
7.2.6	Limitations of the Assessment	7-15
7.2.7	Consultation	7-16
7.3	Baseline Information	7-17
7.3.1	Private Property & Housing	7-17
7.3.2	Businesses & Development Land (including Socio-economics)	7-28
7.3.3	Community Land & Assets (including Tourism)	7-45
7.3.4	Non-Motorised Road Users (NMUs)	7-53
7.4	Predicted Effects	7-58
7.4.1	'Do-Nothing' scenario	7-58
7.4.2	Construction Phase Effects	7-60
7.4.3	Operational Phase Effects	7-70
7.5	Mitigation Measures	7-90
7.5.1	Construction Phase	7-90
7.5.2	Operational Phase	7-93
7.6	Residual Predicted Effects	7-95
7.6.1	Construction Phase	7-95
7.6.2	Operational Phase	7-95
7.7	Monitoring	7-98
7.8	Project Wide Effects	7-98
7.9	Transboundary Effects	7-98
7.10	Summary	7-100
7.11	Conclusion	7-112
7.12	References	7-113

Tables

Table 7-1:	Population Receptor Sensitivity Guidance from TII Standard 2025 PE-ENV-01108-02	7-8
Table 7-2:	Population Assessment Magnitude of Impact Criteria from TII Standard 2025 PE-ENV-01108-02	7-11
Table 7-3:	Significance of Effect (Source: EPA, 2022, p.53)	7-14
Table 7-4:	CSO Census – National, County and Scheme area Population 2011-2022 (CSO, 2022b)	7-29
Table 7-5:	NISRA Census – Northern Ireland, Sperrin Electoral Area and Selected Data Zone Population 2011-2021	7-29
Table 7-6:	Population Density (People per km ²) - Ireland, County Donegal and Scheme area	7-29
Table 7-7:	Population Density (Number of Usual Residents per ha) of Northern Ireland, Sperrin Electoral Area and Selected Data Zone Population 2011-2021	7-30
Table 7-8:	Population Structure of the State and County Donegal 2016 and 2022	7-30
Table 7-9:	Population Structure of Northern Ireland, the Sperrin Electoral Area and Selected Data Zones 2011 and 2022	7-31
Table 7-10:	Population of Section 1 Scheme Area	7-32
Table 7-11:	Population Density of Section 1 (CSO, 2023)	7-32
Table 7-12:	Population Structure of Section 1 (2016 and 2022)	7-32

Table 7-13: Population of Section 2 Scheme area	7-33
Table 7-14: Population Density of Section 2	7-33
Table 7-15: Population Structure of Section 2 (2016 and 2022)	7-34
Table 7-16: Population of Section 3 Scheme area	7-34
Table 7-17: Population Density of Section 3	7-35
Table 7-18: Population Structure of Section 3 (2016 and 2022)	7-35
Table 7-19: Economic Status of the Total Population Aged 15+ (CSO, 2022b)	7-36
Table 7-20: Census 2022 – Persons at Work by Industry (CSO, 2022b)	7-36
Table 7-21: Economic Status of the Population aged 16+ (NISRA 2021)	7-37
Table 7-22: Census 2021 – Persons at Work by Industry (NISRA, 2021)	7-38
Table 7-23: Economic Status of the Total Population of Section 1 Scheme area Aged 15+ (CSO, 2022b)	7-39
Table 7-24: Census 2022 – Persons at Work in Section 1 Scheme area by Industry	7-39
Table 7-25: Economic Status of the Total Population of Section 2 Scheme area Aged 15+ (Census, 2022)	7-41
Table 7-26: Census 2022 – Persons at Work in Section 2 Scheme Area by Industry	7-42
Table 7-27: Economic Status of the Total Population of Section 3 Scheme area Aged 15+ (CSO, 2022)	7-44
Table 7-28: Census 2022 – Persons at Work in Section 3 Scheme area by Industry	7-44
Table 7-29: Tourism Statistics for the Border Region 2024 (Fáilte Ireland, 2025)	7-46
Table 7-30: Construction Employment Generation and Economic Output for TEN-T PRIPD	7-62
Table 7-31: Summary of Potential Environment Effects, Mitigation and Monitoring	7-100

Figures

Figure 7-1: Proposed Development and Electoral Divisions	7-7
Figure 7-2: TEN-T PRIPD Section 1 N15 / N13 Ballybofey / Stranorlar Urban Region, CDDP 2024-2030	7-19
Figure 7-3: Ballybofey / Stranorlar, CDDP 2024-2030 (Source: DCC)	7-20
Figure 7-4: Extract from Ballybofey / Stranorlar Land Use Zoning Map, CDDP 2024-2030 (Source: DCC)	7-22
Figure 7-5: Indicative Masterplan for Opportunity Site 1 of Ballybofey / Stranorlar Area Plan 2024-2030 ..	7-23
Figure 7-6: TEN-T PRIPD Section 2 N56 / N13 Letterkenny to Manorcunningham, CDDP 2024-2030 (Source: DCC)	7-24
Figure 7-7: Letterkenny Land Use Zoning Map (LPLTP 2023-2029) (Source: DCC)	7-25
Figure 7-8: Settlement Boundary of Manorcunningham	7-26
Figure 7-9: Lifford Settlement Framework, CDDP 2024-2030 (Source: DCC)	7-27
Figure 7-10: Key Employment Areas in Letterkenny (Source: Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan)	7-42
Figure 7-11: Lands within Flood Zone A in the Bonagee area shown within the LPLTP 2023-2029	7-50
Figure 7-12: Proposed Route of the Barnesmore Gap Greenway into Ballybofey/ Stranorlar	7-56

List of Abbreviations

The following is a list of abbreviations used within this chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

TEN-T List of the 'Population' Abbreviations

List of Abbreviations	
ATN	Active Travel Networks
CDDP	County Donegal Development Plan
CORINE	Coordination of Information on the Environment
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
CWMP	Construction Waste Management Plan
DCC	Donegal County Council
DMRB	Design Manual for Roads and Bridges
END	Environmental Noise Directive
EOP	Environmental Operational Plan
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
IPI	Irish Planning Institute
LAP	Local Area Plan
LPLTP	Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
NCN	National Cycle Network
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NMU	Non-Motorised Road Users
NPF	National Planning Framework
PBC	Preliminary Business Case
PRIPD	Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
RTN	Road Traffic Noise
RTPI	Royal Town Planning Institute
SEED	Strengthen Enable Engage Deliver
SCP	Stakeholder Communication Plan
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
TTM	Temporary Traffic Management
WTC	Western Transport Corridor
Zol	Zone of Influence

7 POPULATION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) presents an assessment of the impact of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (PRIPD), hereafter referred to as the “Proposed Development”, or the “Project” under the heading of population. The Proposed Development is a strategic transport corridor to be provided in County Donegal which will form part of a European transport network, which seeks to contribute to a single European transport area, with social and economic benefits arising from enhanced connectivity. The Proposed Development will improve the accessibility of County Donegal and the north-west, with benefits for residents and for the regional economy, including the tourism sector. The Proposed Development includes for improved connectivity to Letterkenny, the largest town within County Donegal; to the important fishing port of Killybegs to the southwest, and along and close to sections of the Wild Atlantic Way; as well as providing a bypass for the twin towns of Ballybofey / Stranorlar and the western part of Lifford.

The Proposed Development comprises three distinct sections of new road and associated active travel infrastructure, hereafter referred to as Sections 1, 2 and 3:

- **Section 1** – N15 / N13 Ballybofey / Stranorlar Urban Region
- **Section 2** – N56 / N13 Letterkenny to Manorcunningham
- **Section 3** – N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford / Strabane / A5 Link¹

The population chapter is structured under the following key assessment areas in accordance with the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Population and Human Health Assessment of Proposed National Roads – Standard, published in September 2024:

- Private property and housing.
- Businesses and development land, including socio-economics.
- Community land and assets, including tourism.
- Non-motorised road users (NMUs).

Within these sub-headings, information is predominantly presented under the three sections of the overall Proposed Development to assist in navigating the extensive nature of the project. An overall assessment is also provided.

This chapter draws from detailed project information and considers the scope and findings of other technical impact assessments within the EIAR that have implications for population, most notably:

- Chapter 6: Traffic & Transportation
- Chapter 8: Human Health
- Chapter 12: Air Quality
- Chapter 14: Noise & Vibration
- Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural)
- Chapter 17: Cultural Heritage
- Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual

For the sake of brevity, this chapter does not seek to repeat text or replicate data from the wider EIAR.

¹ This assessment considers the Proposed Development with the N14/N15 to A5 Link in place at the eastern end, but also considers any changes to likely significant impacts should the N14/N15 to A5 Link not be implemented.

7.1.1 Competent Experts

This chapter has been prepared by Michelle Bennett, a qualified planner working within the RPS Environment, Planning and Renewables team. Michelle holds a Bachelor of Social Science (Hons) and a Masters of Regional and Urban Planning (Hons) from University College Dublin in 2000 and 2002 respectively. Michelle obtained a Certificate in Local Government Studies (Hons.) from the Institute of Public Administration / National University of Ireland in 2005. Michelle is a Corporate Member of the Irish Planning Institute (IPI).

Michelle has 22 years of experience working in the field of planning, sustainable development and environmental impact assessment (EIA). Michelle has previously prepared and contributed to the Population / Socio-Economic assessments included in EIARs and non-statutory Environmental Reports (ERs) for projects including road and greenway infrastructure, electricity infrastructure, flood relief works, wind farms and related developments including grid connections, remediation projects and industrial facilities. Michelle has regularly prepared planning reports covering issues arising for the receiving population to accompany applications for planning consent where EIA has not been required or ERs were not prepared, with experience in infrastructure projects such as road improvement schemes and bridges; wastewater treatment plants, water storage facilities and related infrastructure; industrial facilities, including extensions, new processes and plant; waste management facilities; remediation projects; and tourist infrastructure.

The chapter has been reviewed by Valerie Brennan, Business Unit Director of the RPS planning team in the Republic of Ireland. Valerie holds a BA International (Hons.) in Geography and French (2001), along with a Higher Diploma in Education (2002) from the National University of Ireland Galway (now known as University of Galway) and a Master of Science Degree in Town and Country Planning from Queen's University Belfast (2004). Valerie is a Chartered Town Planner and is a Chartered Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and a Corporate Member of the IPI. She is the Past Chair of RTPI Ireland (having held the Chair role from 2022-2023) and is a member of the RTPI Ireland Executive Committee.

Valerie is an infrastructure specialist and has an excellent variety of experience having worked in the public, private and semi-state sectors including periods of secondment / semi-secondment to Uisce Eireann, EirGrid and the Dublin Airport Authority and having worked as Senior Planning and Development Manager with Coillte for over 8 years. She has over 20 years professional planning experience advising on a wide range of strategic infrastructure, commercial and renewable energy projects, many of which have required EIA and comprise of linear infrastructure.

7.2 Methodology

7.2.1 Relevant Guidelines

In addition to the guidelines listed in Chapter 1: Introduction, this assessment has been prepared where considered reasonably practicable in accordance with the following guidelines and standards:

- EIAR Guidelines for the Consideration of Tourism and Tourism Related Projects (Fáilte Ireland, 2023).
- TII Population and Human Health Assessment of Proposed National Roads - Standard, December 2025 (PE-ENV-01108-02) (hereafter referred to as the TII Standard 2025).

The publication of both documents post-dated environmental inputs to the earlier stages of the overall process such as options selection. Additionally, the Project was well advanced prior to the publication of the TII Standard 2025 and its predecessor of 2024 and therefore, as inferred in the TII Standard 2025, full alignment with all requirements is not required. Notwithstanding this, alignment with the TII Standard 2025 has been sought in so far as is reasonably practicable.

7.2.2 Defining the Scope of Assessment

To determine the scope of this chapter we have considered firstly whether the Proposed Development has potential for positive or adverse, direct or indirect impacts on the assessment areas identified above due to its nature, scale and location.

The project is a substantial national road project with the objective to improve safety and journey amenity for road users, enhance facilities for NMUs and enhance accessibility for the resident, working and visiting

populations of Donegal. The combined length of the mainline route of the Proposed Development (i.e. that which will form part of the national primary road network and associated tie-ins) is approximately 35 km of Type 1 dual carriageway / Type 2 divided road across all three sections. Other sections of the Proposed Development include new link roads and improvements / realignments of existing roads as well as access tracks and an extensive active travel network (approximately 63 km) for NMUs. Summaries for each section are provided below.

Section 1 includes new road construction, within rural areas and close to and within the settlement boundary of Ballybofey / Stranorlar, including a crossing over the River Finn.

Section 2 includes a significant proportion of online upgrades, including works to the existing national route within the developed urban area of Letterkenny and new construction including a crossing over the River Swilly, adjacent to established residential and commercial areas, along with development in the rural area east of Letterkenny.

Section 3 primarily involves new road construction, both within rural areas and close to and within settlement boundaries, particularly at Lifford where it connects to Northern Ireland via the proposed N14/N15 to A5 Link, just to the south of Lifford. This in turn connects to a proposed Trunk Road T3 which in turn connects to the proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5 WTC) in Northern Ireland.

The types of new and upgraded roads (e.g. Type 2 dual carriageway, access roads, etc.) and lengths of various road types and detail of other structures and works are provided and explained within Chapter 4: Project Description.

Given the nature, scale and location of the Proposed Development, an assessment on the potential for effects on the receiving population is necessary. These are considered on a grouped basis where appropriate (e.g. visitors in the context of tourists using way-marked routes), with effects on individual receptors addressed as necessary (e.g. impacts on individual properties arising from land take which is addressed in Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural)). The assessment for significant effect examines baseline environmental characteristics of the area, as collated from sources listed in Section 7.2.3. The potential impacts of the Proposed Development on these characteristics are identified based on changes to the baseline environment that are likely to arise with the Proposed Development in place, considering the location, nature and extent of the construction and operational phases.

It is important to identify key locational and socio-economic characteristics of the receiving community to give context to the Proposed Development and consequently the potential for impact on population, including resident, working and visiting communities. Sufficient statistical information to provide context and demonstrate the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the receiving environment is included as there is potential for impact on population levels.

A detailed economic analysis is not provided other than where the TII Standard 2025 provides guidance on how to assess the potential impact of construction employment.

Businesses are largely concentrated in the settlements identified throughout the chapter. Where there is a potential for likely significant impact on an individual basis, these businesses are named; otherwise, potential economic impacts are considered on a grouped basis. A detailed description in terms of the location and numbers of these enterprises and the numbers employed is not considered necessary in all cases given the nature of the potential impacts of the Proposed Development and the nature and scale of the commercial premises within the zone of influence. Where potential impacts on individual businesses are considered, this is assessed in the context of implications of the usage of the premises as it may be affected by the Proposed Development and on employment in the context of employment within the study area and potential changes to sources of existing trade, as opposed to potential future financial performance which could be influenced by other factors. These individual commercial properties that are directly affected are also identified within land take assessments in Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural) and assessed therein. Agricultural properties are specifically addressed in Chapter 15: Material Assets (Agricultural) and are not referenced further in the Population assessment.

Chapter 8: Human Health includes baseline information on the health status and socio-economic profile of the area as is considered appropriate to assessments under that topic, particularly where more vulnerable

subgroups of the receiving population are required to be examined with respect to health outcomes which can relate to deprivation.

In line with the TII Standard 2025, journey characteristics are considered only in the context of the potential effect of the new road network on the various categories of journeys undertaken by the receiving communities, particularly NMUs. A full assessment of traffic and transportation impacts is contained in Chapter 6. The potential for community severance is assessed whereby communities could potentially be adversely affected in the context of deterrents to their journeys by non-motorised means through an increase in journey time (or conversely to benefit from improved connectivity / accessibility). The potential for significant effects arising from severance or improved accessibility has been informed by liaison with the design team. It is acknowledged that households who do not have access to a private car are more vulnerable to effects from severance, and, conversely, more likely to benefit from enhanced active travel provision. Enhanced accessibility is also considered.

With respect to land use, this is addressed where appropriate under the four key assessment areas. Individual loss of land to specific properties is addressed under the land take assessments provided within Material Assets chapters (Chapters 15: Material Assets: Agriculture and Chapter 16: Material Assets: Non-Agriculture). Zoned lands identified within development plans for the areas affected are considered with respect to potential impact arising from the Proposed Development. A review of planning policy to inform the identification of such potential effects was carried out as part of this assessment and is provided as baseline information. This assists in identifying likely positive impacts arising from improved accessibility and safety and confirms the specific provisions within those zoning objectives for these lands to accommodate the Proposed Development.

The TII Standard 2025 identifies a need to assess potential effects on community lands. Community lands identified for the purposes of this assessment are considered to include outdoor spaces open to and accessible to the public, without charge, for the purposes of active and passive recreation (e.g. a park or forest walk). Community assets are interpreted as including other recreational facilities which have similar benefit but are available to members or visitors subject to a membership arrangement and need not necessarily be an outdoor facility (e.g. a football club pitch or a theatre), along with important assets such as health and education facilities and other supports to the receiving population and its general welfare (in particular the resident population who use these facilities more regularly).

With respect to community facilities, there is some overlap with considerations regarding tourism, as community lands and tourist attractions may be used by residents and visitors alike. It is considered reasonable to address these within the same section. The quantum of users and frequency of use among those communities will differ (e.g. members of the local community may walk regularly in a nearby woodland and some visitors to the area may stop and avail of the same walking route, conversely, local residents may avail of a restaurant in a hotel providing visitor accommodation, etc.). Community assets such as health facilities and religious buildings are used predominantly by the local community but may be used on occasion by visitors (e.g. churches, health facilities if a visitor holidaying in the area falls ill, etc.).

With respect to the potential impacts of changes to accessibility of recreational amenities on health and wellbeing, this is discussed in Chapter 8: Human Health.

Amenity is a consideration for several of the assessment areas. The concept of general amenity is not readily defined in EIA legislation; however, amenity is often defined as the pleasant or normally satisfactory aspects of a location which contribute to its overall character and the enjoyment of residents or visitors. This chapter considers on a grouped basis, the potential for impacts on the general amenity of the relevant receptor groups. The effects on land take on the amenity of individual properties are assessed in Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural). Landscape and visual amenity aspects of the receiving environment are addressed within Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual. Further, general amenity is also considered within Chapter 19: Interactions and Cumulative Impacts whereby the findings of specialist chapters of relevance are considered on the whole.

The TII Standard 2025 uses the terms positive or beneficial and negative or adverse interchangeably with respect to the nature of impacts and effects. In the case of each of the four sub-categories for assessment, both positive / beneficial and negative / adverse potential impacts are considered by the assessment. Herein, the terms positive and adverse are used.

The TII Standard 2025 identifies six areas of potential impact to be considered under the key topic areas. These are:

- Demolition of assets (assessed within Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural)).
- Land take (also assessed within Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural)).
- Changes to amenity value (assessed under the relevant topic areas and within Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural) and Chapter 19: Interactions and Cumulative Impacts).
- Changes to accessibility and potential for severance (considered under the relevant topic areas, particularly the NMU topic area).
- Changes in journey times for NMUs (considered under the NMU topic area).
- Employment generation (considered under the topic area of Business and Development Land, including socio-economics).

7.2.3 Data Sources

7.2.3.1 Desktop Sources

This chapter utilises several data sources to inform the assessment of the potential impacts on population. In the context of employment and economic activity, social and recreational context, and tourism assets, there are a number of information sources pertinent to the assessment, and which are incorporated into this chapter. These include:

- Aerial photography and historic mapping.
- Central Statistics Office (CSO), Census of Population Data and other data.
- Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), Census data.
- GeoDirectory data.
- Coordination of Information on the Environment (CORINE) National Landcover Data (2018).
- National Planning Framework – First Revision (2025).
- County Donegal Development Plan (CDDP) (2024-2030), as varied.
- Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan 2023-2029.
- Pobal mapping (for Early Years facilities).
- Fáilte Ireland's Tourism Statistics and Facts.
- Sport Ireland Outdoors (Sports Ireland, 2025).
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region (2020-2032) (Northern & Western Regional Assembly, 2020).
- Results of Open Space Desktop Condition Survey.

7.2.3.1.1 Planning Policy Documents Referenced

The two primary planning policy documents which provide for zoning objectives / future land uses that are of relevance to the Proposed Development are the CDDP 2024-2030, and the Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan 2023-2029.

The CDDP, which was adopted in May 2024, provides the necessary strategic planning framework for the statutory approval process for the Proposed Development, including reserving and protecting the preferred route corridors within the plan. These are shown red on maps based on OSi Discovery Mapping and by hatched polygons on land use zoning maps. The CDDP also provides strategic policy support for the project (Objective RPO-3.7.30).

Zoning objectives for lands within the settlement boundaries of Ballybofey / Stranorlar (within an Area Plan) and Lifford (within a Development Framework) settlement boundaries are also included within the CDDP².

² There are no implications for zoned lands or the settlement boundaries of Manorcunningham or Raphoe; other settlements referenced are smaller and do not include zoned lands.

7.2.3.2 Site Visits and Surveys

7.2.3.2.1 Site Visits

The assessment on population has been informed by site visits undertaken on the 22nd and 23rd July 2020 and 20th, 21st and 22nd October 2025.

7.2.3.2.2 Surveys

Community land usage and condition surveys were undertaken during August 2025 at 6 no. sites. The dates, times, location of and the findings of these surveys is set out in Appendix C7.01 in Volume C: Technical Appendices.

7.2.4 Proposed Development Area

Effects to population will predominantly have a localised effect from construction activities with some potential for wider impacts on longer-distance commuters or visitors. A wider area will be relevant at operational stage in terms of potential for significant effects; the benefits of a major road scheme will extend beyond the local areas in which works are to be carried out, predominantly the county in which it is situated. Key statistics are therefore provided for County Donegal with more detailed information focussed on the electoral divisions (EDs) along the route of the Proposed Development. The data for each section is considered in the context of the wider county level data to inform analysis.

Statistics for the State are used as comparators. In cases, where data for EDs is not available at the time of writing, statistics relating to Donegal only are relied upon. The EDs relevant to each section of the Proposed Development are summarised below and illustrated in Figure 7-1.

- **Section 1:** Dooish, Goland, Stranorlar, Convoy, Lettermore.
- **Section 2:** Letterkenny Rural, Magheraboy³.
- **Section 3:** Manorcunningham, Kinraigy, Treantaghmucklagh, Feddyglass, Clonleigh North, Clonleigh South.

The use of ED data is based on the available spatial data. While there are areas outside of the selected EDs that are closer to parts of the Proposed Development than some areas within the selected EDs, on balance, the statistics are considered to give a reasonable picture of the profile of the receiving environment, and notwithstanding same, these areas are included within the county statistics.

Socio-economic determinants (such as employment and related income generation) have a wider geographic influence and in such instances, only data for County Donegal as a whole is utilised, using Ireland as a comparator.

In general, baseline field work and desktop research relating to non-statistical sources considers receptors outside of the EDs whereby the zone of influence of the Proposed Development is considered to have a potential for impact on the receptor.

The EIAR has also considered impacts outside of the State, i.e. transboundary, into Northern Ireland. Given the proximity of the Proposed Development to the border with Northern Ireland (at the eastern end of Section 3), and its potential impact on nearby communities in the Strabane area, this chapter also includes baseline statistics for the following Data Zones and Electoral Area, along with those for Northern Ireland:

- Data Zones of Sperrin C, Derg A, Sperrin D, Sperrin E, Sperrin H; and
- Sperrin Electoral Area (EA)⁴.

³ Section 2 partially encroaches into Manorcunningham ED, however, as Section 3 traverses through a larger portion of Manorcunningham ED and covers the same space taken up by Section 2, the population figures for Manorcunningham have been included in Section 3

⁴ The Sperrin Electoral Area is comprised of Data Zones Sperrin A to Sperrin H and lies just east of the Proposed Development. It is part of the Derry City and Strabane Government Area.

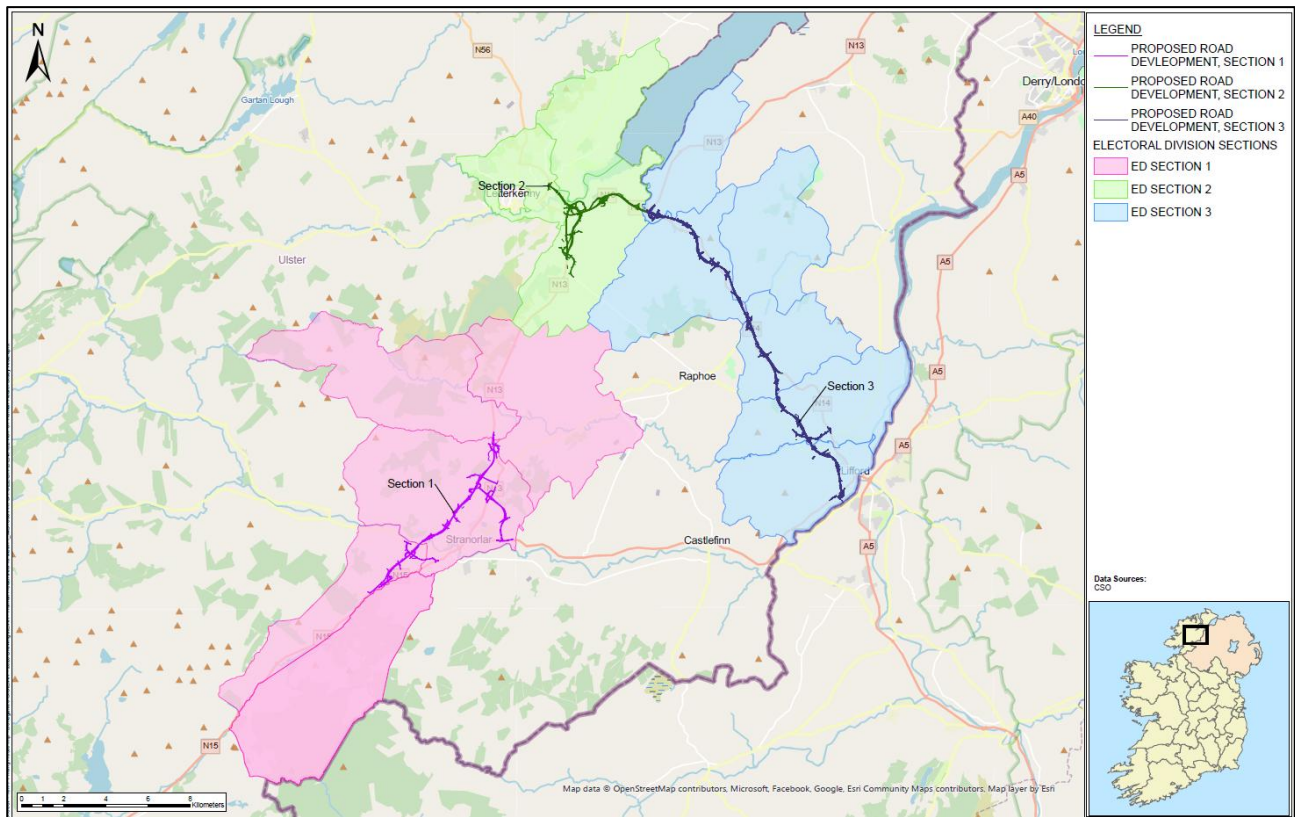


Figure 7-1: Proposed Development and Electoral Divisions

7.2.5 Assessment Criteria and Assignment of Significance

The assessment of significance of effect is a professional judgement based on the significance / sensitivity of the existing environment and the impact (i.e. character, magnitude, duration, probability, consequences) as informed by the EPA Guidance (EPA, 2022) and by the TII Standard 2025 where specific methods have been provided to inform population assessments. The following section sets out the methodology used to inform the assigned significance of effect in this case.

7.2.5.1 Population Receptor Sensitivity

The TII Standard 2025 (Table 4.9 as provided below as Table 7-1) has introduced guidance on how to assign sensitivity to population receptors within the zone of influence of a proposed road development. This is applied here on a grouped basis, where a number of receptors make up the baseline (e.g. specified community lands and way-marked trails) and individually where appropriate, such as where land-take effects are considered in Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural). Population receptor sensitivity can be categorised as negligible, low, medium or high under those guidelines.

With respect to the use of the sensitivity ratings, the TII Standard 2025 (p.53) advises:

“The table should be used as guidance and where professional opinion is applied to upgrade or downgrade a sensitivity away from the guidance, justification of the rationale should be provided within the assessment report.” It also refers to the Zol or Zone of Influence.

Table 7-1: Population Receptor Sensitivity Guidance from TII Standard 2025 PE-ENV-01108-02

Receptor Sensitivity	Receptor Category	Description
High	Private property and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing private property or land allocated for housing located in a town or city where the existing population is expected increase significantly by 2040 relative to the target outlined in the Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework. Existing housing and land allocated for housing (e.g., strategic housing sites) covering a large area of land in comparison to other land uses within the ZoI.
	Community land and assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternatives are only available outside the Local Authority area. The level of use is very frequent (e.g. daily). The land and assets are used by the majority of the community.
	Socio-economics, businesses and development land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing employment sites (excluding agriculture) and land allocated for employment (e.g., strategic employment sites) covering a large area of land in comparison to other land uses within the ZoI. Specialist businesses, workforces or economies that are at risk and have no capacity to experience the impact without incurring a significant socio-economic loss (or gain) of an economic resource, or employment.
	NMUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National trails and routes likely to be used for commuting, recreation and social use that record frequent (daily) use. Such routes connect communities with employment land uses and other services with a direct and convenient NMU route. Little / no potential for substitution. Regional trails and routes (e.g., promoted circular walks) likely to be used for recreation and social use or to a lesser extent commuting, that record frequent (daily) use. limited potential for substitution. Routes regularly used by vulnerable users such as the elderly, school children and people with disabilities, who could be disproportionately affected by small changes in the baseline due to potentially different needs. The population practitioner should take into account the location, crossing facilities and amenity value when establishing sensitivity of NMU provisions. This applies to all sensitivity categories.
Medium	Private property and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing private property or land allocated for housing located in a town or city where the existing population is expected increase moderately by 2040 relative to the target outlined in the Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework. Existing housing and land allocated for housing (e.g., strategic housing sites) covering a moderate area of land in comparison to other land uses within the ZoI.
	Community land and assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative facilities are only available in the wider Local Authority area. The level of use is frequent (e.g. weekly). The land and assets are used by most of the community.

Receptor Sensitivity	Receptor Category	Description
	Socio-economics, businesses and development land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing employment sites (excluding agriculture) and land allocated for employment (e.g., strategic employment sites) covering a moderate area of land in comparison to other land uses within the ZoI. Businesses, workforces or economies that are at risk and that have little or no capacity to experience the impact without incurring a significant socio-economic loss (or gain) of an economic resource, or employment.
	NMUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public rights of way and other routes close to communities which are used for recreation and social purposes (e.g., dog walking), but for which alternative routes can be taken. These routes are likely to link to a wider network of routes to provide options for longer, recreational/social journeys.
Low	Private property and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed development on unallocated sites providing housing with planning permission/in the planning process.
	Community land and assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative facilities are readily available and accessible at a local level within the wider community. The level of use is infrequent (monthly or less frequent). The land and assets are used by the minority of the community.
	Socio-economics, businesses and development land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing employment sites (excluding agriculture) and land allocated for employment (e.g., strategic employment sites) covering a small area of land in comparison to other land uses within the ZoI. Businesses, workforces or economies that have an adequate capacity to experience the impact without incurring a significant socio-economic loss (or gain) of an economic resource, or employment.
	NMUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routes which have fallen into disuse through past severance, or which are scarcely used because they do not currently offer a meaningful route for either utility or recreational/social purposes.
Negligible	Private property and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
	Community land and assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No or limited severance or accessibility issues. Alternative facilities are available within the same community. The level of use is very infrequent (a few occasions yearly). The land and assets are used by the minority of the community.
	Socio-economics, businesses and development land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
	NMUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

7.2.5.2 Magnitude of Impact and Description of Effect

The TII Standard 2025 has also introduced criteria for assessing the magnitude of impacts for both the construction and operational stages of a Proposed Development with respect to population receptors (Table 4.10 of same as provided in Table 7-2). This is applied where appropriate to receptors in this chapter and in Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural).

The TII Standard 2025 states (p.58):

“It should be noted that the impact does not need to satisfy all criteria identified within each box. If the impact meets the criteria of one or more impact levels the population practitioner shall make a judgement as to the most relevant category, representing a reasonable worst case.”

Further guidance is provided (TII Standard 2025, p.58) on assigning an impact rating to specific assessment areas.

“In regard to NMU impacts, any diversion routes or changes in length should take into account the amenity value of the surrounding landscape. For example, a slightly longer diversion by a more scenic route could qualify for a lower magnitude of impact. The opposing rationale applies for shorter diversions or changes in length via areas of less amenity value. Cross references to other topics which account for amenity such as landscape, air quality and noise should be made where relevant. The traffic and transport topics should also be referred to.

When considering whether or not there is a change in the amenity quality or integrity of population receptors, the population practitioner will take into consideration the effects reported in other topics assessments. For example, any significant changes to traffic and transport, air quality, noise and landscape which impact on population receptors, will be assessed within the context of how that effect alters the characteristics of the population receptor in question.”

The foregoing has been applied in relation to population receptors on a grouped basis within this chapter. Chapter 19: Interactions and Cumulative Effects is also of relevance.

The TII Standard 2025 (p.62) indicates that it does not provide guidance on the scale of impact that should be considered to result in a ‘substantial’, ‘noticeable’ or ‘discernible’ change, *“since these judgements may vary depending on the specific circumstances in each case”*. The TII Standard 2025 goes on to state that *“Professional judgement shall be used, and the assessment of magnitude shall be supported by clear narrative text describing the rationale”*.

Table 7-2: Population Assessment Magnitude of Impact Criteria from TII Standard 2025 PE-ENV-01108-02

Magnitude of impact	Environmental Impact criteria for construction or operation				
	Private Property and Housing	Development Land and Business	Community Land and Assets	Socio-Economics (as a subset of socio-economics, development land and businesses)	Non-Motorised Road Users
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The permanent loss of a resource, or loss of key characteristics that makes it unviable. Introduction (adverse) or removal (beneficial) of severe severance giving rise to a permanent, material change in accessibility. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A material change in net economic output relative to the economic output of the geographical area in and around the Zol. A material contribution to employment levels relative to the available employment within the geographical area in and around the Zol. For example, where the Zol incorporates parts of an urban conurbation this could be more than 500 jobs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The complete stopping up of a route (unless there are mitigating circumstances e.g., in agreement with the Local Authority due to existing safety concerns). An increase or decrease in the length of the journey which has the potential to encourage or deter the use of the NMU provision for a substantial proportion of users. Judgements should consider relevant factors such as the local setting, how the NMU provision is used (e.g. primarily recreational or to access community resources and services), the scale of increase/decrease relative to the total length of the route and the availability of alternatives. Changes to the quality of the route which are likely to encourage or deter its use for a substantial proportion of users. For example, the provision or removal of crossing points and/or substantial changes to perceived safety or amenity value, taking into account the findings of interrelated topics such as landscape, air quality and noise.

Magnitude of impact	Environmental Impact criteria for construction or operation				
	Private Property and Housing	Development Land and Business	Community Land and Assets	Socio-Economics (as a subset of socio-economics, development land and businesses)	Non-Motorised Road Users
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partial loss of/damage to key characteristics, features or elements, e.g. partial removal or substantial amendment to access or area of land, compromising viability of the asset. Introduction (adverse) or removal (beneficial) of severe severance giving rise to a limited / moderate change in accessibility which may be permanent or temporary. During construction this would be for a substantial period, for example at least two years. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A noticeable change in net economic output relative to the economic output of the geographical area in and around the Zol. A noticeable contribution to local employment levels relative to the available employment within the geographical area in and around the Zol. For example, where the Zol incorporates parts of an urban conurbation this could be between 100 and 500 jobs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase or decrease in the length of the journey which has the potential to encourage or deter the use of the NMU provision by a small proportion of users. Judgements should consider relevant factors such as the local setting, how the NMU provision is used, the scale of increase/decrease relative to the total length of the route and the availability of alternatives. Changes to the quality of the route which are likely to encourage or deter its use by a small proportion of users. For example, changes to crossing points and/or amenity value, taking into account the findings of interrelated topics such as landscape, air quality and noise.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A discernible change in attributes, quality or vulnerability; minor loss of, or alteration to, one or more key characteristics, features or elements. For example, amendment to access or acquisition of land resulting in minor changes to operating conditions. Introduction (adverse) or removal (beneficial) of severance, whilst retaining adequate accessibility provision. During construction this would be for a notable period, for example at least one year. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A discernible change in net economic output relative to the economic output of the geographical area in and around the Zol. A discernible change in net employment relative to the available employment within the geographical area in and around the Zol. For example, where the Zol incorporates parts of an urban conurbation this could be less than 100 jobs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A discernible increase or decrease in the length of the journey, which is not likely to encourage or discourage its use or change the way in which it is used. A discernible change to the quality of the NMU provision, which is not likely to encourage or discourage its use or change the way in which it is used.

Magnitude of impact	Environmental Impact criteria for construction or operation				
	Private Property and Housing	Development Land and Business	Community Land and Assets	Socio-Economics (as a subset of socio-economics, development land and businesses)	Non-Motorised Road Users
Negligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very minor loss of or alteration to one or more characteristics, features or elements. For example, acquisition of non-operational land or buildings not directly affecting the viability of the asset. Very minor introduction (adverse) or removal (beneficial) of severance whilst retaining ample accessibility provision. No noticeable difference in the provision of private property, local facilities or services. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No measurable wider socio-economic effects within the local area. No measurable change in net number of jobs at the local level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No noticeable increase or decrease in the length or quality of NMU provision.

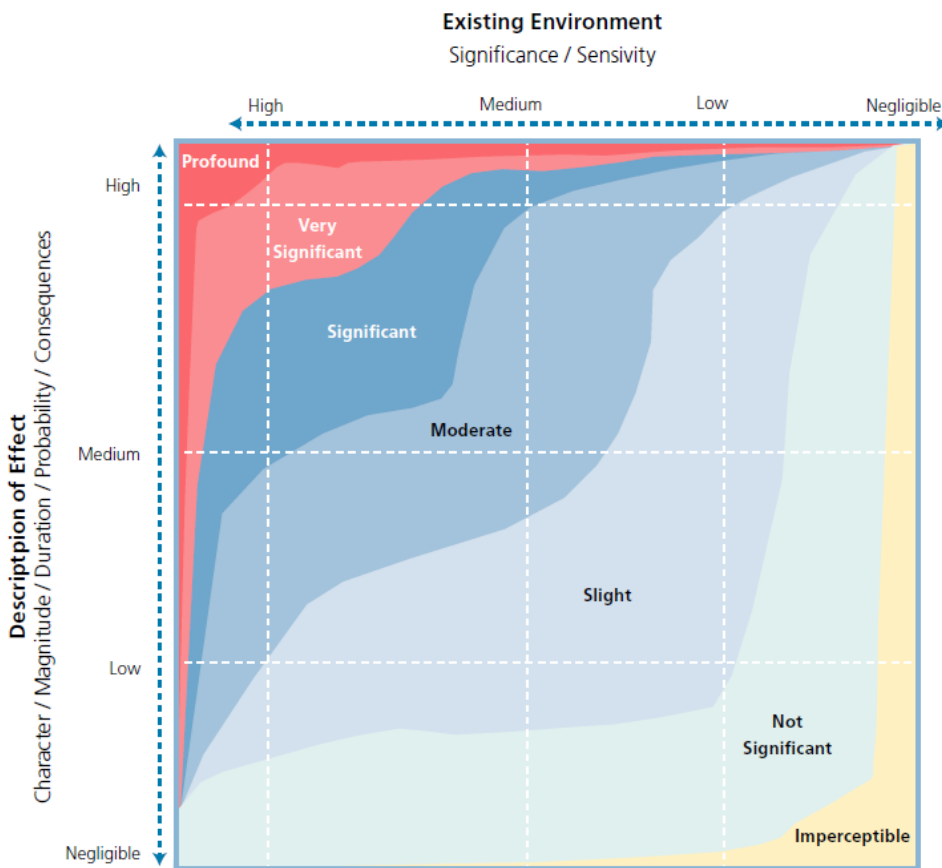
7.2.5.3 Significance of Effects

A combination of receptor sensitivity which reflects the quality of the baseline environment and the magnitude (as defined in the assessment) is then applied to determine the significance of effects on population, using the matrix shown in Table 7-3. This Significance of Effect matrix is provided for by the EPA (2022) and may be used to guide the judgement of significance according to the TII Standard 2025 (provided in Figure 3.4 of same). Figure 3.4 of the EPA Guidelines illustrate how the sensitivity of the receiving environment can determine the significance of the effect when compared with the character of the predicted effect.

The TII Standard 2025 (p.55) provides that “Whether effects are deemed significant is dependent on consideration of the following criteria:

- The sensitivity of the receptor.
- The susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change or development being proposed.
- The magnitude of the impact.
- The size and scale of the effect (complete loss of a landscape element or a minor change).
- The geographical extent of the area which will be influenced by the change.
- The duration of the effect and its reversibility.”

Table 7-3: Significance of Effect (Source: EPA, 2022, p.53)



With respect to the conclusions of the assessment, any identified residual effect that is Significant, Very Significant or Profound is considered ‘Significant’ and any identified residual effect that is Moderate, Slight, Not Significant or Imperceptible is considered ‘Not Significant’. In line with Table 3.4 of the EPA (2022) guidance, significant effects alter the characteristics of the environment in a manner that goes beyond an alteration that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends. In some cases a range has been provided, e.g. slight-moderate.

7.2.6 Limitations of the Assessment

The population assessment references technical outputs from the air quality, noise and vibration, material assets, landscape and visual, cultural heritage and traffic and transport assessment chapters, and consequently this assessment is bound by the same limitations and assumptions therein.

As noted previously, the design and environmental evaluation of the Proposed Development commenced prior to the publication of the TII Standard 2025 as was originally published in 2024⁵. As allowed for in the TII Standard 2025, full alignment with all requirements is not required. However, alignment with the TII Standard 2025 has been sought in so far as is reasonably practicable.

Given the advanced stage of the project, it was considered reasonable to retain the structure of the EIAR with respect to the assessment of individual properties (land take, etc.), and not to engage new specialists for detailed assessments of economic impacts beyond those quantity surveying inputs used with respect to construction stage employment.

With respect to usage of community spaces, efforts to obtain publicly available data via desktop studies were made initially however limited data was available and usage surveys were subsequently carried out during August 2025. This survey period is considered to coincide with peak usage season of the assets (i.e. woodland walks and parks are frequented more regularly in drier, warmer conditions during summer months). It is considered that the output of off-peak surveys would not add value to the assessment or affect the sensitivity or significance rating of potential impacts, with the peak season being more reflective of the value of the amenities to the population receptors.

The use of GeoDirectory data is recommended within the TII Standard 2025 to inform baseline. Data is presented from this source to give a broad depiction of the nature of the scheme area and to confirm the limited numbers of buildings directly affected by the CPO process. However, it is noted that some buildings within the database are unclassified and recorded as 'unknown' with respect to use and therefore numbers within 'commercial', 'residential' and 'commercial and residential' building categories within the scheme area from this source are not complete. Furthermore, there are cases whereby there may be one address code per building, but a number of distinct units are contained therein (e.g., at Bonagee Business Park, three address points are shown on the mapping generated from the GeoDirectory database but each of these three buildings comprises a number of individual units). Categories provided within land take assessments in Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural) are based on survey and are considered more accurate; information provided in this chapter on residential and commercial properties that are to be acquired for demolition or retention as part of the scheme is informed by those surveys as opposed to solely by GeoDirectory data. Further, the land take assessment considers the broader property as opposed to the building or receptor⁶ which is classified by GeoDirectory data. For example, references to residential buildings within the CPO line as defined by GeoDirectory refer to situations where the house or apartment is located within that line, whereas land take assessments would also classify a residential garden as residential property / being part of a residential use that is impacted by the CPO.

With respect to Fáilte Ireland visitor statistics, there is a significant change in the key attractions within County Donegal for which visitor numbers are provided for within 2023 as opposed to those for which numbers are available from earlier years. It is unclear as to whether this relates to a change in destination trends or is related to availability of statistics. The 2024 statistics upload (August 2025) advises that overseas tourism statistics are generated using NISRA's Northern Ireland Passenger Survey and the CSO's Inbound Tourism statistical series and that due to a change in the CSO's data collection methodology for 2023/2024, results in this Key Tourism Facts are not directly comparable to previous years.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2021 census of population did not take place until 2022 and this 2022 census data is included below in Section 7.3. NISRA data referenced does not coincide temporally with CSO data as the Northern Irish Census is not conducted as frequently and there are other differences between the data collection methods which mean not all data is directly comparable (e.g., CSO population

⁵ Relatively minor updates were made, and a revised version was published in 2025.

⁶ In the case for example whereby a number of apartments in one building may be assigned a different Eircode and may be individually recorded.

density output is based on square kms whereas NISRA population density output is based on hectares. Further, NISRA conducted its most recent census during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021 and it is considered likely that this has skewed some results, particularly regarding the mode of transport for commuters whereby people tended to avoid public transport or other shared transport arrangements where possible. Finally, NISRA used new spatial areas (Data Zones and Super Data Zones) for the production of Census 2021 statistical outputs in place of Super Output Areas used in 2011. NISRA advises⁷ that while similar in size, Super Data Zones and Super Output Areas differ in terms of their boundary layout. Therefore, a sensible comparison is not achievable, and 2011 data has not been provided to this level for that reason. No other limitations are identified.

Notwithstanding the limitations identified above, it is considered that there is sufficient information available to inform a robust assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the receiving population. The most recent data available has been utilised and the chapter is informed by a range of desktop sources including published statistics and development plans, along with site visits and survey work.

7.2.7 Consultation

Extensive consultation was undertaken as part of the preparation of the EIAR and earlier at constraints and option selection stages. This included public and other stakeholder consultations carried out to inform the location and design of the Proposed Development and the preparation of the EIAR.

With respect to the Proposed Development, the following feedback from statutory consultees is notable with respect to potential impacts on receiving communities from a population context:

- **Derry City and Strabane District Council:** Note benefit of Section 1, including the Ballybofey / Stranorlar Bypass, which will link Derry / Letterkenny and Strabane to Sligo, Galway and the Atlantic corridor. Good access from Strabane and the Castlederg / Aghyaran directions is considered necessary. Section 2 also considered beneficial linking Derry / Letterkenny to the Atlantic corridor and to Dublin. Active travel / share facilities including Park and Ride / bus facilities encouraged near major junctions and linkage with the A5 WTC was discussed.
- **Donegal County Council Roads Department:** For Section 1, advised the importance of a walking link from Drumboe Avenue to Creggan Forest and suggests an overspill car park for this amenity. Also notes the bypass will separate two Coillte forests (Holy Well Woods which has established walks, and the forested area along Drumboe Avenue) and a walking / cycling link is recommended between these areas.
- **Donegal County Council Planning Department:** Fully supportive of the Proposed Development which will enhance the accessibility of the northwest, which is a national strategic outcome of the National Planning Framework.
- **An Bord Pleanála (now An Coimisiún Pleanála):** Meetings covered items such as demonstrating how connectivity is achieved, severance is avoided and ensuring proposed or potential greenways can be achieved in future.
- **Ballybofey and Stranorlar Chamber of Commerce:** Requested assessment criteria underpinning the appraisal of all the options.
- **Fáilte Ireland:** No comment on the Proposed Development.

Other consultees of relevance who were contacted but did not provide comment include Donegal County Development Board, Lifford Chamber of Commerce, and Údarás na Gaeltachta.

Submissions relating to potential impacts on individual properties that were made during the non-statutory public consultation process are not discussed within this chapter but have been considered through design / embedded mitigation⁸ over project iterations and are addressed within land-take assessments.

⁷ Email September 2025.

⁸ Embedded mitigation is taken to mean mitigation by design and is used in this assessment in line with the terminology used in the TII Standard 2025.

Consultation with landowners and other interested parties has also been carried out by Donegal County Council's (DCC's) Liaison Officers (LOs) throughout the design and EIA process and records have informed this chapter. The author has also consulted with some of the business owners whereby demolition of commercial premises is proposed as part of the Proposed Development⁹.

7.3 Baseline Information

The following sections of this chapter describe baseline characteristics of the existing environment as it relates to the entire Proposed Development, as well as the three separate sections.

7.3.1 Private Property & Housing

Based on GeoDirectory data, the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) boundary for the overall project encompasses 37 no. residential buildings and there are 3,674 no. residential buildings within 500m of same (See EIAR Drawings 7.01, 7.02 and 7.03). It should be noted that the CPO boundary is referred to as the 'Proposed Development boundary' in the EIAR drawings. The land take assessment tables in Appendix C16.01 of Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural) provide a more detailed categorisation of land uses within the CPO boundary and will be published alongside the EIAR as part of the CPO process. As per the land take assessments provided in Appendix C16.01, approximately 220 no. residential properties are intersected by the CPO boundary of the Proposed Development. These figures, however, include properties whereby only a very small proportion of temporary land take applies. A total of 37 no. dwellings are to be acquired as part of the Proposed Development.

7.3.1.1 Settlement and Residential Land Use – Overview

Settlement patterns within the scheme area include linear, clustered and individual residential properties, particularly at the edges of and close to identified settlements, and urban areas. The largest proportion of the Proposed Development to be located within an established urban area / identified settlement boundary containing lands zoned for future development is at Letterkenny (Section 2). The greatest concentration of land holdings associated with residential receptors directly intersected by the Proposed Development (other than farms) is located in and around the towns of Ballybofey and Stranorlar.

The settlements, where residential properties are concentrated, that are intersected by or are close to the Proposed Development are listed by section number as follows:

- **Section 1:** This section of the Proposed Development forms a northern bypass of the twin towns of Ballybofey / Stranorlar with link roads from the existing road infrastructure located within the town to connect sections of the Proposed Development to the existing road network south of the twin towns.
- **Section 2:** This section of the Proposed Development is located within and close to the large town of Letterkenny. The eastern extent of this section is close to the village of Manorcunningham.
- **Section 3:** The western end of this section of the Proposed Development is close to the village of Manorcunningham. The route lies to the north of the town of Raphoe. The Proposed Development then proceeds to the N14/N15 Lifford Junction, south of the town of Lifford. From this roundabout, the proposed N14/N15 to A5 Link (which forms part of the Proposed Development up to the border with Northern Ireland) will see the construction of a new bridge over the River Finn. This link will connect with a proposed Trunk Road T3 from the Northern Ireland border that will in turn connect to the proposed A5 WTC, both of which are to be pursued by the Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure. The small settlement clusters of Drumoghill, Murlog and Ballindrait are located within the scheme area between Manorcunningham and Lifford.

Chapter 8: Human Health identifies indicative community locations in closest proximity to the proposed new road alignments and modifications to the existing road network; see Figures 8-2 to 8-4 in Section 8.2.2 of Chapter 8 of the EIAR.

⁹ Telephone calls October 2025.

The greatest concentration of land holdings associated with residential receptors directly intersected by the Proposed Development (other than farms) is located in and around the towns of Ballybofey and Stranorlar. These figures, however, include properties whereby only a very small temporary land take applies.

7.3.1.1.1 Future Residential Development Land

Zoning objectives for lands within the settlement boundaries of Ballybofey / Stranorlar (within an Area Plan) and Lifford (within a Development Framework) settlement boundaries are included within the CDDP¹⁰. These are identified and discussed in more detail as they affect specific properties within the land take assessments for individual properties within Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural), specifically Appendix C16.01, which include assessments of land parcels zoned for residential development. At a broader scale, however, the lands include areas zoned as Established Development and land within a settlement boundary (which include existing residential properties), and an Opportunity Site where residential development is open to consideration. See Section 7.3.1.2 and Section 7.3.1.4 of this chapter respectively.

Zoning objectives for lands within Letterkenny are contained within the Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan 2023-2029 as discussed in Section 7.3.1.3, with impacts on individual residentially zoned lands discussed within Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural), particularly Appendix C16.01.

The settlements are placed within a settlement hierarchy within the CDDP, and population growth allocations are provided therein.

7.3.1.2 Settlement and Residential Land Use - Section 1

The main section of the road proposed within Section 1 runs to the northwest of Ballybofey / Stranorlar. There are also significant spurs of new road construction to the southwest and northeast of the urban area. The proposed route lies outside of the main existing built-up areas of the twin towns but crosses local roads with urban generated ribbon development. Where it intersects the settlement boundary of Ballybofey / Stranorlar as set out in the CDDP, it is retained within agricultural lands for the most part but lies close to existing clusters of housing in a number of locations. These are:

- Dooish
- Cappry
- Drumboe
- Tyrcallen
- Meenavoy
- Housing estates / other established residential areas within the southwestern part of Ballybofey.

According to the GeoDirectory database, there are 18 no. residential receptors within the CPO boundary (See EIAR Drawing 7.01) and 1,487 no. residential receptors within 500m of same for Section 1. The land take assessment tables in Appendix C16.01 of Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural) provide a more detailed categorisation of land uses within the CPO boundary, identifying approx. 100 residential land parcels intersecting the CPO boundary, which is reflective of, in the majority of cases, the extent of land associated with a residence (including garden space, entrances and boundary treatments etc.)

Ballybofey / Stranorlar

Ballybofey / Stranorlar is a County Growth Driver for settlement as identified within the core strategy of the CDDP, with 681 housing units allocated to the towns by the core strategy over the CDDP lifetime (c. 8% of projected housing unit growth across the county). Ballybofey / Stranorlar has been identified for growth based on the following factors:

¹⁰ There are no implications for zoned lands or the settlement boundaries of Manorcunningham or Raphoe; other settlements referenced are smaller and do not include zoned lands.

- It is the third largest settlement in the county.
- It is to benefit from enhanced connectivity (TEN-T) and environmental improvements (SEED Project11).
- There is potential for development locally and for the town to act as a base for those working in nearby settlements.

The CDDP places the town within the second layer of the settlement hierarchy for the county with over 26% of the county’s growth to occur in such towns. The population of Ballybofey / Stranorlar is projected to grow to approximately 7,218 by 2030, from the 6,971 recorded in the 2022 Census. The County Donegal Development Plan (CDDP) estimates that 19.46 ha of zoned lands are required to facilitate same; an excess of c. 16.27 ha of greenfield zoned lands is identified.

The CDDP identifies the preferred route corridor (not the footprint) for the TEN-T road improvement project within Maps 8.1.4 and 15.2, which are shown below in Figure 7-2 and Figure 7-3¹² and illustrate where the proposed route corridor intersects the settlement boundary of Ballybofey / Stranorlar. Policy BS-T-P-1 seeks to progress and implement TEN-T PRIPD within this area; other development that could prejudice the project will not be permitted within the reserved areas.

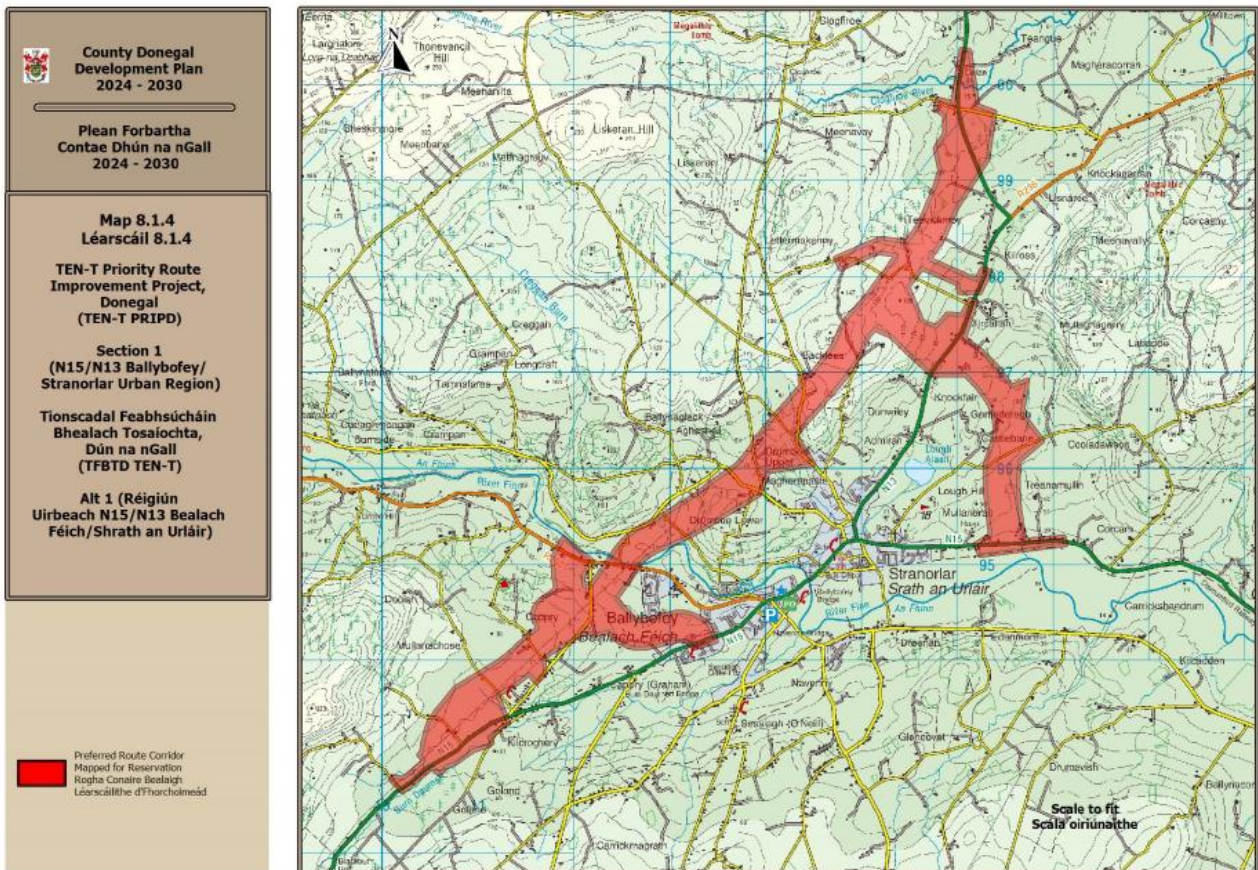


Figure 7-2: TEN-T PRIPD Section 1 N15 / N13 Ballybofey / Stranorlar Urban Region, CDDP 2024-2030

¹¹ ‘Strengthen Engage Enable Deliver’ Funding for town centre regeneration from the Rural Regeneration Development Fund which aims to transform the town’s commercial centre.

¹² Available: <https://www.donegalcocodocs.ie/docs/Map%2019.1Ballybofey-Stranorlar%20AreaPlanLandUseZoningMapandProposedVariationNo.1tothCDP2024-203008-1-2026.pdf>

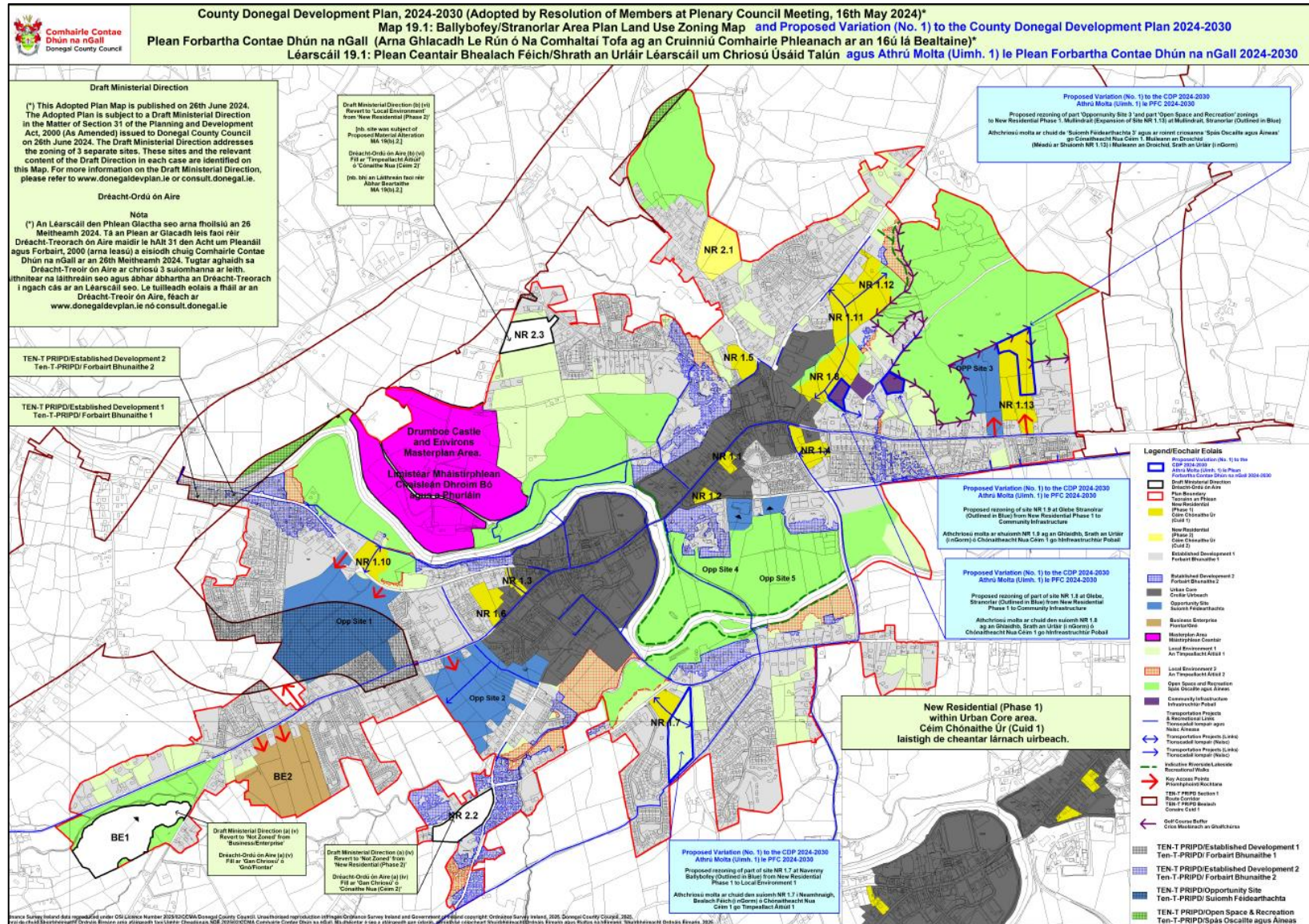


Figure 7-3: Ballybofey / Stranorlar, CDDP 2024-2030 (Source: DCC)

Policy support is provided within Policy BS-T-P-1 of the CDDP 2024-2030, for which part c) seeks (*inter alia*) to; “Facilitate any development related to the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Scheme, Donegal within Ballybofey / Stranorlar within lands zoned”:

- “TEN-T PRIPD / Established Development 1 and TEN-T PRIPD / Established Development 2.
- TEN-T PRIPD / Opportunity Site.”
- **TEN-T PRIPD / Established Development** – “To conserve and enhance the quality and character of the area, to protect residential amenity and allow for development appropriate to the sustainable growth of the settlement, including new residential development, subject to all material planning considerations, all the policies of this Plan, relevant national / regional policy / guidance including environmental designations and subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and to provide for the development of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal”. Two pockets of established areas are covered by this objective, identified as Established Development 1 and Established Development 2. These lie adjacent to each other at the western side of the twin towns (indicated in grey and blue) above. Residential development is open to consideration in the area zoned Established Development 1 but “Only proposals for minor developments such as small extensions to houses and most changes of use to existing buildings and/or extensions and additions to existing commercial and industrial enterprises shall be considered within land use zoning ‘Established Development 2’ in accordance with Policy Gen-F-P1.”
- **TEN-T PRIPD / Opportunity Site** – “To reserve lands for specific development opportunities that are appropriate in terms of mix of use and compatibility with the wider area (See Specific Opportunity Site Policies) and to provide for the development of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal.” This objective applies to a large opportunity site to the west of Ballybofey town centre, identified as Opportunity Site 1 (shaded blue) above. Residential development is open to consideration in this area.

To clarify, an extract from the Local Area Plan (LAP) mapping (Figure 7-4) shows the Opportunity Site (labelled Opp Site 1)¹³ and the Established Development areas.

¹³ Note Opportunity Site 2 is no longer intersected by works for the proposed TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project.

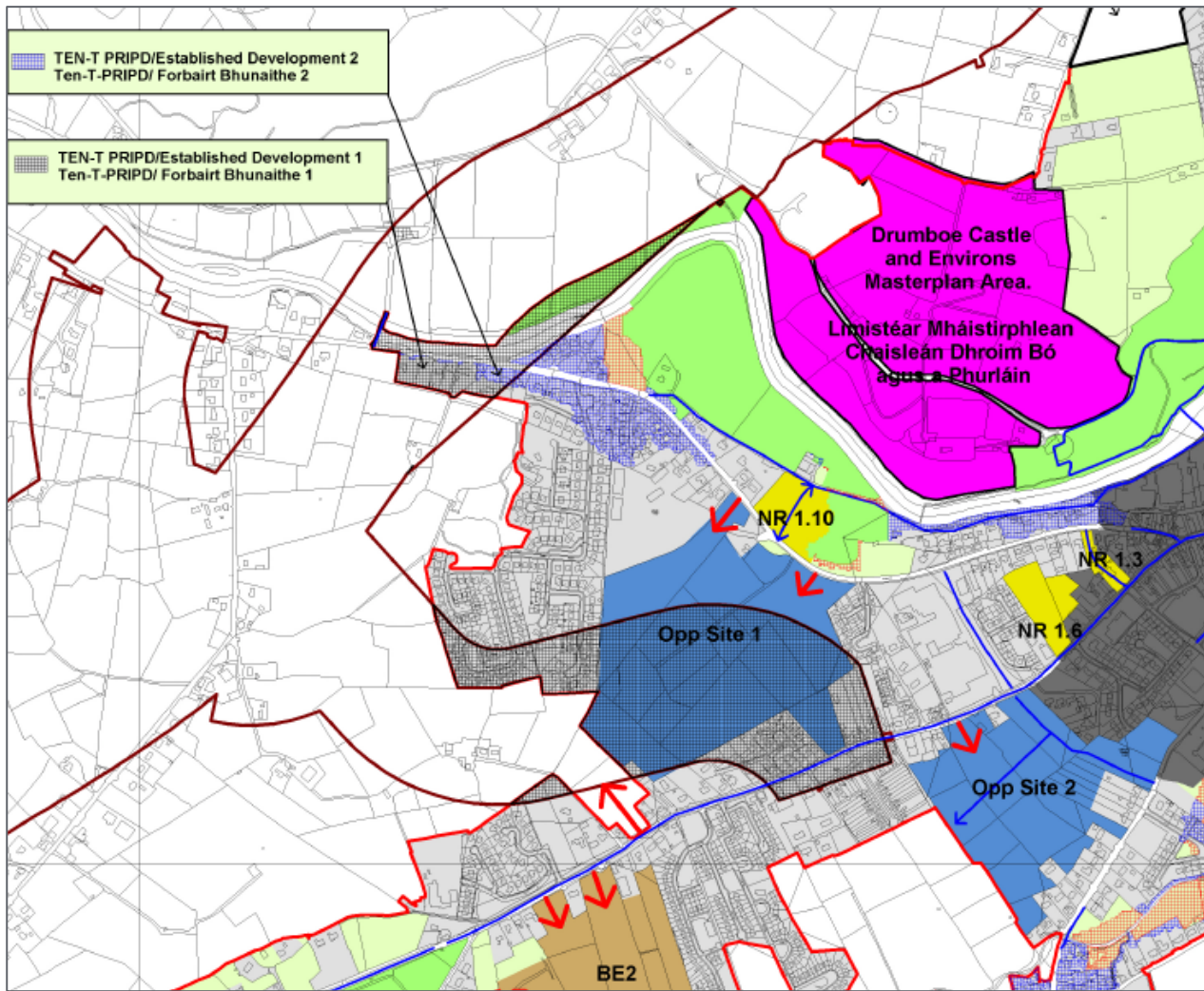


Figure 7-4: Extract from Ballybofey / Stranorlar Land Use Zoning Map, CDDP 2024-2030 (Source: DCC)

The policy objective for Opportunity Site 1 in the Area Plan for Ballybofey / Stranorlar includes for multiple residential development proposals such as will accord with the indicative Masterplan for the overall site. These are shown as to be located on the eastern side of the overall Opportunity Site 1 plot. See Figure 7-5.

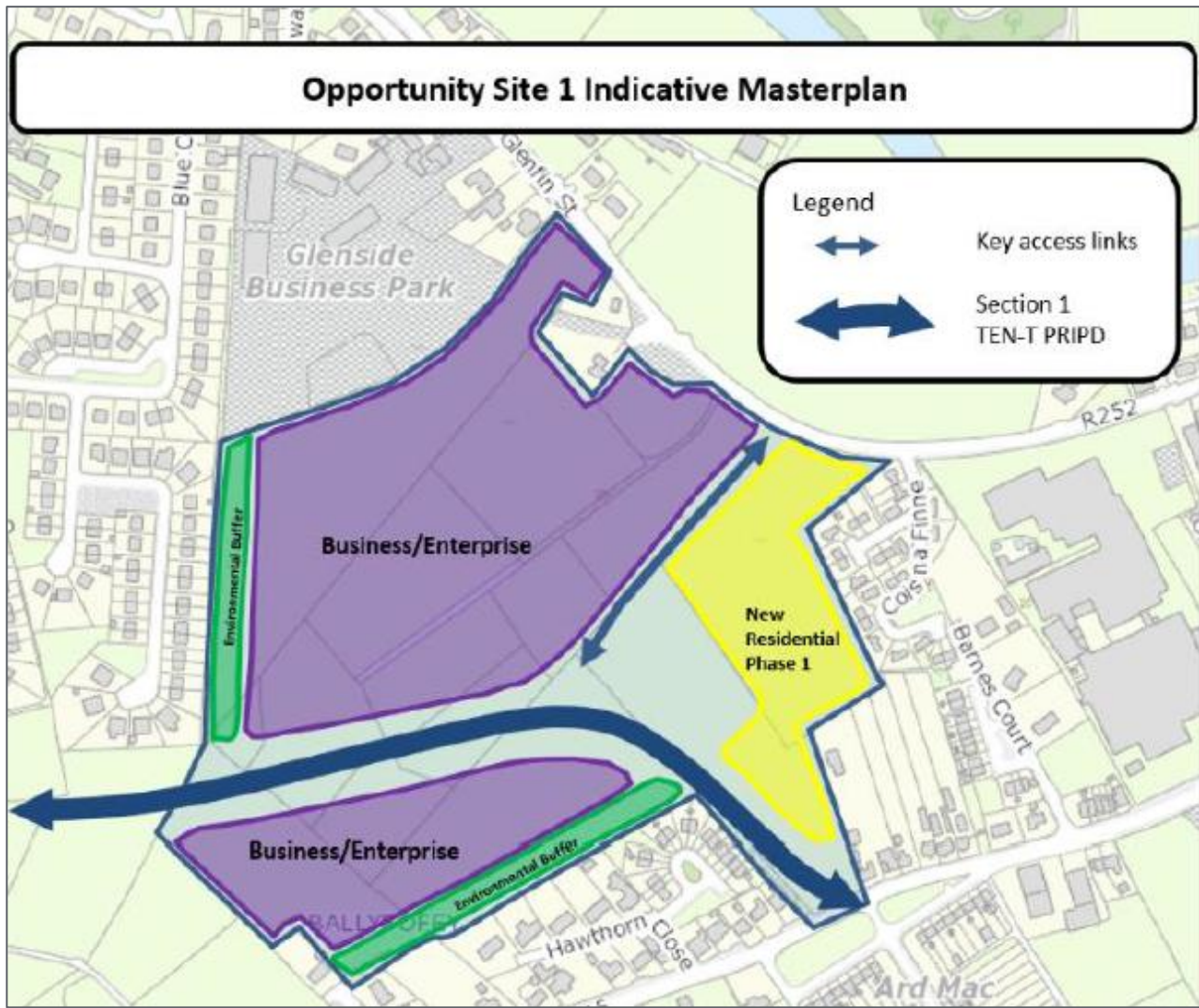


Figure 7-5: Indicative Masterplan for Opportunity Site 1 of Ballybofey / Stranorlar Area Plan 2024-2030

Any proposals for Opportunity Site 1, in accordance with BS-OPP-P-1 must “not prejudice the delivery, strategic functionality, road safety and carrying capacity of, the Section 1 TEN-T PRIPD link road”. The policy also provides for the protection of residential amenity within existing and future residential areas.

7.3.1.3 Settlement and Residential Land Use - Section 2

The national primary route, N13 (Ballybofey / Stranorlar to Letterkenny and Derry City via the A6) travels through the south-eastern part of the Letterkenny urban area. It approaches Letterkenny from the south, serving some residential uses. East of the Dry Arch Roundabout, the existing N13 road comprises dual carriageway and is flanked by established residential development, to its south particularly. As it leaves the built-up area of Letterkenny extending east to the Pluck Roundabout near Manorcunningham, where Section 2 of the Proposed Development meets the start of Section 3, some individual residential properties are also located along the existing national route.

According to the GeoDirectory database, there are 6 no. residential receptors within the CPO boundary (See EIAR Drawing 7.02) and 1,059 no. residential receptors within 500m of same for Section 2. The land take assessment tables in Appendix C16.01 of Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural) provide a more detailed categorisation of land uses within the CPO boundary, identifying approx. 80 residential land parcels intersecting the CPO boundary, which is reflective of, in the majority of cases the extent of land associated with a residence (including garden space, entrances and boundary treatments, etc.)

Letterkenny is identified within the CDDP 2024-2030 as the Regional Growth Driver, with 2,259 housing units allocated to the town by the core strategy over the CDDP lifetime (30% of projected housing unit growth across the county). Letterkenny is placed at the top of the settlement hierarchy for the following reasons:

- It is identified by the National Planning Framework (NPF) as a Regional Centre for the Northwest and is a key element of the North-West City Region along with Derry City and Strabane.
- Its critical mass relative to other settlements in the county.

The population growth specifically projected for Letterkenny is identified as an additional 6,808 people, bringing the total projected population to approximately 29,357 by 2030. The CDDP estimates that 73.12 ha of zoned lands are required to facilitate same; an excess of 83.72 ha of greenfield zoned lands is identified.

Figure 7-8 shows the preferred route corridor for Section 2 of the Proposed Development as per the CDDP.

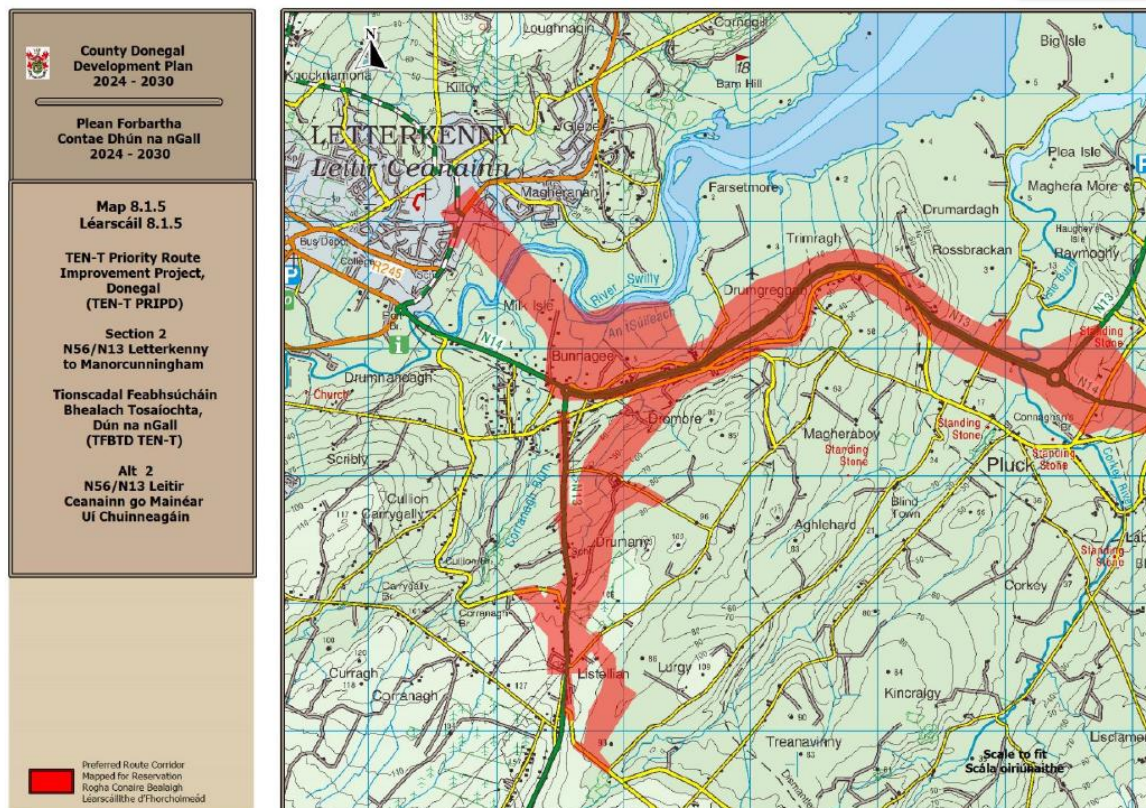


Figure 7-6: TEN-T PRIPD Section 2 N56 / N13 Letterkenny to Manorcunningham, CDDP 2024-2030 (Source: DCC)

The Land Use Zoning Objectives for the areas within the settlement boundary of Letterkenny are provided within the Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan 2023-2029 (the LPLTP). An extract is provided in Figure 7-7. The LPLTP was subject of a Ministerial Direction regarding the zoning of 6 no. sites within the plan area. The sites in question are not directly intersected by the Proposed Development. One site is directly adjacent to the Proposed Development (in Bonagee close to the Dry Arch Roundabout) and was reinstated to an open space zoning objective from a general employment zoning as part of the process. The revised map is shown below.

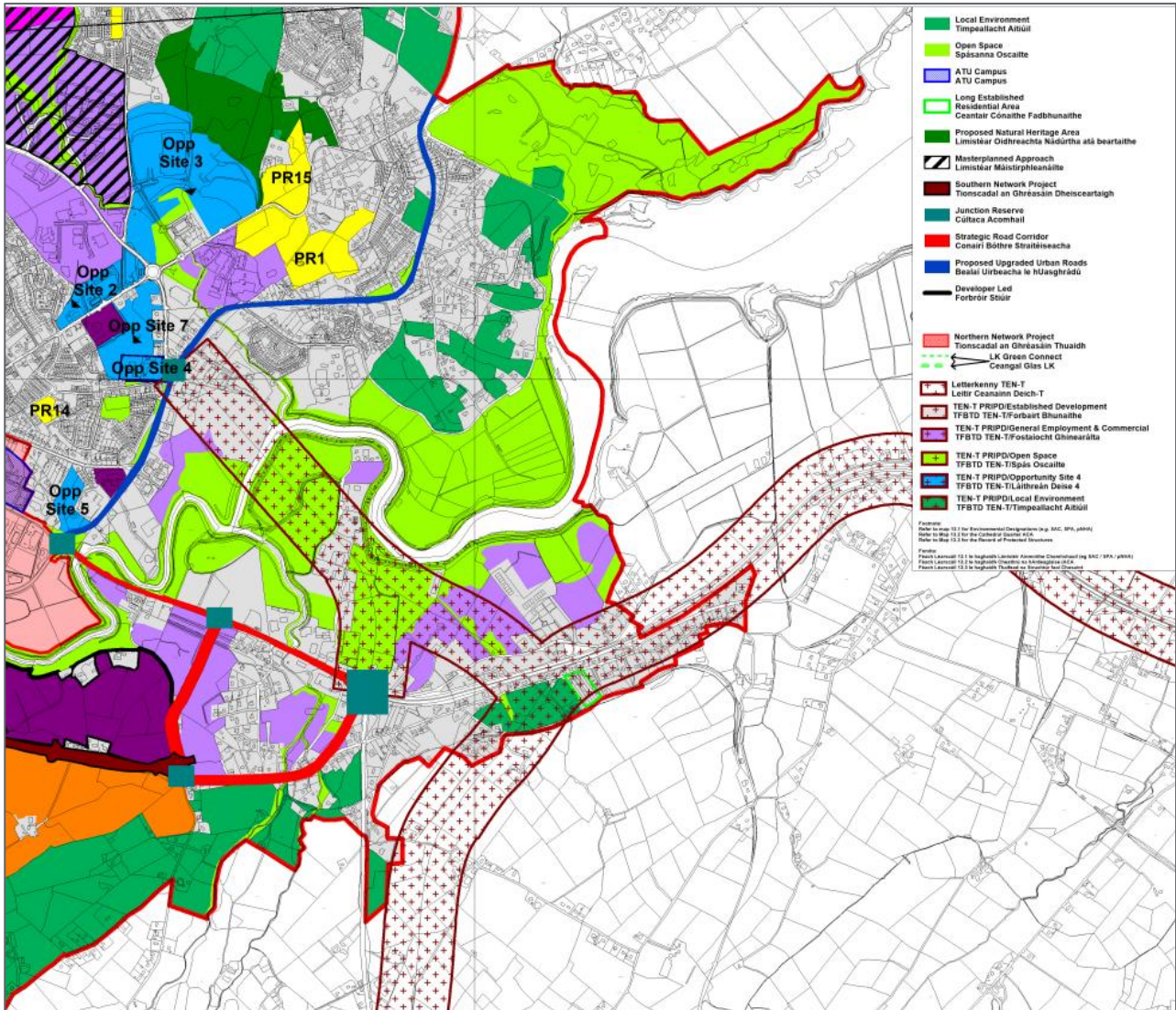


Figure 7-7: Letterkenny Land Use Zoning Map (LPLTP 2023-2029) (Source: DCC)

The preferred route corridor commences on the south-eastern side of the town. It crosses through lands with zoning objectives including residential development, as follows:

- TEN-T PRIPD / Established Development** – “To conserve and enhance the quality and character of the area, to protect residential amenity and allow for development appropriate to the sustainable growth of the settlement, including new residential development, and to provide for the development of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal subject to all relevant material planning considerations, all the policies of the Plan, relevant national/ regional policy/guidance including environmental designations and subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area”. Such areas are indicated by a light grey colour and a ‘+’ above. The established areas covered by this objective include those residential properties to the south of the existing dual carriageway at the eastern extent of Letterkenny. One small area of housing is subject to a further objective, i.e. ‘Long Established Residential Area’.

- **TEN-T PRIPD / OPP Site 4** – “To provide for a mix of employment and commercial use, residential use, local neighbourhood-level retail activity and to provide for the development of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal”. There is a minor intersection of the Opportunity Site with the northwestern extent of the road scheme corridor reservation. It is identified in blue on the zoning map. The teal box relates to a junction reserve.
- **TEN-T PRIPD / Local Environment** – “To provide for limited development only ensuring no significant impact on the landscape setting or biodiversity quality of the area and to provide for the development of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal”. This relates to a tract of land south of the dual carriageway. The CDDP provides in footnote 20, p.323, that “Only proposals for single dwellings will be considered on lands zoned Local Environment 1 in accordance with GEN-H-P-2.” Furthermore, the LPLTP 2023-2029 states in footnote 13, p.23, that, “Proposals for multiple (i.e. 2 or more) residential units will not be considered on lands zoned as Local Environment. Proposals for single dwellings may be considered where they otherwise accord with, inter alia, the Councils housing policies, conservation policies and policies regarding the appropriate integration of development into the receiving landscape.”

Manorcunningham

Manorcunningham is a small settlement approximately seven kilometres east of Letterkenny. A population of 830 was recorded in the 2022 Census. It is identified as a Rural Settlement within the fourth tier of the settlement hierarchy of the CDDP and limited growth is planned. A small number of commercial and community facilities are located within the village. The N13 national road is routed just west of the built-up area of Manorcunningham. The N13 forms a junction with the N14 national primary road to the south of Manorcunningham at the Pluck Roundabout. Figure 7-8 shows the settlement boundary of Manorcunningham which bounds the Proposed Development at its southern end.

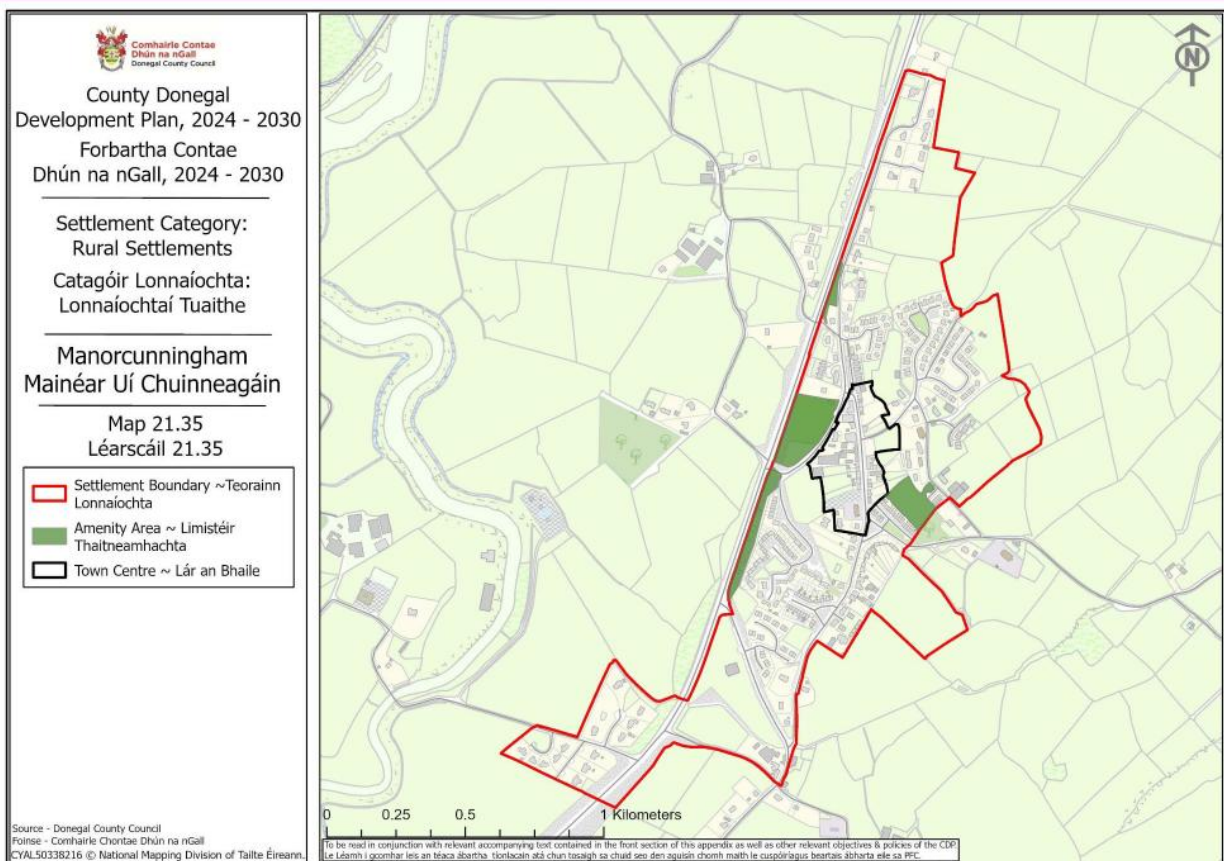


Figure 7-8: Settlement Boundary of Manorcunningham

7.3.1.4 Settlement and Residential Land Use - Section 3

The Section 3 scheme area is predominantly located along and near the route of the existing N14 national primary route. Outside of the built-up area of Lifford (the main settlement which this section intersects or is close to), there are dispersed residential properties directly adjacent the existing route, some of which are accessed via local roads.

Other settlements close to the route are discussed below. Most are accessed via lower tier roads via junctions with the national road, i.e., Raphoe, Drumoghill, Ballindrait and Murlog. Information is also provided on Strabane, which does not intersect the route, but is located across the River Finn from Lifford, and which is proposed to be linked to the Proposed Development via the N14/N15 to A5 Link.

According to the GeoDirectory database, there are 13 no. residential receptors within the CPO boundary (See EIAR Drawing 7.03) and 1,128 no. residential receptors within 500m of same for Section 3. The land take assessment tables in Appendix C16.01 of Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural) provide a more detailed categorisation of land uses within the CPO boundary, identifying approx. 50 no. residential land parcels intersecting the CPO boundary, which is reflective of, in the majority of cases the extent of land associated with a residence (including garden space, entrances and boundary treatments, etc.)

Lifford

Lifford is a town in east Donegal, located adjacent the large town of Strabane in Co. Tyrone. The existing N14 from Letterkenny forms a junction with the existing N15 at the Three Coins Roundabout at Lifford. The N15 continues east for a short distance to connect to Strabane. South of the Three Coins Roundabout, the N15 connects to Castlefinn, Stranorlar and on to Donegal and Sligo.

Lifford had a population of 1,613 in the 2022 Census. Lifford is placed with Layer 3 of the CDDP Settlement Hierarchy; as a Service Town as it provides an important local employment and retail function. It is proposed to allocate 121 no. housing units to Lifford, with a target of an additional 322 population by 2030 (less than 1.5% of the projected growth for the county). There are residential areas within the north-western area of Lifford currently accessed by the N14, and south of the Three Coins Roundabout the N15 also provides access to residential areas.

The CDDP provides a Settlement Framework Plan for Lifford which is shown below as Figure 7-9.

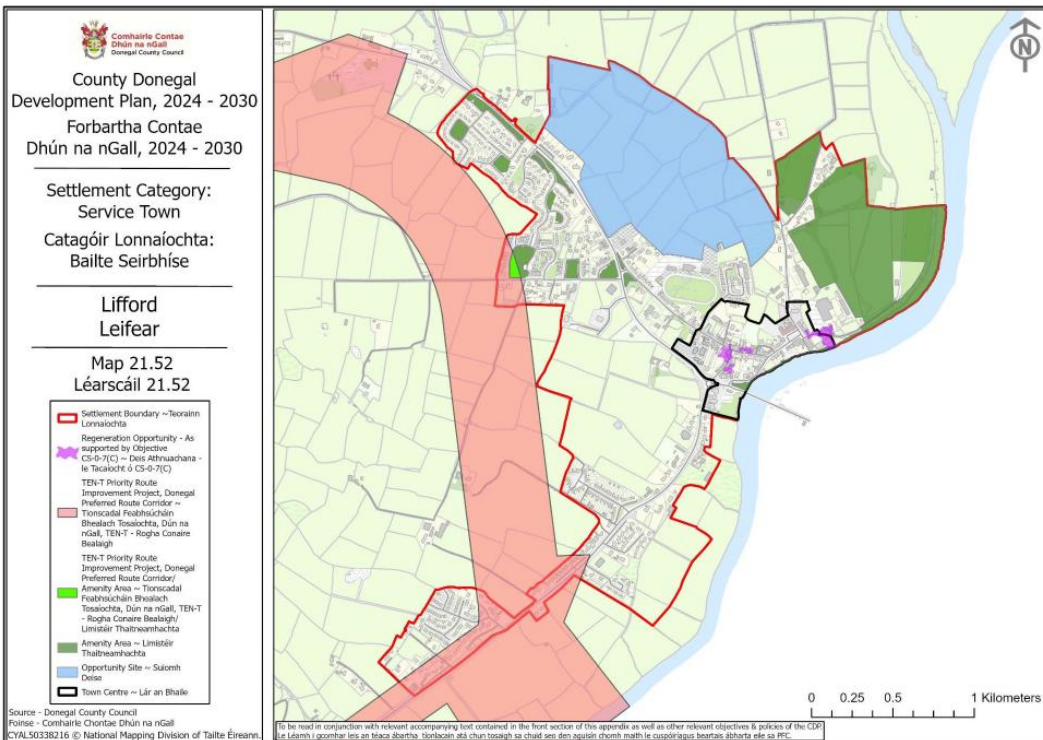


Figure 7-9: Lifford Settlement Framework, CDDP 2024-2030 (Source: DCC)

The route corridor intersects the settlement boundary of Lifford in three locations, all of which contain existing residential uses.

Raphoe

Raphoe is a small town in the east Donegal area known as the Laggan, lying approximately three kilometres to the west of the N14. A population of 1,161 was recorded in the 2022 Census and like Lifford, the town is placed with the third layer of the CDDP as a Service Town. An additional 120 housing units and population growth of 319 people are projected for 2030 which is less than 1.5% of the growth allocation for the county.

Drumoghill

Drumoghill is a small settlement, including some residential properties just southeast of Manorcunningham, and east of the N14 national primary road.

Ballindrait

Ballindrait is a small village, with a population of 100 recorded in the 2022 Census, close to Lifford and approximately three kilometres to the west of the N14.

Murlog

Murlog is a small cluster of community facilities just west of Lifford and the N14 and north of the Proposed Development boundary; the residential development in this area extends mainly from the outskirts of Lifford.

Strabane

Strabane is a town of approximately 13,500 population (NISRA, 2021). Section 3 includes the N14/N15 to A5 Link, a connection from the N14/N15 Lifford Junction roundabout, south of Lifford, across the River Finn to the border with Northern Ireland, where it will connect to a proposed Trunk Road T3 and the proposed A5 WTC south of Strabane. Given its size, Strabane contains substantial residential areas. It is included within the list of settlements to ensure that any potential transboundary effects are captured in the assessment if these arise to population receptors.

7.3.2 Businesses & Development Land (including Socio-economics)

7.3.2.1 Socio-economics (Demography) - Overview

7.3.2.1.1 Population Trends – Overview

The baseline population trends for the scheme area of the entire Proposed Development were considered with those for County Donegal and the State. The scheme area for the project is defined by the EDs through which the Proposed Development passes (see EDs listed by section in Section 7.2.4).

Population change between censuses is the combined effect of natural changes (birth rate less deaths), and net migration (immigration less emigration). The 2022 census shows that the population of the State has risen by 7.52% since 2016 from 4,761,865 to 5,149,139 (CSO, 2022b).

Within County Donegal, the population increased in the period 2016 to 2022 by +7,892 persons or +4.7%. The total population in 2022 was recorded as 167,084 persons. It should be noted that between 2011 to 2022 the population of County Donegal increased by 3.7% or 5,947 persons.

The population of the scheme area increased in the period 2016 to 2022 by 14%. The total population within the scheme area in 2022 was recorded as 34,409 persons.

In terms of policy relating to population trends, the CDDP (2024-2030) references population projections of the Implementation Plan for the National Planning Framework which seeks growth within the county to provide for approximately 173,500-176,500 people by 2026 and to consequently reach a range of 179,500-183,500 people by 2031.

Population changes as obtained from the CSO statistics are summarised in Table 7-4.

Table 7-4: CSO Census – National, County and Scheme area Population 2011-2022 (CSO, 2022b)

Year / Area	National	National % Change	County Donegal	County Donegal % Change	Scheme Area	Scheme Area % Change
2011	4,588,252	8.2	161,137	9.4	29,962	N/A
2016	4,761,865	3.7	159,192	-1.2	30,179	0.7
2022	5,149,139	7.5	167,084	4.7	34,409	14

With respect to the potential for transboundary impacts, Table 7-5 provides comparative information for Northern Ireland, the Sperrin EA and selected Data Zones.

Table 7-5: NISRA Census – Northern Ireland, Sperrin Electoral Area and Selected Data Zone Population 2011-2021

Area	Population 2011	Population 2022	Population % Change 2011 - 2022
Northern Ireland	1,810,863	1,903,175	+5.1%
Sperrin Electoral Area	23,840	24,720	+3.69%
Sperrin C	2,438	2,509	+2.9%
Sperrin D	2,508	2,887	+15.1%
Sperrin E	1,164	1,393	+19.7%
Sperrin H	2,983	2,932	-1.7%
Derg A	2,096	2,135	+1.9%

Outside of a small decline in the Sperrin H Data Zone, population increases were otherwise recorded, with particularly high growth in the Sperrin D and E Data Zone areas which are both located within the built-up area of Strabane. By comparison, the population in the Sperrin EA had declined by 0.2% between 2001 and 2011 during a period when the population of Northern Ireland grew by 7.5%.

7.3.2.1.2 Population Density - Overview

The population densities (persons per square kilometre) recorded for Ireland and County Donegal during the 2016 and 2022 census periods are summarised in Table 7-6.

Table 7-6: Population Density (People per km²) - Ireland, County Donegal and Scheme area

Area	Population Density 2016	Population Density 2022
Ireland	69.6	73.3
County Donegal	32.8	34.4
Scheme Area	87.4	84.6

The relatively low population of Donegal in relation to its geographic size gives the county a population density that is less than half of the national average. This is expected given its relatively peripheral location and distance from major centres of population. However, the urban areas of Ballybofey / Stranorlar, Letterkenny and Lifford skew the population density within the scheme area to a much higher level. In particular, the population density for Letterkenny, means that the average over the entire scheme area of all

three sections of the Proposed Development exceeds the national average. Further detail on the population densities for each section is provided in the section-specific analysis.

With respect to the potential for transboundary impacts, Table 7-7 provides comparative information for Northern Ireland, the Sperrin EA and selected Data Zones. It should be noted that these values are residents per hectare, not square kilometre.

Table 7-7: Population Density (Number of Usual Residents per ha) of Northern Ireland, Sperrin Electoral Area and Selected Data Zone Population 2011-2021

Area	Population Density 2011	Population Density 2022
Northern Ireland	1.34	1.4
Sperrin Electoral Area	0.42	0.43
Sperrin C	0.53	0.55
Sperrin D	13.86	15.96
Sperrin E	19.73	23.61
Sperrin H	29.85	29.34
Derg A	24.38	24.84

Population density in four of the five selected Data Zones is considerably higher than the figures for the Sperrin Electoral Area and for Northern Ireland in both census years. This is reflective of parts of the Strabane urban area being located within those zones.

7.3.2.1.3 Age Structure - Overview

The age profile statistics from the 2016 and 2022 censuses for the State, County Donegal and the scheme area are summarised below.

Table 7-8: Population Structure of the State and County Donegal 2016 and 2022

Area / Age	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
State 2016	1,006,552	576,452	1,406,291	1,135,003	637,567	4,491,763
State 2022	1,012,287	644,771	1,422,424	1,293,342	776,315	5,149,139
Change	+0.6%	+10.6%	+1.1%	+12.2%	+17.9%	+12.8%
Donegal 2016	35,042	18,407	40,939	39,815	24,989	159,192
Donegal 2022	34,092	19,750	39,609	44,010	29,623	167,084
Change	-2.8%	+6.8%	-3.4%	+9.5%	+15.6%	+4.7%
Scheme area 2016	6,708	3,920	8,661	6,994	3,946	30,179
Scheme area 2022	6,757	4,027	8,452	7,896	4,910	35,042
Change	+0.7%	+2.7%	-2.4%	+12.9%	+24.4%	+6.2%

Comparison of the data in Table 7-8 highlights some interesting trends in County Donegal. There has been a significant increase in the age groups between 45-64 and 65+ comparable to what is observed throughout the State and the Population scheme area. The combined population of these two age-groups is 73,633 in County Donegal in 2022 meanwhile the combined population of the 15-24 and 25-44 age-groups in County Donegal during the 2022 census period is 59,359, i.e., these groups now form the majority of the adult population in the county. This highlights future impacts on social and economic activity in the county, including a need for improved accessibility to community facilities as these groups age.

Within the scheme area, only the 25-44 age cohort experienced a decline in population between the 2016 and the 2022 Census period. The 0-14 cohort experienced the lowest increase (+0.7%), comparable with the national trends in the same census period. In the same period, the county has experienced a minor decline in the 0-14 and the 25-44 age-groups, which would be representative of young family units.

Table 7-9 below examines the age profile of the adjoining state (Northern Ireland) and selected units of data which are most proximate to the Proposed Development.

Table 7-9: Population Structure of Northern Ireland, the Sperrin Electoral Area and Selected Data Zones 2011 and 2022

Area	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
Northern Ireland 2011	354,703	252,254	498,046	442,140	263,720	1,810,863
Northern Ireland 2021	365,210	224,589	491,935	494,962	326,477	1,903,173
Change	+2.96%	-10.96%	-1.23%	+11.95%	+23.8%	+5.1%
Sperrin EA 2011	4,915	3,304	6,467	5,882	3,272	23,840
Sperrin EA 2021	4,825	2,939	5,928	6,720	4,299	24,711
Change	-1.83%	-11.05%	-8.33%	+14.25%	+31.39%	+3.65%
Sperrin C 2011	35,042	18,407	40,939	39,815	24,989	159,192
Sperrin C 2021	34,092	19,750	39,609	44,010	29,623	167,084
Derg A 2011	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derg A 2021	511	341	544	569	178	2,143
Sperrin D 2011	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sperrin D 2021	667	341	739	745	406	2,898
Sperrin E 2011	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sperrin E 2021	196	153	413	387	254	1,403
Sperrin H 2011	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sperrin H 2021	495	295	696	748	695	2,929

- Comparable information not available.

Significantly, there is an increase for both Northern Ireland and the Sperrin Electoral Area in both the 45-64 and 65+ age brackets but in general, a decline has been recorded in almost all age brackets below age 45 for the state and all brackets below age 45 for the EA. This is likely to result in population decline in the coming years. It contrasts with the growth being experienced across the border in Donegal and highlights the importance of improving connectivity between the adjoining towns of Lifford and Strabane and the respective counties and countries in which they are located.

7.3.2.2 Socio-economics (Population) – Section 1

7.3.2.2.1 Population Change

Section 1 of the Proposed Development is located within the N15 / N13 Ballybofey / Stranorlar Urban Region. The scheme area for Section 1 is defined by the EDs through which the Proposed Development passes. These are: Stranorlar, Lettermore, Dooish, Goland and Convoy. Population change statistics are summarised in Table 7-10 below.

Between 2011 and 2022, the population increased by 412 persons or a total of 4.7%. In the period 2011 to 2016 the population increased by 50 persons or a total of 0.6%. In comparison, between 2011 and 2022 Donegal county an overall increase of 3.7% occurred. The above Section 1 growth across the eleven years is likely due to the influence of development around the urban centre of Ballybofey / Stranorlar.

Table 7-10: Population of Section 1 Scheme Area

Year	Population
2011	8,750
2016	8,801
2022	9,162

7.3.2.2.2 Population Density

The population densities (persons per square kilometre) recorded for the Section 1 EDs during the 2011, 2016 and 2022 censuses are summarised in Table 7-11.

Table 7-11: Population Density of Section 1 (CSO, 2023)

Electoral Districts (EDs)	Population Density 2011	Population Density 2016	Population Density 2022
Stranorlar	110.9	110.6	114
Lettermore	10.7	10.7	9
Dooish	50.9	51.5	55
Convoy	55.9	57.1	60
Goland ¹⁴	N/A	N/A	8
Section 1 Combined Population Density¹⁵	58.7	59.0	49.0

All EDs displayed increases in population density between 2011 and 2022 apart from Lettermore which exhibited a slight decrease in population density. This figure is higher than the population density as recorded for County Donegal during the same period. This is influenced by the urban settlement of Ballybofey / Stranorlar.

7.3.2.2.3 Age Structure

The age information from the 2016 and 2022 Census for the Section 1 scheme area is summarised in Table 7-12.

Table 7-12: Population Structure of Section 1 (2016 and 2022)

Area/Age	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
Section 1 (2016)	1,828	1,111	2,222	2,235	1,405	8,801
Section 1 (2022)	1,884	1,084	2,254	2,350	1,590	9,162
Change	+3.0%	-2.4%	+1.4%	+5.1%	+13.2%	+4.1%

The 0-14 age category has experienced an increase within the Section 1 scheme area between 2016 and 2022. This is not representative of this age group within County Donegal where people aged 0-14 decreased by 2.8% within the same time period. Nationally there was a slight increase of 0.6% for persons aged 0-14 between 2016 to 2022. The Section 1 Scheme area therefore has experienced a significantly higher increase in numbers for this age cohort.

¹⁴ At the time of writing, figures for population density for the year of 2011 and 2016 for Goland are no longer available. Previous population density was collated from a previous reporting period.

¹⁵ Figures provided but are skewed by lack of information for Goland in earlier years and by strong variation between the urban and rural EDs.

The 15-24 age cohort demonstrated an overall decrease in population within Section 1, which contrasted to the results at State and County level which both experienced an increase in this age cohort.

The 25-44 age group experienced an increase of +1.4% between 2016 to 2022 in Section 1 similar to trends at national level, however, the county experienced declines in this age cohort within the same time period.

The 45-64 and 65+ age cohorts have shown increases of 5.1% and 13.2% respectively within the Section 1 Scheme area, corresponding with national and county trends which is broadly reflective of an aging population.

7.3.2.3 Socio-economics (Demography) – Section 2

7.3.2.3.1 Population Change

The scheme area for Section 2 is defined by the EDs through which the Proposed Development passes. These are: Letterkenny Rural, Manorcunningham and Magheraboy. This area, while outside of the centre of Letterkenny, is strongly influenced by the large town. Population change statistics are summarised in Table 7-13.

Table 7-13: Population of Section 2 Scheme area

Year	Population
2006	13,265
2011	14,128
2016	14,332
2022	15,224

Between the 2006 and 2011 censuses, the population of the Section 2 scheme area increased by 863 persons, or 6.5%. Between 2011 and 2016, the population of the scheme area increased by 204 persons, or 1.4%. A further increase in population occurred between 2016 to 2022 of 892 persons (6.2% increase). This demonstrates a positive population change within the period 2011 to 2016 in comparison to the overall decrease in population experienced in County Donegal. Over the 11-year period from 2011 to 2022, the population of the scheme area increased by 1,959 persons or a total of 14.8%. Within the same period, County Donegal had experienced an increase of 5,447 (or 3.7%) increase in population size. It is likely that Section 2 exhibited a significantly higher population increase compared to the county because of the development in and around the Letterkenny urban area.

7.3.2.3.2 Population Density

The population densities (persons per square kilometre) recorded for the Section 2 EDs during the 2016 and 2022 censuses are summarised in Table 7-14.

Table 7-14: Population Density of Section 2

Electoral Districts (EDs)	Population Density 2016	Population Density 2022
Letterkenny Rural	880.4	923
Manorcunningham	73.3	79
Magheraboy	62.4	60
Section 2 Combined Population Density	251.0	258.0

The population density of Section 2 increased marginally by 7 persons per square kilometre between 2016 and 2022.

The population density of Section 2 is significantly higher than the population density as recorded for County Donegal during the same period. This is influenced by the location of much of this section being within and near Letterkenny.

7.3.2.3.3 Age Structure

The age profile of the Section 2 scheme area for 2016 and 2022 is summarised in Table 7-15.

Table 7-15: Population Structure of Section 2 (2016 and 2022)

Area / Age	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
Section 2 (2016)	3,183	1,956	4,503	3,051	1,639	14,332
Section 2 (2022)	3,261	1,963	4,478	3,490	2,032	15,224
Change	+2.5%	+0.4%	-0.6%	+14.4%	+24%	+6.2%

The 0-14 age category has experienced an increase between 2016 and 2022 in Section 2, contrasting with the trends experienced within County Donegal of -2.8% for this age group. Section 2 exhibits a higher increase in this cohort than the state figures, again likely influenced by development in the Letterkenny urban area.

There was an increase in the population within the 15-24 age-group in the Section 2 scheme area between 2016 to 2022, comparable to the state and county population trend for this age group during the same Census period. The 25-44 age group decreased in the Section 2 scheme area in line with the both the scheme area and county figures.

The 45-64 and 65+ age cohorts in Section 2 have shown the most significant overall increases of +14.4% and +24% respectively and reflects a similar trend across the county and the State during the same period. In the Section 2 Scheme area, this cohort accounts for a combined population of 5,522 persons or 36.3% of the total population.

7.3.2.4 Socio-economics (Demography) – Section 3

7.3.2.4.1 Population Change

The scheme area for Section 3 is defined by the EDs through which the Proposed Development passes. These are: Manorcunningham, Kincairgy, Treantaghmucklagh, Feddyglass, Clonleigh North and Clonleigh South. The area lies predominantly in a rural area with its southern extent intersecting Lifford, which is influenced by the nearby larger settlement of Strabane. Population change statistics are summarised in Table 7-16.

Table 7-16: Population of Section 3 Scheme area

Year	Population
2006	6,137
2011	7,084
2016	7,046
2022	7,656

In the five years between the 2006 and 2011 censuses, the population of the scheme area increased by 947 persons or a total of 15.4%. Between 2011 and 2016, the population of the scheme area decreased by 38 persons or a total of -0.5%. Between 2016 and 2022, the Section 3 Scheme area had experienced an increase of 610 persons or an 8% increase. Over a 16-year period, the population of the scheme area for Section 3 increased by 1,519 persons or 19.8%. The population decrease between 2011 and 2016 is reflective of the overall decline in population in the county for this period and the largely rural nature of the area.

7.3.2.4.2 Population Density

The population densities (persons per square kilometre) recorded for the Section 3 EDs during the 2016 and 2022 censuses are summarised in Table 7-17.

Table 7-17: Population Density of Section 3

Electoral Districts (EDs)	Population Density 2016	Population Density 2022
Treantaghmucklagh	31.3	33
Feddyglass	24.2	24
Manorcunningham	73.3	79
Clonleigh North	51.9	52
Clonleigh South	94.2	92
Kincraig	33.0	33
Section 3 Total	49.7	50.4

The population density of Section 3 decreased slightly by 0.7 persons per square kilometre between 2016 and 2022. This figure is higher than the population density recorded for County Donegal, but lower than the State. Lifford is the most populated area within Section 3; as the scheme area includes this town and its environs, this is a factor in a significantly higher population density than the County figure.

7.3.2.4.3 Age Structure

The age profile distribution for 2016 and 2022 for the Section 3 scheme area is summarised in Table 7-18.

Table 7-18: Population Structure of Section 3 (2016 and 2022)

Area/Age	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
Section 3 (2016)	1,697	853	1,936	1,658	902	7,046
Section 3 (2022)	1,612	980	1,720	2,056	1,288	7,656
Change	-5.3%	+13%	-12.6%	+19.4%	+30%	+8%

In Section 3, the 0-14 age group has experienced an overall decrease of 5.3% between 2016 and 2022. This is a higher decrease compared to the county and national level of growth +0.6% and the -2.8%, respectively.

The 15-24 age-group increased in population within the Section 3 scheme area by 13%, which corresponds with the trend across the County and the State during the same census period.

In the Section 3, the 25-44 age group experienced a decrease of 12.6% between the 2016 and 2022 census periods. These figures are comparable with the County trend which had also experienced a 3.5% decrease in the 25-44 age group in the same census period. However, these figures contrast the national trend for the 25-44 age group which had experienced a slight increase of 1.1% in the same census period.

In Section 3, the 45-64 and 65+ age cohorts have shown significant overall increases of 19.4% and 30% respectively between the 2016 and 2022 census period. These figures for the 45-64 and 65+ age cohort in Section 3 scheme area compare with county and national changes and are reflective of an aging population.

7.3.2.5 Socio-economics (Irish Language)

Irish is the first official language of Ireland and is defined as an official language of the European Union. According to 2022 census statistics, a total of approximately 1.9 million people stated that they can speak Irish, of which 71,968 have said that they speak the Irish language daily outside of the education system,

and of which 20,168 reside in Gaeltacht areas. Seanad Éireann in conjunction with the All-Island Research Observatory published a report entitled 'Socio-Economic Profile of the seven Gaeltacht Areas in Ireland' (2018). The report identified that the Galway and Donegal Gaeltacht areas are the largest nationally and account for almost three quarters of all Gaeltacht residents.

Section 1 is the closest to a Gaeltacht area and is approximately 5.7 km east of the boundary of the Donegal Gaeltacht. Section 2 and 3 are located at greater distances of 14.3 km and 18.7 km respectively from Gaeltacht boundaries.

7.3.2.6 Socio-economics (Employment and Economic Activity) – Overview

Details pertaining to the employment context of the State, Donegal and the scheme areas for the three sections are set out in the following sections.

The 2022 Census showed that the unemployment rate nationally stood at 4% in the 2022 census period whereas the unemployment rate in County Donegal was 4.8% during the 2022 census period. Table 7-19 sets out the total population aged 15+ who were in the labour force according to the 2022 Census.

Table 7-19: Economic Status of the Total Population Aged 15+ (CSO, 2022b)

	Status	State	County Donegal
Percentage of population aged 15+ of which are	At work	45%	40.7%
	First time job seeker	0.7%	0.7%
	Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	3.2%	4.1%
Percentage of the population over 15 who are not in the labour force of which are	Student	8.9%	8.2%
	Looking after home/family	5.3%	5.7%
	Retired	12.8%	15.6%
	Unable to work	3.7%	4.3%
	Other	0.5%	0.4%

40.7% of persons aged 15 and over in County Donegal defined their economic status as being 'at work' according to the 2022 Census which is slightly lower than that of the State average of 45%. The number of people retired in County Donegal was higher (15.6%) than the State average of 12.8%.

8.2% of persons in County Donegal aged over 15 defined their economic status as 'student' for the 2022 Census. Table 7-20 summarises the breakdown of the workforce by type within Donegal and the State, as derived from the Census 2022 statistics.

Table 7-20: Census 2022 – Persons at Work by Industry (CSO, 2022b)

Industry Type	State	County Donegal
Agriculture, forestry and fishing - Total	3.5%	5.7%
Building and construction - Total	5.8%	6.9%
Manufacturing industries - Total	11.8%	9.8%
Commerce and trade - Total	23.8%	20.2%
Transport and communications - Total	9.2%	6.6%
Public administration - Total	5.7%	7.2%
Professional services - Total	24.4%	26.5%
Other - Total	15.8%	17.2%

The largest employment sector for Donegal is 'Professional Services' at 26.5%, followed closely by 'Commerce and Trade' at 20.2%. 5.7% of persons within County Donegal work within the 'Agriculture, forestry and fishing' sector which is higher than the State average of 3.5% and is reflective of the relatively rural and coastal nature of the county.

The CSO publish quarterly records under the Labour Force Survey (replacing the previous Quarterly Household Survey). Records for Q4 2025 indicate that there has been an annual increase in employment by 2% to 2,833,100 people in the 12 months period from Q4 2024.

With respect to economic activity, according to the GeoDirectory database, in total, the CPO boundary for the overall project encompasses 18 no. commercial buildings and there are 486 no. such receptors within 500m of same. The land take assessment tables in Appendix C16.01 of Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural) provide a more detailed categorisation of land uses within the CPO boundary; approx. 25 no. landholdings with commercial uses are intersected by the CPO boundary. These figures, however, include properties whereby only a very small temporary land take applies; only 4 no. commercial landowners are affected where buildings to be demolished (noting that one of these has multiple units rented to individual businesses).

In considering the potential for transboundary effects, the economic status of those aged 16+¹⁶ for Northern Ireland, the Sperrin Electoral Area and selected Data Zones are shown below in Table 7-21.

Table 7-21: Economic Status of the Population aged 16+ (NISRA 2021)

Status	Northern Ireland	Sperrin EA	Sperrin C	Sperrin D	Sperrin E	Sperrin H	Derg A	
Percentage of population aged 16+ of which are	At work	56.56%	47.50%	44.06%	55.71%	66.42%	51.16%	57.93%
	Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	2.26%	3.58%	4.73%	3.10%	3.77%	2.29%	3.29%
Percentage of the population over 16 who are not in the labour force of which are	Student	5.32%	4.07%	0.39%	6.57%	1.51%	10.39%	1.18%
	Looking after home/family	5.07%	7.1%	9.52%	5.90%	3.50%	5.12%	9.02%
	Retired	20.21%	22.28%	24.75%	17.76%	11.89%	18.39%	14.08%
	Unable to work	7.43%	11.07%	12.41%	7.43%	9.36%	9.77%	9.70%
	Other	3.15%	4.40%	4.14%	3.52%	3.55%	2.88%	4.81%

The percentages recorded as being 'at work' are higher than those of the Republic of Ireland and County Donegal, however this may be influenced by the slight difference in the age bracket identified. The Sperrin EA has a higher unemployment rate than that of Northern Ireland.

Table 7-22 examines the breakdown of the type of industry those 'at work' in 2021 were employed in for both Northern Ireland and the Sperrin EA.

¹⁶ CSO as shown above uses 15+ for the corresponding statistical analysis.

Table 7-22: Census 2021 – Persons at Work by Industry (NISRA, 2021)

Industry Type	Northern Ireland	Sperrin
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2.60%	6.99%
Mining and quarrying	0.20%	0.37%
Manufacturing	8.96%	8.3%
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0.50%	0.43%
Water supply; sewerage, and waste management	0.72%	0.49%
Construction	8.50%	13.32%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	15.06%	17.04%
Transport and storage	4.01%	3.16%
Accommodation and food service activities	4.10%	3.5%
Information and communication	3.57%	3.17%
Financial and insurance activities	3.48%	3.35%
Real estate activities	1.05%	0.72%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	5.34%	2.89%
Administrative and support service activities	4.04%	2.78%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	7.90%	6.08%
Education	9.17%	11.27%
Human health and social work activities	16.72%	11.59%
Other	4.07%	4.55%

The information contained in Table 7-22 is not directly comparable with the CSO output for Donegal and the Republic of Ireland however it is noted that there is a higher proportion employed in the Sperrin EA in agriculture, fishing and forestry than in County Donegal.

7.3.2.7 Socio-economics (Employment and Economic Activity) – Section 1

The unemployment rate for the Section 1 scheme area stood at 4.7% which is slightly lower than the county average. **Table 7-23** sets out the total population of the Section 1 scheme area aged 15+ who were in the labour force during the 2022 Census.

50.3% of persons aged 15 and over in the Section 1 scheme area defined their economic status as being 'at work' according to the 2022 Census which is higher than the State average. The number of people retired in the Section 1 scheme area (16.5%) was slightly higher than the State average and lower than County Donegal (19.5%).

9.6% of persons in the scheme area for Section 1 aged over 15 defined their economic status as 'student' for the 2022 Census.

Table 7-23: Economic Status of the Total Population of Section 1 Scheme area Aged 15+ (CSO, 2022b)

Description of Population	Status	Section 1
Percentage of population aged 15+ of which are	At work	50.3%
	First time job seeker	1.6%
	Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	5.4%
Percentage of the population over 15 who are not in the labour force of which are	Student	9.6%
	Looking after home/family	7.2%
	Retired	18.5%
	Unable to work	7.0%
	Other	0.4%

Table 7-24 summarises the breakdown of the workforce by type within the Section 1 scheme area, as derived from Profile 7 'Employment, Unemployment and Commuting' of the Census 2022 statistics. The largest employment sector within Section 1 is 'Professional Services' at 23.9%, followed closely by 'Commerce and Trade' at 22.3%. A total of 5.1% of persons within the scheme area work within the 'Agriculture, forestry and fishing' sector which is higher than the State average of 3.5% but lower than the county statistic.

Table 7-24: Census 2022 – Persons at Work in Section 1 Scheme area by Industry

Industry Type	Section 1
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	4.9%
Building and construction	6.4%
Manufacturing industries	9.5%
Commerce and trade	21.5%
Transport and communications	6.5%
Public administration	8.3%
Professional services	26.8%
Other	16.0%

With respect to commercial uses within the scheme area for Section 1, the existing national primary road (N15 - Sligo to Lifford), is routed along the main streets of Ballybofey and Stranorlar. The junction of the N15 with the N13, also a national primary route (Ballybofey / Stranorlar to Letterkenny and Derry City via the A6) is located within the centre of Stranorlar's commercial area. These areas contain a concentration of commercial uses.

These existing national primary routes, from which strategic traffic would be diverted should the Proposed Development be implemented, serve land uses typical of town centres, urban area edges and approach roads, including:

- Retail outlets, including larger outlets such as supermarkets (Lidl and Costcutter on the N15 in Ballybofey; Andie's Superstore and Maguire's Foodfare on the N15 in Stranorlar) and a department store (McElhinney's), Foy and Company Homewares / Toymaster, and grocery / clothing/ goods outlets (New

Shoes, Alexander's Grocery, McConnell's Butcher, McLaughlin's, Vodafone, Willow and Belle Bridal, Homesavers and Central Corner).

- Personal services (e.g. and Gráinne Duffy Holistic Practice, the G Barber, R Town Barber, Casablanca Barbers, Body Comfort Massage Therapy, Gormley Opticians, Scissors Edge Hair Studio and Birds Reflexology).
- Hotels / accommodation providers (on the N15, these include Dergfield House B&B, Johnny's B&B, the Villa Rose Hotel and Kees Hotel and on the N13, Hilltop B&B, Steeple View B&B and Stranorlar Country House B&B) and on the R252 Capry B&B; public houses (Bonner's Bar, Harvey's Cheer Bar, The Rosses Bar, The Snug Bar and McGuigan's Bar); cafés and restaurants / take-aways (Roadhouse Bar & Restaurant and True Brew coffee container, Bobby's Coffee in Cannon Business Park; in Ballybofey town centre: Alexander's Grocery and Coffee Loft, Food Junction, Let's Eat, The Hatter Express, Benny and Co. Coffee and Restaurant, Tasty Bite, Pizza Max, The Just Inn Ice-cream Parlour, Food Guru, Apache Pizza, O'Hehir's Born to Bake, and Cool Creamery & Coffee Dock, and in Stranorlar on N15, Oriental Takeway, Curry Cottage, John Dory Diner Oriental Restaurant; and in Stranorlar on N13, The Hatter Tearoom).
- Service stations, some with associated retail outlets. On the western approach to Ballybofey (existing N15), is Ballybofey Car Wash, a service station (Circle K) with a Gala shop and other small businesses¹⁷. Further east is Great Gas Barnes View service station¹⁸ and two more car wash / valet businesses (Gallen's and Gallaghers). There is also a small service station 'Twin Town Oils', on the L6544 close to its intersection with the N15 on the western side of Ballybofey just east of the westernmost of the proposed interchanges with the Proposed Development. Within Stranorlar at the junction of the N15 and N13, there is a Top Oil service station with Mace retail unit and on the N13 Professional Valeting and Car Wash.
- Offices, banks and financial service outlets (Bank of Ireland, AIB, PTSB, Credit Union, O'Malley Scanlon Insurance, McCullin Solicitors, Henry Kee and Son Auctioneers / estate agents).
- Commercial and light industrial units (e.g., Bernard Long & Son Transport, Mulrines (juices), furniture showrooms (McPhilemy's), joinery workshops, McBride Fireplaces, car showrooms / car sales outlets such as Gillespie's, Connaghan's and Dunnion's, gyms (e.g. Don Maguires at Cannon Business Park), Pretty Paws Dog Grooming, Blackburn Electrical, JJ Kelly & Sons (beverages)).
- Various other services such as Bluestack Vets, Coillte in the Glenview Business Park; Bonner's Pharmacy, Gerard McHugh Photos, McCool Funeral Directors, Ladbrokes Bookmakers, Games Room

The GeoDirectory data identifies 2 no. commercial receptors within the CPO boundary (See EIAR Drawing 7.01) and 142 no. commercial properties within 500m of same for Section 1. The land take assessment tables in Appendix C16.01 of Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural) provide a more detailed categorisation of land uses within the CPO boundary but is consistent with the numbers of commercial land holdings identified. The Ballybofey-Stranorlar Area Plan (the B-SAP) contained within the CDDP references McElhinney's Department Store, Mulrines (manufacturing) and three hotels¹⁹ as significant employers in the twin towns. The B-SAP however also points to figures from the Q2 2022 Geodirectory Commercial Building Report which identified that Ballybofey had the highest commercial vacancy rate in Ireland at 30.2%; with the high vacancy rate particularly evident around Glenfinn Street, Navenney Street, and parts of both Stranorlar and Ballybofey Main Streets. The Q4 2024 equivalent report²⁰ advises that Ballybofey held the highest town commercial vacancy rate of 80 no. selected towns nationally and 22 no. Dublin districts at 36.4%, a significant increase also from the 2022 figure recorded in the B-SAP.

The B-SAP also references research from DCC's economic development unit which indicates that Ballybofey / Stranorlar's ratio of total jobs to resident workers (1.227) lags behind smaller urban centres such as

¹⁷ Also known as Gallagher's Filling Station.

¹⁸ Closed for redevelopment at the time of writing, October 2025.

¹⁹ Villa Rose, Jackson's and Kee's

²⁰ Geodirectory Commercial Buildings Report Q4 2024, EY – note this was the most recent version found online at the time of writing, 12.09.25.

Donegal Town. Overall, the B-SAP states that “there is also a significant need to strengthen and diversify the economic base of the towns by providing opportunities for existing employers to expand and to attract new employment generating activities to the town” (p.371, CDDP).

The Proposed Development intersects several commercial properties outside of the built-up area of Ballybofey / Stranorlar (a number of commercial properties are included in the CPO boundary) including JJ Kelly & Sons beverage wholesaler premises, the Roadhouse Bar & Restaurant / True Brew Coffee and Steeple View B&B. The route cuts through some sections of forestry but avoids the main commercial planted tracts.

With respect to future commercial development, the route intersects a site zoned as Opportunity Site 1 on Donegal Road / Glenfin Road. The zoning objective for this site in the Ballybofey / Stranorlar Area Plan (BS-OPP-P-1) seeks to facilitate inter alia business / enterprise uses (including light engineering / manufacturing, logistics / warehousing, service-based enterprises). It also provides for the delivery of the Proposed Development including pedestrian and cycle infrastructure between the proposed link road and Glenfin Road.

7.3.2.8 Socio-economics (Employment and Economic Activity) – Section 2

The unemployment rate for the Section 2 scheme area stood at 5.6% which is higher than the State and county averages. Table 7-25 sets out the total population of the Section 2 scheme area aged 15+ who were in the labour force during the 2022 Census.

Table 7-25: Economic Status of the Total Population of Section 2 Scheme area Aged 15+ (Census, 2022)

Description of Population	Status	Section 2
Percentage of population aged 15+ of which are	At work	52.8%
	First time job seeker	1.4%
	Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	5.6%
Percentage of the population over 15 who are not in the labour force of which are	Student	12.3%
	Looking after home / family	6.2%
	Retired	15.3%
	Unable to work	6.0%
	Other	0.4%

52.8% of persons aged 15 and over in the Section 2 scheme area defined their economic status as being ‘at work’ according to the 2022 Census which is higher than the State average. The number of people retired in the Section 2 scheme area (15.3%) was higher than the State average and lower than that of County Donegal.

12.3% of persons in the scheme area for Section 2 aged over 15 defined their economic status as ‘student’ for the 2022 Census. Table 7-26 summarises the breakdown of the workforce by type within the Section 2 scheme area, as derived from Profile 7 ‘Employment, Unemployment and Commuting’ of the Census 2022 statistics. The largest employment sector in the scheme area is ‘Professional Services’ at 30.7%, followed closely by ‘Commerce and Trade’ at 22.2%. 1.4% of the total persons within Section 2 scheme area, work within the ‘Agriculture, forestry and fishing’ sector which is lower than the State average of 3.5% and reflects the influence of the urban settlement of Letterkenny on employment sources.

Table 7-26: Census 2022 – Persons at Work in Section 2 Scheme Area by Industry

Industry Type	Section 2
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing - Total	1.4%
Building and construction - Total	3.1%
Manufacturing industries - Total	7.3%
Commerce and trade - Total	22.2%
Transport and communications - Total	11.2%
Public administration - Total	7.3%
Professional services - Total	30.7%
Other - Total	16.9%

The GeoDirectory data identifies 13 no. commercial receptors (See EIAR Drawing 7.02) within the CPO boundary and 223 no. commercial properties within 500m of same for Section 2. The land take assessment tables in Appendix C16.01 of Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural) provide a more detailed categorisation of land uses within the CPO boundary, identifying approx. 22 no. commercial land holdings intersected by the Proposed Development.

Figure 8.1 of the LPLTP as shown below, shows the key employment areas in the town, including Bonagee, the town centre and the Atlantic Technological University (ATU).

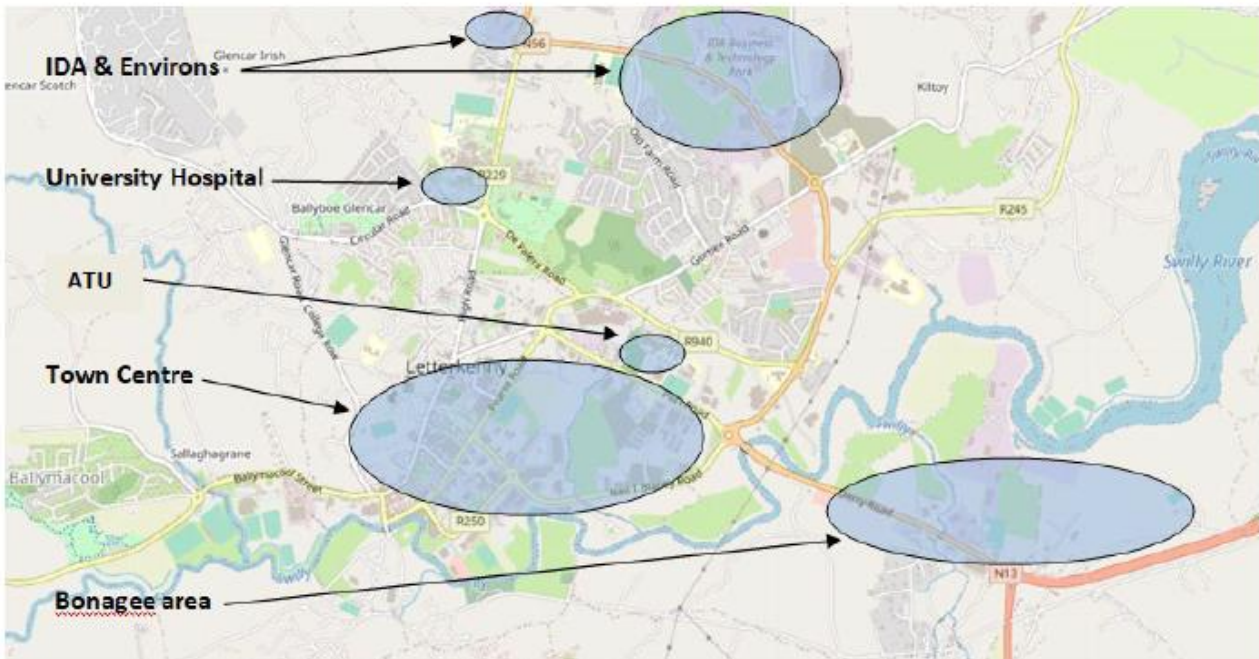


Figure 7-10: Key Employment Areas in Letterkenny (Source: Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan)

A B&B provider, Hillcrest, is located along the existing N13 on the southern approach to Letterkenny, as is McDaid’s Brothers Vehicle Test Centre.

A key junction, the Dry Arch Roundabout, in the Bonagee area of Letterkenny, connects the existing N13 to the N56 national secondary road, which extends west of the roundabout towards the Polestar Roundabout

and provides access to the larger portion of the urban area of Letterkenny to the northwest. The Bonagee area accommodates significant commercial land use.

Along the N56, close to and just off the Dry Arch Roundabout these commercial outlets include the Clanree Hotel, a Texaco filling station with Mace retail outlet and the Dry Arch Inn, and an Applegreen service station with shop and Subway food offer, just west of the Dry Arch Roundabout.

To the south of the N56 there are a mix of uses including the Clanree Hotel and Applegreen outlet referred to above, several car sales outlets, a restaurant / take-away, and commercial and residential uses.

On the section of the N56 north of the Pole Star roundabout, the Mount Errigal Hotel is situated, along with Ballyrairie Business Park (health and personal services predominantly but also including Rossan College and an accountancy office), a Top Oil service station with Spar retail outlet and White Park B&B. The Pin Tavern closed at the time of writing, but Maxus garage is operational adjacent. Key's Garage and petrol station (Ardosent) is located on the Ballyrairie Roundabout where the Proposed Development will intersect the N56. Northeast of the roundabout is Ballyrairie Industrial Estate (including Asian Food Store, Philips Medisize, Padam and Kinnegar Brewing).

Along Bonagee Lane are sited *inter alia*, light industrial and commercial units including McMenamin Commercials / Renault, Donegal Tractors, WERS Donegal and LK Autos, New Kid Coffee Roasters, Norwest (mechanics), Snugborough Restaurant, Bonagee Business Park (three buildings with multiple units accommodating a variety of commercial uses), Tinney's Coal and Fuel Depot, Lough Swilly Test Centre and Supermix.

East of the Dry Arch Roundabout, the existing N13 road comprises dual carriageway, with commercial, light industrial, residential and agricultural uses to the north. These include the Dry Arch Business Park (One Stop Motorshop, NCT Centre etc.), Letterkenny Glass and Johnston's Caravans. East of here an astroturf pitch facility (formerly Boals Goals) was closed at the time of writing and new commercial units are under construction to the north of same. There are a small number of defined access points via local roads to these uses. Near the proposed interchange at Trimragh, Ard Aoibhinn B&B is located.

The LPLTP advises that "*job numbers in the town will increase by 5000-6000 by 2040, bringing the overall number of jobs within the town to approximately 17,000.*" Zoned lands for general employment and commercial uses within the plan total c. 96.8 ha with a further c. 49 ha provided for commercial use within Opportunity Sites and a small amount of additional land available within the town centre. The LPLTP supports the TEN-T PRIPD and the removal of strategic traffic from the town centre.

The Q4 2024 Geodirectory Commercial Building Report identifies that Letterkenny had the second highest commercial vacancy rate in County Donegal at 26.3%.

The following relevant zoned areas intersect the Proposed Development:

- **TEN-T PRIPD / General Employment and Commercial** - *To reserve land for commercial, industrial and non-retail purposes and to provide for the development of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal.* This objective applies to a substantial plot of land north of the dual carriageway which is connected to other lands zoned for employment and commercial uses. It is identified in purple in Figure 7-7.
- **TEN-T PRIPD / OPP Site 4** – the zoning objective includes for a mix of uses including commercial and employment users and local neighbourhood-level retail activity.

7.3.2.9 Socio-economics (Employment and Economic Activity) – Section 3

The unemployment rate for the Section 3 scheme area stood at 6.6% which is higher than the State and the county average. Table 7-27 sets out the total population of the Section 3 scheme area aged 15+ who were in the labour force during the 2022 Census.

Table 7-27: Economic Status of the Total Population of Section 3 Scheme area Aged 15+ (CSO, 2022)

Description of Population	Status	Section 3
Percentage of population aged 15+ of which are	At work	48.8%
	First time job seeker	1.6%
	Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	6.6%
Percentage of the population over 15 who are not in the labour force of which are	Student	9.5%
	Looking after home/family	8.9%
	Retired	17.6%
	Unable to work	6.5%
	Other	0.5%

48.8% of persons aged 15 and over in the Section 3 scheme area defined their economic status as being 'at work' according to the 2022 Census which is lower than the State and county average. The number of people retired in the Section 3 scheme area (17.6%) was higher than the State and county average. 9.5% of persons in the Section 3 scheme area aged over 15 defined their economic status as 'student' for the 2022 Census. Table 7-28 summarises the breakdown of the workforce by type within the Section 3 scheme area, as derived from Profile 7 'Employment, Unemployment and Commuting' of the Census 2022 statistics. The largest employment sector in the scheme area is 'Commerce and Trade' at 23.2%, followed closely by 'Professional Services' at 22.6%. A total of 8.4% of persons within the Section 3 scheme area work within the 'Agriculture, forestry and fishing' sector which is higher than the State average of 3.5% and that of County Donegal which reflects the rural setting of the Section 3 scheme area.

Table 7-28: Census 2022 – Persons at Work in Section 3 Scheme area by Industry

Industry Type	Section 3
Agriculture, forestry and fishing - Total	8.4%
Building and construction - Total	7.1%
Manufacturing industries - Total	8.9%
Commerce and trade - Total	23.2%
Transport and communications - Total	6.3%
Public administration - Total	7.7%
Professional services - Total	22.6%
Other - Total	15.7%

The GeoDirectory data identifies 3 no. commercial receptors within the CPO boundary²¹ (See EIAR Drawing 7.03) and 121 no. commercial receptors within 500m of same for Section 3. The land take assessment tables in Appendix C16.01 of Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural) provide a more detailed categorisation of land uses within the CPO boundary and indicate only one commercial holding within the CPO boundary, not including the plot owned by DCC used by a private operator for haulage parking.

The town of Lifford (with Strabane adjacent) provides the main hub of commercial activity at the eastern end of Section 3. At the northwest of the Three Coins roundabout on the N14 approach there are local service uses, filling stations with associated retail outlet (Circle K / Spar and Applegreen / Costcutter), Finn Valley Enterprise Park (An Post Depot and vacant units as of site visit October 2025) and commercial outlets such as Homeland. At the North East of the roundabout there are businesses typical of a town centre edge. South of the Three Coins Roundabout, the N15 provides access to another filling station, Circle K Express.

South of Lifford, just off the N15 towards Castlefin, there is a B&B, Douglas Lodge at Cluain Laoi.

There are some commercial facilities in the small settlements close to the route including a milling operation at Ballindrait.

There are some isolated commercial / light industrial uses in the rural areas along or close to the existing N14 route. The former Rossgair Inn is advised to be in use for occasional Airbnb rental²² and Ballyholey Farm Shop is located at Sheshkinapoll close to the N14.

7.3.3 Community Land & Assets (including Tourism)

This section provides baseline information on community land and assets, including tourism.

An overview is provided below with respect to tourism in the wider area whereby data is available for this topic and the subsequent sections then provide detail on the community land and assets and tourist facilities of the scheme areas grouped by the respective sections of the Proposed Development for ease of reference.

Most of the community land and assets and visitor facilities that have been identified across the overall scheme area are concentrated in and around the settlements along the route of and near to the Proposed Development.

To inform the assessments carried out later in this chapter, usage and condition surveys have been carried out as per the detail provided in Appendix C7.01.

Tourism – Overview

Ireland is divided into eight tourism regions. The Proposed Development is contained within the Border region, which includes counties Donegal, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan, and Sligo. The information on overseas tourists and revenue for the Border region and the State is contained in Table 7-29.

In 2024, the total number of trips completed by overseas visitors to the Border region totalled approximately 525,000, which makes up 2.1% of the national total tourism figures for the State. In terms of revenue generated from tourism, the Border region generated €376 million from overseas visitors in 2024, comprising a total percentage share of approximately 3.2% of the State's total revenue from tourism. In comparison, these figures represent an increase on 2023 statistics for tourism in the border region, when the border region welcomed 462,000 overseas visitors²³ generating approximately €337 million in revenue.

²¹ It is noted from land take assessments for Section 3 that in two of these cases the properties are residential only, or residential and agricultural. A third has a plot used for parking of vehicles from a haulage company on a plot owned by Donegal County Council.

²² Drumbeg B&B was located on the L2374 just west of the existing N14 but no signage now and no recent online evidence.

²³ Fáilte Ireland (2025) include the following disclaimer and therefore earlier years' data is not provided for reference: "Overseas tourism statistics are generated using NISRA's Northern Ireland Passenger Survey and the CSO's Inbound Tourism statistical series. As a result of a change in the CSO's data collection methodology for 2023/2024, results in this Key Tourism Facts are not directly comparable to previous years."

Domestic and Northern Ireland tourists to the Border region in 2024 made up a further 1,827,000 and 504,000 visitors respectively, generating €385m and €130m in revenue. The comparable 2023 figures were 1,520,000 (€343m) Domestic and 569,000 (€118m) Northern Ireland tourists.

During 2024, the total tourism revenue generated in the Border region was approximately €891 million, an increase from €798 million in 2023.

Table 7-29: Tourism Statistics for the Border Region 2024 (Fáilte Ireland, 2025)

	Britain	Mainland Europe	North America	Other Areas	All Overseas	Northern Ireland	Domestic Trips (Fáilte Ireland, 2025a)
Border Numbers (000s)	230	140	130	25	525	504	1,827
Border Revenue (€m)	155	82	123	16	376	130	385
State Total Numbers (000s)	2,667	2,368	1,469	388	6,892	1,205	16,571
State Revenue (€m)	1,331	2,086	2,216	536	6,169	383	3,601

Additionally, Fáilte Ireland's Key Tourism Facts 2023 (published February 2025 and the most recent statistics available as of August 2025) (Fáilte Ireland, 2025b) as set out within Fáilte Ireland's Survey of Visitor Attractions identifies the top fee-charging and free attractions within Ireland.

Based on visitor numbers, the top attractions within County Donegal include Donegal Castle (attracting a total of 63,072 visitors in 2023) and Glencolumbkille Folk Village Museum and Heritage Centre (attracting a total of 61,902 visitors in 2023) which are at a significant distance from the Proposed Development. Oakfield Park at Raphoe (see below under Section 7.3.3.3 which discusses visitor attractions of potential relevance to the assessment of the Proposed Development that pertain in particular to Section 2) attracted 49,247 visitors in 2023. Tropical World in Letterkenny and Lurgybrack Open Farm just south of the town had 45,000 and 40,000 visitors in 2023 (See Section 7.3.3.2 for further detail). Grianán of Aileach (located c. 15 km northeast of Section 3), attracted approximately 17,919 visitors in 2023 and the Donegal County Museum in Letterkenny received just over 6,000 visitors that year. The Lifford Old Courthouse (see Section 7.3.3.3.) attracted 3,360 visitors in 2023. Other top tourist attractions within County Donegal which were not included in the statistics for 2023, but which had been identified as attracting significant visitor numbers in previous years (e.g. 2018) include Glenveagh Castle / National Park, and the Sliabh Liag Cliffs.

Subsequent sections provide further detail on the most relevant of the above visitor attractions and local attractions and amenities of the Proposed Development set out by each respective sections of the Proposed Development, which benefit visitors to the area and also benefit the local population both in terms of amenity and economically.

7.3.3.1 Community Land & Assets (including Tourism) – Section 1

The community lands identified as receptors which have the potential to experience likely significant effects as a result of the Proposed Development are located within and close to Section 1.

These include woodlands with walks which are important amenities for the area. While usage surveys have been carried out, as with similar facilities elsewhere, it is reasonable to assume usage fluctuates based on the time of the year and week and on weather conditions. Usage is likely higher during brighter evenings, on weekends and during holiday periods, and in drier weather conditions. The locations are:

- Drumboe Woods is a large forest recreation area (over 25ha) managed by Coillte located c. 725 m from the Proposed Development. It includes three walking trails, picnic facilities, benches and has a number of points of interest including a range of tree species, a Civil War monument, a fairy tree and views to

former castle stables. There are multiple access points to the amenity for pedestrians, including two with parking and way-finding and other signage is provided. The lands are accessible to people with disabilities. The lands are used for a range of organised events. Given the size, nature and location of this amenity close to the towns of Ballybofey and Stranorlar it is well-used on a daily basis which is evidenced by usage survey results contained in Appendix C7.01. In excess of 130 no. people were recorded as having visited the amenity during a Sunday afternoon survey slot with numbers also high on weekday slots.

- Holy Well Wood lies to the northwest of Drumboe Woods, the Proposed Development intersects the woodland (which is over 7ha) at its southern part. There is a path and signs to the holy well site, a recorded monument as discussed in more detail in Chapter 17: Cultural Heritage and also in Chapter 10: Land, Soils and Hydrogeology. The woods are located at a remove from most residents of the local towns with very limited parking. Usage is limited to a small number of walkers according to survey results.
- Troopers Hill woodland, known locally as Creggan Forest Walk, is a large woodland area (>25ha) with two main access points where parking is possible at splayed entrances, and a defined main walking path within its southern part. It is located 200m to the north of Section 1. There has been recent path development at Troopers Hill as indicated from site survey and from public consultation for the Proposed Development. While at more of a remove from the built-up area than the above-mentioned lands, this site offers an amenity facility and Coillte are working to enhance the quality of the woodland from a biodiversity perspective. While regular usage occurs given the scale of the lands and the availability of the path and some parking, Troopers Hill has limited facilities and is less connected to the developed urban area than Drumboe Woods; therefore, usage is low.
- There are small areas of woodland either side of Drumboe Avenue (to the west of Drumboe Woods) which collectively are over 6ha. A small area of these woods is intersected by the Proposed Development at the northern part. While not signed, the woods are accessible to the public in at least three locations. A further path was in use for felling activity at the time of the survey. A splayed entrance allows for a small number of cars to park. The paths are short but include access to views of the River Finn on the western side. A small number of dog walkers were found to use the paths at the time of survey, and the paths are clear indicating regular usage. Signage was in place at the time advising that areas of forestry works were to be avoided and given the limited size and path provision this may have resulted in users avoiding the wood entirely. The woodland further contributes to the amenity value of the area; the road itself is a popular walking, running and cycling route for local residents and this was confirmed by observations from the location for the usage survey of the wooded areas.

The area of Ballybofey / Stranorlar in which the above woodlands are located are *inter alia*, the subject of a strategy to improve the amenity offer of Ballybofey and its environs (DCC, 2022). The Drumboe Woods area and other local wooded plots, along with linkages between them are an important amenity and accordingly form a key element of the placemaking aspect of the strategy. The design team for the Proposed Development has liaised with the consultant appointed to prepare the strategy regarding the Proposed Development and general access in the vicinity of the existing woodlands and adjacent lands.

A small amenity area, Gort na Scith picnic area is in the southeast of the scheme area (c. 770 m east of Section 1). There are two short pathways extending from this picnic area, one extending north until a boundary with private lands through an adjacent wooded area which is publicly accessible, and the other providing access towards a cliff just above the seating area, which at the time of site visit (August 2025) was blocked due to a fallen tree²⁴. The picnic area also serves as a parking area for 'The Steeple' walking route which is indicated on a map at the signboard in this location (see Section 7.3.4 below regarding NMUs). There is potentially some occasional use of the picnic area during winter months, but it is expected to be more likely to be used during holiday periods or periods of good weather. Survey findings confirmed higher

²⁴ The Gortletteragh waterfalls which were identified during desktop research as a potential amenity in this area are located across the road to the south of this picnic area. There is a path to the waterfalls however that access is on private property according to signage at the site and therefore public access is not available. There is no inter-visibility evident between the waterfall feature and the public road. The waterfalls are not considered going forward in this assessment as a community asset or tourist attraction.

usage of the picnic area and adjacent walks at the weekend, but usage is likely to be moderate at most based on the findings. One of the picnic benches is wheelchair friendly but the walks are not accessible.

Ballybofey and Stranorlar Community Gardens or Twin Towns Community Garden is a small but central facility located c. 1.1 km south-east of Section 1 near the River Finn. It comprises a community garden initiative between Ballybofey and Stranorlar set up in 2011 where members of the local community can rent allotment plots. Ballybofey and Stranorlar Men's Shed is also located at this location. There are benches provided, and the site was in use for an art event at the time of survey. Accessible parking is located in the adjacent car park. The usage is relatively high given the scale of the facility but low to moderate in the context of numbers using Dromboe Woods.

Appendix C7.1 provides further information on the facilities available at the above site based on desktop research.

The following sporting and active recreational amenities are identified within the vicinity of Section 1:

- Finn Valley sports centre and athletics track is approximately 1.2 km west of Section 1.
- MacCumhaill Park and Sean MacCumhaill GAA Club - MacCumhaill Park / Sean MacCumhaill GAA Club is located just less than 1 km from the Proposed Development in the built-up area of Ballybofey. MacCumhaill Park is the home ground of the Seán MacCumhaill club and also Donegal's Gaelic football and hurling teams. The grounds have a capacity of approximately 17,500 people. Traffic management and restrictions are implemented during large events to minimise disruption arising from traffic travelling to the stadium.
- Finn Harps football club is located c. 1.4 km south of the Proposed Development within the built-up area of Ballybofey. The stadium has a capacity of approximately 4,200 persons. It is planned however that the club will move to a larger facility on new grounds in the coming years.
- Cappry Rovers (formed in 1978) and its associated football pitches and clubhouse are located less than 50 m from Section 1. This facility would be regularly used by members and supporters.
- Ballybofey and Stranorlar Golf Club is located c. 400 m west of the Stranorlar link road in the Finn Valley area and encompasses Lough Alaán as part of the course facilities. Lough Alaán is a private amenity associated with the golf course with wild trout within the lake and angling activity. There are no similar facilities locally.
- The North West Equine Assisted Therapy Centre (a horse riding and pony trekking facility which provides equine assisted therapy and learning) is located c. 360 m from Section 1 on lands north of Ballybofey / Stranorlar. This is a specialist facility for which alternatives would not be commonly available and users of the centre would come from vulnerable population groupings.

Way-marked routes for cyclists and pedestrians located within or of relevance to this section are discussed under Non-Motorised Users. See Section 7.3.4.3. There are two areas zoned within the CDDP 2024-2030 (See Figure 7-3 of Section 7.3.1.2) for open space and recreation uses:

- **TEN-T PRIPD / Open Space and Recreation** - To preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities and to provide for the development of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal. The areas are shown hatched on a light green background on Figure 7-3. One is part of a large tract of land to the northwest of Ballybofey town centre and of the River Finn, while the other is a smaller strip of land at the edge of a larger zoned plot to the north of Stranorlar town centre. Both are at the edges of the settlement boundary.

With respect to indoor cultural facilities the following is identified:

- Balor Arts Centre is located within Ballybofey town centre at a remove (approximately 1.2 km) from the proposed works area. The Balor Arts Centre comprises two sister companies – the Butt Drama Circle Company Ltd. and the Balor Developmental Community Arts Group Ltd. The Arts Centre typically hosts a range of local, national and international performances, and facilitates a wide range of outreach and developmental community arts projects.

There is a concentration of community facilities within Ballybofey / Stranorlar, some of which are located along the N15 / N13. Facilities located within the towns include but are not limited to:

- Ballybofey Garda Station and Stranorlar Fire Station.
- Church of Mary Immaculate (Ballybofey) and Stranorlar Presbyterian Church, Stranorlar Reformed Presbyterian Church and St. Mary's Church of Ireland, Stranorlar.
- Educational facilities including St. Columba's College, Finn Valley College, St. Mary's National School, Scoil Naisiúnta Seiseadh Uí Néill, Dooish National School and Robertson National School.
- Strangriff House Nursing Home, Stranorlar Health Centre, Ard na Gréine Court Group Homes and St. Joseph's Hospital, Stranorlar.
- Tiny Tots Playgroup, Stranorlar, and Clare's Little Stars and Beechwood Pre-Schools, Ballybofey.

The facility most likely to be subject to significant impacts from the Proposed Development is St. Joseph's Hospital, the grounds of which bound the Proposed Development at its south-eastern extent. Visitor accommodation and points of interest occur within the area of influence:

- There are two hotels located along the existing route of the national road (Villa Rose, Ballybofey and Kee's, Stranorlar), along with bed and breakfast accommodation, bars and cafés / restaurants that serve a tourism function. Villa Rose is 1.1 km southeast. From Section 1 lands. Kee's is approximately 1 km south from the proposed works area.
- Similar facilities are located within and near to the town, e.g., Jackson's Hotel in the centre of Ballybofey, approximately 940 m southeast of the proposed works area.
- Cappry B&B is located along the R252, <100m from tie in works and c. 220m from the proposed Finn crossing.
- Steeple View B&B is located on the N13 adjacent tie in works.
- Dunwiley Ringfort is identified as a local point of interest but no information on any existing accessibility as a visitor attraction was noted. The Proposed Development includes for the provision of planting, improved access and visitor information. This feature is further considered under Chapter 17: Cultural Heritage (Section 17.2.1.1) and Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual (Table 18-22, Appendix C18-01 Figure 4a).
- On a broader scale, Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual (section 18.4.1) identifies landscapes designated for their amenity value within the CDDP; lands identified as 'High Scenic Amenity' and 'Moderate Scenic Amenity' are identified. With respect to designated scenic views in the area, none are identified.

7.3.3.2 Community Land & Assets (including Tourism) – Section 2

There is a playing area within Croaghan Heights in Lifford, c. 70m from the Proposed Development where a tie-in to the local road will occur. This facility is a basic hard surface located on a green area within a housing estate which would serve a very localised function. No surveys were therefore considered necessary.

The nearest recreational woodland walking trail to Section 2 of the Proposed Development is:

- Corravaddy Woods (c. 2.7 km south-west of Section 2). A four-kilometre looped forest walk is located within a national forested woodland controlled by Coillte. While an important amenity to the area, given the distance between the amenity and the Proposed Development it is not considered that surveys are warranted or that there is potential for likely significant impact.

In terms of sporting and recreational amenities within the vicinity of Section 2, the following have been identified:

- Bonagee United Football Club (Dry Arch Park) is located in the Bonagee industrial park (John Crossan Business Park) and is located c. 150 m from Dry Arch Roundabout which forms part of Section 2 of the Proposed Development. The name of the grounds is taken from a railway bridge named 'The Dry Arch' which is situated c. one kilometre from the pitch. The arch was demolished as part of the construction of the N13 national road dual carriageway. There are a number of additional retail and hospitality enterprises and premises associated within the Bonagee industrial park / area, including a number of filling stations with associated retail units and food outlets. The entrance to the industrial estate is approximately 120 m west of the roundabout.
- There is an AstroTurf rental facility near the Dry Arch Roundabout, however this is closed at the time of writing²⁵.

Way-marked routes for cyclists and pedestrians within or of relevance to this section are discussed under Non-Motorised Users. See Section 7.3.4.4.

The LPLTP 2023-2029 includes the following zoning objective which relates to lands within the reserved route corridor:

- **TEN-T PRIPD / Open Space** - *To conserve and enhance land for formal and informal open space and amenity purposes, to make provision for new recreation, leisure and community facilities and to provide for the development of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal.* These parcels of land are mapped in light green, including two large areas south of the River Swilly, and some smaller plots which are adjacent commercially zoned lands and lands zoned for the protection of the local environment and are small proportions of those blocks of lands.

Some of these areas coincide with flood zones which will affect the nature of future uses. Figure 7-11 shows in light blue, lands within Flood Zone A (Bonagee and Port Road area) which were identified as part of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Letterkenny that was carried out in 2022 and are subsequently indicated in the LPLTP 2023-2029 from which the map below is sourced. The purple, brown and peach shading relates to land use zonings that would have been in place when the SFRA was prepared but which would since have been superseded by the zoning objectives of the LPLTP 2023-2029.

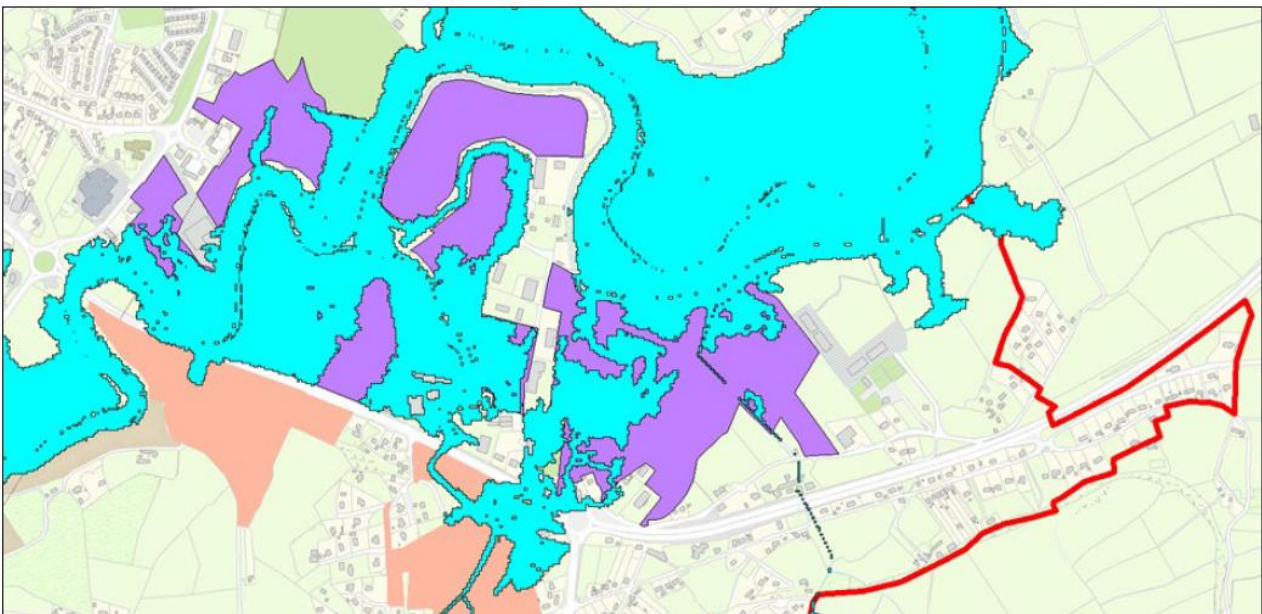


Figure 7-11: Lands within Flood Zone A in the Bonagee area shown within the LPLTP 2023-2029

²⁵ October 2025. Formerly Sweeney's Astros and then Boals Goals.

With respect to indoor recreational / cultural facilities, due to its size, Letterkenny town contains a range of leisure and cultural facilities including a Regional Cultural Centre, Donegal County Museum, Letterkenny Shopping Centre, and Arena 7 Entertainment Complex. These are not directly connected to the Proposed Development.

Letterkenny supports a wide hinterland, including the smaller towns and villages within its sphere of influence. There are community facilities located along the N13 and N56:

- Archview Lodge Nursing Home is located less than 100 m from Section 2 of the Proposed Development along a local road off the N13 national road. Archview Lodge Nursing Home is a private nursing facility that accommodates c. 34 residents.
- St. Patrick's National School is located along the N13 national road and adjoins or is close to the Proposed Development to its east, south and west.
- Ballyraine National School is located just off the N56 on the R940 Ramelton Road to the south of the N56 tie-in and proposed new crossing of the River Swilly, c. 200m from the Proposed Development.
- Ballyraine Health Centre is located just east of the works area, at the proposed Ramelton Road Access.
- There is a further HSE facility at Ballyraine Industrial Estate (Ballyraine Training Services Centre) where an ETB Training Centre is also located just north of the Proposed Development, and Rossan College is located nearby to the south.
- Wonder Years Preschool is located at Rosbracken.
- The Indian Community Centre Letterkenny is located c. 50 m from Section 2 on a site within the Bonagee industrial park (John Crossan Business Park). The Indian Community Centre was established in 2008 and comprises a temple as well as a multi-purpose hall all contained within a single unit.
- Bonagee Hall, located along Bonagee Road, accommodates a range of community activities including meetings, indoor sports and groups such as the Letterkenny Christian Fellowship. Other churches in the wider area are located to the north and west of the scheme area and are concentrated in the town centre.
- There is a small airstrip, Letterkenny Airfield, (c. 500 m in length) located c.150 m from Section 2 north of the Letterkenny to Manorcunningham dual carriageway which is used for search and rescue aircraft by the Irish coastguard.
- Letterkenny University Hospital, which forms an integral part of the Health Service Executive North West Region, is located north of Letterkenny town on the R229 Kilmacrenan Road. There is currently only one main route into Letterkenny from the south and east of the county on the N56 with a single crossing of the River Swilly that links to the hospital; the existing N56 is identified as a 'lifeline' route.
- The Atlantic Technological University (Donegal campus) is located on the N14 Port Road, west of the N56 Polestar Roundabout. Although not directly connected to the Proposed Development, the campus is a relatively large campus within the scheme area that attracts significant volumes of traffic from all over the county with over 350 staff and 4,000 students.

With respect to tourism, the Wild Atlantic Way travels through Letterkenny and near Manorcunningham along the existing N13 from the northeast and along the N56 west of the Dry Arch Roundabout heading northwest to access the coastal peninsulas of North Donegal. Way-marked routes for cyclists and pedestrians are discussed under Non-Motorised Users. Visitor accommodation and facilities identified for Section 2 are:

- Lurgybrack Open Farm is an open farm that is located c. 300 m west of the N13 national road and attracts families and groups. As advised earlier approx. 40,000 visitors attended during 2023. The facility's website advises that an average of 200 children per day visit the attraction in May and June, which coincides with the primary school tour season. It is also considered reasonable to assume higher visitor numbers during school holiday periods and weekends, and opening hours are adjusted during

the year to respond to demand. For example, the website advises that other than the May bank holiday Monday, the facility opens at weekends until the end of May.

- The Clanree Hotel, along with restaurants / cafés, bars and bed and breakfast accommodation located along the existing N13 / N56 (Hillcrest and White Park B&Bs and the Mount Errigal Hotel) serve a tourism function. There are more such facilities within and near the main built-up centre of Letterkenny, northwest of the scheme area. Ard Aoibhinn B&B is located at Trimragh.
- In terms of more significant visitor attractions, the Donegal County Museum and Tropical World are located in Letterkenny, but each are over 1.4km from the Proposed Development. Further from the town, Newmills Corn and Flax Mill and Colmcille Heritage Centre are located to the west and northwest, c. 5km and c. 11km from the Proposed Development. The former had 3,743 visitors in 2024 according to the Office of Public Works²⁶.
- On a broader scale, Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual (section 18.5.2) identifies landscapes designated for their amenity value within the CDDP; lands identified as 'High Scenic Amenity' and 'Moderate Scenic Amenity' are identified. Two protected views and prospects from the N13 are identified (To the northeast at Listellan, northwest of Glenmaquin; and looking northwest from Maghera Beg, north of Manorcunningham).

7.3.3.3 Community Land & Assets (including Tourism) – Section 3

No public parks or woodlands have been identified within the zone of influence or scheme area of Section 3. There is a green area and unfenced tarmac court / pitch within a housing estate, Croaghan Heights, to the east of the proposed route alignment which serves local usage; this is separated from the Proposed Development by housing within the housing estate and will not be affected.

In terms of sporting facilities within the vicinity of Section 3, the majority are located around the urban centres of Lifford and Strabane and include the following:

- Lifford GAA ground is located approximately 1.2 km northeast of Section 3 lands and Lifford Greyhound Stadium is located c. 130 m north of the N14.
- There is a soccer ground (The Moss) in the small settlement of Drumoghill.

Way-marked routes for cyclists and pedestrians within or of relevance to this section are discussed under Non-Motorised Users. See Section 7.3.4.5.

Outside of Lifford, indoor recreational / cultural facilities identified were limited to Cavanacor House and Gallery, located on the L2444 approximately 1.4 km to the east of Ballindrait is. The Proposed Development (near N14) will be constructed between Ballindrait and Cavanacor House. The L2444 will be realigned to tie in with the Proposed Development and link Section 3 with Ballindrait and the existing N14 at Rossgair. At the time of writing this chapter, Cavanacor House, which houses a gallery and has a historic garden (identified along with Croghan House in Lifford within Chapter 17: Cultural Heritage and Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual) is only open to the public during Heritage Week.

There are several community facilities located along the N14 and N15. The towns of Lifford and Strabane collectively also provide a range of community and recreational facilities for the population of the towns and surrounding hinterlands. Facilities include:

- Manorcunningham Community Resource Centre is located c. 1.5 km north of Section 3 in the settlement of Manorcunningham and comprises a centre for various activities and events within the local community.

²⁶ [visitor-numbers-2024-final.pdf](#)

- Ray National School, and Ray Church and Graveyard are located along local roads off the N14 national road, the school being c. 250 m from Section 3 of the Proposed Development.
- St. Patrick's National School and Church, Clonleigh are located within the small settlement of Murlog near the existing national route. The southern boundary of the church yard and graveyard adjoins the development boundary of Section 3. The school is approximately 140 m north of Section 3.
- St. Columba's Church and graveyard are located in Drumoghill. The church is approximately 260 m northeast of the development boundary for Section 3. Drumoghill National School is located directly across the road from St. Columba's Church.
- Ballindrait Presbyterian Church is located within the small settlement of Ballindrait.
- The existing national route (N15) southeast of Lifford provides access to Lifford National School, Lifford Community Hospital, and the Busy Bee Playschool. The community hospital is approximately 850 m north of Section 3 lands. The Lifford-Clonleigh Resource / Social Centre and ABC early years provider are located to the east of the proposed route off the Letterkenny Road in the Gallows Lane area, both of which are within c300 m of the proposed new route.

Visitor accommodation and attractions identified for Section 3 are:

- Visitor accommodation is located within the towns of Lifford and Strabane. Douglas Lodge B&B is advertised along the southern approach road to Lifford at Coneyburrow and the Rossgeir Inn is available for rental by visitors. Likewise, cafés / restaurants and bars, which serve a tourism function, are located here. Other visitor facilities include the Old Courthouse (museum) and cinema in Lifford, both just over one kilometre from the proposed works area.
- Oakfield Park is a significant visitor attraction, also with local amenity value, located c.1.5 km from the proposed route on the outskirts of Raphoe. It comprises the gardens and buildings of Oakfield Demesne, train rides, art installations, tea rooms and other facilities. The facility is open from April to September inclusive, with certain areas open only from June to August inclusive. Seasonal events are also held at the venue.
- On a broader scale, Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual (section 18.5.3) identifies landscapes designated for their amenity value within the CDDP; lands identified as 'High Scenic Amenity' and 'Moderate Scenic Amenity' are identified. With respect to designated scenic views in the area, none are identified. Two historic gardens / designed landscapes are identified at Cavanacor House and at Croghan House near Lifford. The latter is not open to the public as a visitor facility and is not considered further herein.

7.3.4 Non-Motorised Road Users (NMUs)

7.3.4.1 NMUs - Overview

To inform considerations of potential for impact on NMUs, a review of journey characteristics to work, school and college for the State, County Donegal and the scheme area was undertaken using the Census 2022 statistics to determine the most common modes of transport for travelling to work, school and college, with particular focus on pedestrian and cyclist journeys.

The most common mode of transport to work for the State and County Donegal is 'car driver'. Based on the Census 2022 data (CSO, 2022b), 34.7% and 36.8% of the population assessed within the State and County are classified as 'car drivers'. The next most common mode of transport is classified as a 'car passenger' within the State and County which makes up approximately 19.1% and 24.0%, respectively. This indicates that travelling by car either as a driver or passenger makes up a significant portion of the mode of transport for persons travelling to work, school or college and a higher proportion of residents of County Donegal avail of this method than the State population.

Using the mode of transport classified as 'bus, minibus and coach' for work, school or college within County Donegal were calculated to comprise of 10.5% of the population assessed. In comparison, this is slightly higher than the 9.0% for persons travelling to work, school or college by 'bus, minibus or coach' within the State.

Cyclists and pedestrian journeys made up approximately 7.1% of modes of transport associated with travelling to work, school or college within County Donegal. This is significantly lower than the 15.3% of persons who use this mode transport to travel to work, school or college within the State, which is to be expected when the figures for use of motorised methods in this county are considered. This indicates that County Donegal is more reliant on the use of private motorised vehicles on the road network in comparison to the State. This can be in part contributed to the rural nature of the area and the current level of availability of suitable public transport routes and facilities for NMUs.

Journey times to work, school and college are typically less than half an hour for both the State (48.2%) and County Donegal (61.5%). Journey times over one hour account for 7.3% of journeys in County Donegal and 10.9% of journeys for the State. Since the 2016 Census, journey times have become longer for both county and State.

In terms of journeys across the border with Northern Ireland, the Northern and Western Regional Assembly's RSES (2020-2032) states that more than 326,000 journeys are made per week across the Border crossings at Derry/Bridgend, Muff Village to Derry between Strabane and Lifford. This demonstrates the interconnectivity of services, industry, communities and local economies between the region and Northern Ireland.

The NISRA Census data for 2011 and 2021 has been reviewed in the context of identifying potential transboundary effects for Northern Ireland, with data for the Sperrin EA also examined. As per the Republic of Ireland, the main mode of travel to work and school or college in Northern Ireland is as a car or van driver, with almost 63% of respondents identifying this mode in 2021, a significant increase from the 39.5% who responded similarly in 2011. Figures for the Sperrin EA (c. 38% for this mode of travel in 2021) are more in line with 2011 results for Northern Ireland. The Northern Irish figure appears to have been influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic as there were significant decreases in those respondents who travelled by bus, coach or minibus; as a passenger in a car or van; or who availed of pooled driving arrangements; likewise, a significant increase in numbers working from home were recorded between 2011 and 2021.

The use of buses, minibuses and coaches within the Sperrin EA are comparable to those of County Donegal (10.65% in 2021 vs the 10.5% for Donegal as per the CSO figures for 2022).

With respect to NMUs then, cyclist and pedestrian journeys, at 7.25% for Northern Ireland in 2021 are comparable to levels recorded in County Donegal by CSO in 2022, but below the figure for the Sperrin EA at 11.91%.

With respect to active travel provision, and the safety of NMUs, Section 6.3.4 of Chapter 6: Traffic & Transportation. Chapter 6: Traffic & Transportation highlights poor provision for pedestrians and cyclists in all three sections of the scheme area as one of the current deficiencies of the existing network in the area. Space and alignment issues along the network also reduces the quality of journey for NMUs and the gradient of the road at Lurgybrack (Section 2) is identified as a deficiency, which would impact NMUs using the route. Section 6.3.6.2 further discusses the current "*minimal infrastructure provision for active travel within the study area*"; with the consequence that cyclists share road space with motorised traffic on the roads into and around the study area. This discourages this mode of travel. The Traffic and Transportation assessment goes on to reference survey data collected at various junctions in 2017 across the study area which show that cyclists represented only 0.01% of total traffic on average and was slightly higher in the urban areas. Outside of the urban areas of Ballybofey / Stranorlar, Letterkenny and Lifford, pedestrian provision is absent (Section 6.3.6.2 of Chapter 6).

7.3.4.2 Demand Management

Transport Demand Management programmes are primarily demand oriented to reduce car usage rather than supply oriented i.e. they attempt to manage/reduce people's travel by car rather than seeking to provide more physical capacity for travel (such as more roads). Transport Demand Management programmes can, however, complement supply-oriented programmes to increase active travel and/or public transport usage. An example would be where on-street parking availability is reduced as a demand management measure, and the space is reallocated to provide for cycle facilities or improved pedestrian environment or public transport priority.

The 2022 Census data associated with modes of transport were also reviewed for each section of the scheme area individually as described in the following sections.

7.3.4.3 NMUs – Section 1

The most common form of transport to work, school or college for Section 1 is car driver. 41.5% of persons travelling to work, school or college is undertaken by this mode of transport categorisation. The percentage of car drivers within Section 1 is slightly higher than the percentage of persons who use this mode of transport to get to work, school or college within the County. 36.8% of persons use this mode of transport to travel to work within County Donegal based on the 2022 Census. The most common mode of transport for persons in school or college for Section 1 is as a car passenger; at 55.2%, this is quite similar to the percentage of persons using this mode of transport to travel to school within County Donegal of 54%.

Using bus, minibus and coach as modes of transport to travel to work, school or college equated to approximately 9.4% within Section 1. This is significantly lower than the percentage of persons who use this mode of transport to travel to work, school or college within the State and slightly lower than the County average of 16.5% and 10.5%, respectively. Similarly, 16% and 0.7% of persons travel to school, work or college on foot and by bicycle, respectively within Section 1. The percentage share of journeys taken by car and bus when compared with other modes of transport, demonstrate the dependence on road-based transport, particularly private cars, within Section 1.

Journey times to school, work and college are typically less than half an hour for Section 1 (76.1%) which is marginally higher than the figure for County Donegal (74.5%). Journey times over one hour account for only 5.2% of journeys in Section 1 (significantly lower than that of the State average of 9.7%).

With respect to existing infrastructure, a number of way-marked routes for walking and cycling of relevance to Section 1 of the Proposed Development have been identified. Some of these intersect the Proposed Development and some do not intersect it but comprise substantial existing and planned long-distance routes within the wider study area, extending in one case into other counties and also into Northern Ireland:

- The North West Trail is a 326 km circular cycle route through counties Donegal, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Leitrim and Sligo. Key settlements that the trail passes through relevant to the Proposed Development include Ballybofey / Stranorlar. The delineated route intersects the Proposed Development at the Stranorlar Link Road (Section 1) where a new road bisects the existing road.
- Barnesmore Gap traverses a mountain pass in the Bluestack Mountains between Croaghconnelagh (Connall's mountain) and Croaghonagh (Owen's mountain). A recreational trail through Barnesmore Gap is approximately one kilometre from Section 1. DCC is developing proposals for a Greenway through the gap between Ballybofey / Stranorlar and Donegal Town. An Option Selection Report was completed in 2024 and in 2025, a proposed route for the greenway was published, as shown in Figure 7-12.
- The Steeple walking route extends to The Steeple or Mullaghgarry Tower which is located in Mullaghgarry townland over 1km from those parts of the Proposed Development located in the Teevickmoy / Tyrallen area. The route is c. 5km from end to end and includes both forest tracks and local roads. There are two parking areas with signage, one at either end of the walk and these are a small layby with space for three to four cars at the L66742 Kilross Road (c. 400m from the Proposed Development) and a larger car park to the south at the Gort Scith picnic area (c. 800m from the Proposed Development).
- There are existing footpaths, access points and NMU facilities within the built-up area of Ballybofey-Stranorlar that will be intersected by the Proposed Development.

The Irish government (Department of Transport) has published details of a proposed National Cycle Network (NCN) that includes a network of cycling route corridors linking Ballybofey to Letterkenny and Sligo.

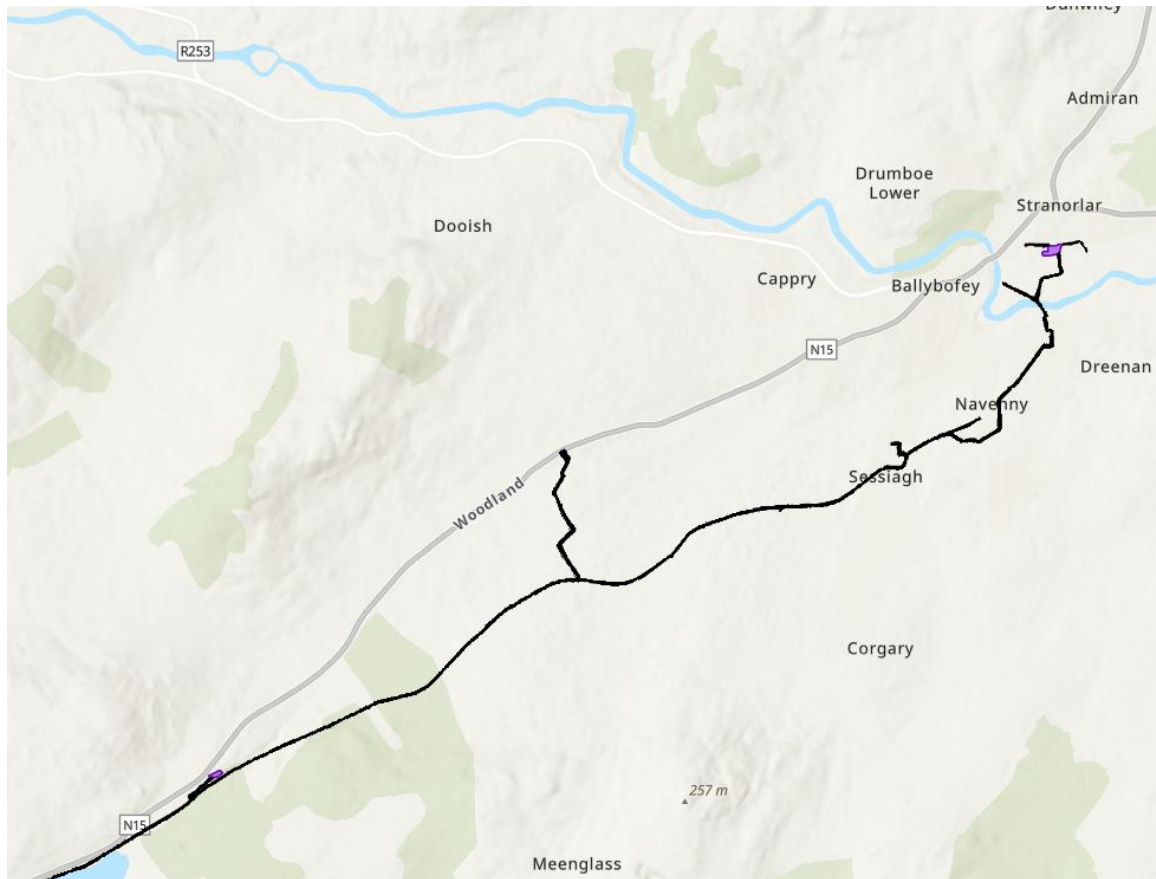


Figure 7-12: Proposed Route of the Barnesmore Gap Greenway into Ballybofey/ Stranorlar²⁷

7.3.4.4 NMUs – Section 2

The most common mode of transport to travel to work for Section 2 is as a 'car driver.' 59.4% of persons travelling to work are classified as 'car drivers'. The proportion of persons who are classified as 'car drivers' for travelling to work is slightly lower in comparison to the county figures for 'car drivers' for transporting to work. The most common mode of transport for persons in school or college for Section 2 is car passenger where 54.5% of persons travelling to school or college opt for this mode of transport. Section 2 has a slightly lower proportion of persons opting for the mode of transport classified as 'car passenger' in comparison to the County statistics.

9.8% of persons within Section 2 used bus, minibus or coach when travelling to work, school or college. This is significantly lower in comparison to the percentage share for the State of 16.5% and below the share of 11.3% for County Donegal. Similarly, 12.8% and 0.5% of persons travelling to work, school or college within Section 2 do so on foot or by bicycle, respectively. The percentage share of journeys taken by car and bus, demonstrate the dependence on road-based transport, particularly private cars, in Section 2.

Journey times to school, work and college are typically less than half an hour for Section 2 (82.4%) which is higher than that of both the State (64.4%) and County Donegal (74.5%). Journey times over one hour account for 3.2% of journeys within Section 2, significantly lower than that of the State average of 9.7%.

With respect to existing and potential way marked routes and other NMU facilities intersecting or located in the vicinity of Section 2, the following are noted:

- The Donegal Cycle Route is a 200 km route that links to the North West Trail (at Donegal Town) and to the Sustrans Route 92 in Newtown Cunningham (via Manorcunningham). It also forms part of the

²⁷ Available: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/33f720999ec2451ebbf034af81232fac>

Eurovelo European Cycling Network. The Donegal Cycle Route runs along local roads (L-1114) south of Letterkenny. The Donegal Cycle Route is intersected by the Proposed Development to the east of the Dry Arch Roundabout and currently crosses the existing national road south of the Dry Arch Roundabout.

- Historically, Letterkenny was served by a railway line which provided connections with Burtonport and Derry. While there are lengths of this railway line within and surrounding Letterkenny which have been subject to construction, there is potential for such historic lines to be developed as future greenways according to the CDDP. Section 2 intersects the former rail route east of the Dry Arch roundabout area at Dromore. There are also sections of disused rail line which intersect the Proposed Development at Dromore and near Trimragh.
- An unnamed track at Ballyraine was identified, may have formerly been utilised as a mountain bike/racing track or similar. However, site visit during October 2025 noted that lands appeared to be inaccessible to the public and there was no evidence of any club / activity related signage. The owner of the land has confirmed that this is disused²⁸.
- As with Section 1, there are existing footpaths, access points and NMU facilities that will be intersected by the proposed scheme.

As noted for Section 1, the NCN that includes a network of cycling routes proposing to link Letterkenny with Buncrana, Derry, Strabane (Lifford) and Sligo (via Ballybofey / Stranorlar). Letterkenny is proposed as a primary node within the NCN, as is Strabane.

7.3.4.5 NMUs – Section 3

The most common form of transport to work for Section 3 is car driver at 61.2%, which is comparable to the percent of persons who are categorised as ‘car drivers’ within County Donegal. Within Section 3, the most common mode of transport for persons in school or college is car passenger at 60.2%, higher than both county and State figures for percent of persons using this mode of transport to school or college.

Within Section 3, 13.6% of persons travelling to work, school or college used bus, minibus and coach as modes of transport. In comparison, 16.5% of persons travelling to work, school or college used the bus, minibus or coach within the State and 11.3% for County Donegal. The percentage share of journeys taken by car and bus, demonstrate the dependence on road-based transport, particularly private car within Section 3. 3.7% and 0.2% of persons travelling to work, school or college did so on foot and by bicycle respectively.

Journey times to school, work or college are typically less than half an hour for Section 3 (76.7%), broadly similar to the percentage share for County Donegal (74.5%). Journey times over one-hour account for 5.4% of journeys within Section 3, significantly lower than that of the State average of 9.7%.

There are several existing and potential way marked routes and other NMU facilities intersecting or located in proximity to Section 3 of the Proposed Development:

- The Northwest Trail – The Northwest Trail is a 326 km circular cycle route through counties Donegal, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Leitrim and Sligo. Key settlements that the trail passes through that relate to the Proposed Development include Lifford. The Northwest Trail intersects with the proposed route of Section 3 at Lifford (Lifford Common Road).
- At the western end of Section 3, the Donegal Cycle Route crosses the existing N14 east of the Pluck Roundabout, to the south of Manorcunningham, and will intersect the proposed new road. This route connects the North West Trail to SusTrans Route 92.
- The Lifford section of the Lifford-Strabane Greenway (4 km route) was completed during 2021 as part of the Northwest Greenway. This is located along the existing N14 approaching the Three Coins

²⁸ Telephone call with author 21st October 2025.

Roundabout and extends across Lifford Bridge to connect to Strabane. No proposed works are to be carried out in the vicinity of this cycle route.

- A Greenway from Lifford to Castlefin has been developed connecting to the Lifford-Strabane Greenway and forms part of the Northwest Greenway. This project was completed in 2024 and connects the urban environs of Lifford to Castlefin over a 7.5km route. It overlaps with the Proposed Development south of Lifford on the N15.
- There is a disused railway line near Drumoghill. Clearance for bridges, and a culvert, are embedded in the proposal to ensure that there is no obstruction to any future use as a greenway.
- As with Sections 1 and 2, there are existing footpaths, access points and NMU facilities that will be intersected by the Proposed Development.

With respect to potential future cycle routes, as noted for Sections 1 and 2, the NCN that includes a network of cycling routes including a link between the primary nodes of Letterkenny and Strabane (Lifford). DCC has also progressed public consultations and route corridor options to develop a Greenway between Lifford and Carrigans which could intersect with the Proposed Development on the western side of Lifford in future.

7.4 Predicted Effects

7.4.1 'Do-Nothing' scenario

The overall objective of the Proposed Development is to improve transportation links and modal shift on key strategic routes within County Donegal. The 'do-nothing' scenario for the Proposed Development assumes that the project is not built and that the objectives of the TEN-T initiative are not achieved. As a result, it is likely that the existing conditions associated with traffic, poor infrastructure, connectivity, and safety standards will continue as per the existing condition. Chapter 6: Traffic & Transportation highlights the current deficiencies of the road network in the scheme area which include congestion and problems with traffic delays; a poor collision rate (higher than national rates); alignment, space and gradient issues (the latter a particular issue at Lurgybrack, in Section 2); and poor provision for cyclists and pedestrians.

In the Do-Nothing scenario some committed road improvement schemes and new greenway sections will be developed, however these would be more piecemeal in nature.

In terms of Section 1, the existing N15 is a key strategic route through the twin towns of Ballybofey and Stranorlar that is currently operating beyond its capacity and is performing poorly with respect to safety and travel times and impacting on town centre amenity. Considering future traffic growth, the retention of this existing road network without any improvements fails to meet the core objective of the project and will give rise to further capacity issues and worsening journey quality. Without the construction of an active travel network there will be no incentive to use alternative modes of transport.

In terms of Section 2, the existing N13 and N56 routes have been identified as key strategic routes that are operating beyond capacity and performing poorly with respect to safety and engineering standards. The retention of the existing N13 and N56 routes without any improvements fails to meet the core objective of the project. Delays in the Dry Arch area of Letterkenny (EIAR Drawing 4.2, Sheet 2) will continue. As traffic numbers are predicted to grow in this section, there will consequently be an adverse impact on journey quality and decreased safety performance arising from growing congestion. Similarly, without the construction of a new bridge over the River Swilly (EIAR Drawings 4.19 through 4.21), the one main artery into Letterkenny (N56 Four Lane Road) will become increasingly congested with resulting impacts on access to medical, education and local services. Without the construction of an active travel network there will be no incentive to use alternative modes of transport.

In terms of Section 3, the existing N14 performs poorly with respect to safety. In the 'do-nothing' scenario safety standards will remain poor. Without the construction of an active travel network there will be no incentive to use alternative modes of transport.

7.4.1.1 Private Property & Housing

In the 'do-nothing scenario' 26 no. residential properties that are proposed to be demolished to facilitate the Proposed Development would remain available to be occupied. The locations of these are provided by CPO plot numbers in Appendix C16-01 in Volume C: Technical Appendices. However, the new infrastructure will facilitate or improve access to zoned lands, particularly within Ballybofey, whereby a new multiple residential development can be facilitated which would not otherwise likely proceed in the absence of this scheme or some alternative similar road development in that area.

In the 'do-nothing' scenario, traffic will continue to use existing urban roads, particularly in the Ballybofey / Stranorlar, Letterkenny and Lifford areas. Continuing and potentially increasing congestion on these roads has the potential to maintain or lead to a reduction in air quality and increase in noise levels for communities living alongside these existing roads thereby reducing their attractiveness as residential areas.

The 'do-nothing' scenario is predicted to have a **moderate to significant long-term adverse effect** on the resident population.

7.4.1.2 Development Land & Businesses (including Socio-economics)

Under the 'do-nothing' scenario, all existing businesses and development land will continue to operate without the new road and active travel infrastructure, avoiding land take for a limited number of commercial properties (including demolitions) which is discussed in Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural) or change in existing operating environment. Current access will remain.

However, the existing road network will continue without improvement and will continue to perform poorly in terms of travel times. Traffic volumes are predicted to increase, especially given the expected increases in population and social and economic growth forecast in the RSES. This will significantly increase the pressure on the existing road network, increasing congestion and travel times, and restricting connectivity between villages and towns in Donegal. This in turn will impact on connectivity, particularly for commuters. Chapter 6: Traffic & Transportation provides details on the traffic flow increases without the project in place for the opening year 2032 and design year 2047 (Section 6.4.4). Congestion increases are likely to significantly constrain the development of residential and commercial / industrial areas, particularly as journey characteristics are adversely impacted. For example, new road infrastructure is required to provide suitable access to zoned lands, in particular the Opportunity Site identified in Ballybofey / Stranorlar (See Figures 7-3 and 7-4 earlier in this Chapter). This in turn will impact the ability of businesses to function efficiently with a consequent impact on employment. Although some businesses do benefit from passing trade (e.g., food providers, service stations, etc.) which would continue to pass those premises if no improvement works are undertaken, congested centres may deter potential customers from stopping, and on the whole, the 'do-nothing' scenario is predicted to have a **moderate to significant long-term adverse effect** on socio-economics, employment and economic activity, with consequent adverse effects on population levels in the scheme area.

7.4.1.3 Community Land & Assets (including Tourism)

If the Proposed Development is not implemented, current levels of traffic congestion and poor safety standards on the routes serving community facilities will continue and will be exacerbated by projected growth. This causes delays and safety issues for the communities accessing facilities.

In particular, the 'lifeline' route of the N56 will continue to be the primary access route into Letterkenny (Section 2) from the east and south of the county. In the 'do-nothing' scenario, this will present significant challenges to emergency services accessing Letterkenny University Hospital, especially as congestion on the existing road network increases with increasing road users, noting the route is currently reliant on a single crossing of the River Swilly.

Access to the Atlantic Technological University, Donegal campus (Port Road, Letterkenny) will also be constrained because of the over-reliance on the N56 as the main access route from east and south of the county.

The 'do-nothing' scenario is predicted to have a **moderate long-term adverse effect** on community facilities and the population that use these facilities.

The experience of visitors and tourists to the area is likely to be diminished because of delays and traffic experience. This will potentially reduce the willingness of tourists to visit key destinations across the county and in turn indirectly impact on the local economy. The amenity value of the area to the resident population is also likely to be affected by increased traffic volumes locally to their homes and along the routes they use to access leisure and amenity facilities. Improvements to access to Dunwiley ring fort (Ch4+900m, Section 1) may not arise in the medium term in the absence of the Proposed Development. The extent of active travel facilities currently proposed, which would benefit local and visiting cyclists and walkers, would not likely arise in the medium-term. The 'do-nothing' scenario is predicted to have a **slight to moderate long-term adverse effect** on community amenity lands and assets, including tourism.

7.4.1.4 NMUs

In the 'do-nothing' scenario, existing pedestrian, cycle and crossing facilities will remain available and planned new facilities from NMUs separate to this project will be developed over time both within the urban areas and through developments such as the implementation of greenway proposals, which should increase the proportion of journeys taken by pedestrians and cyclists to work and school / college. However, the extensive additional active travel network to be provided for the key routes subject to improvement as proposed by the project will not become available. NMUs will continue to use the existing road network on which safety will deteriorate as a result of increased traffic levels predicted and discourage walking and cycling. Chapter 6: Traffic & Transportation provides details on the with and without scheme Do-Something traffic levels and accident rates.

With respect to journey amenity and community severance as it affects NMUs, the 'do-nothing' scenario increases the risk of short-cuts or 'rat-runs' through existing communities with road users trying to avoid congestion as motorised traffic increases. It is anticipated that there may be some adverse impacts on vulnerable groups and communities that are surrounded by heavily trafficked roads, which can lead to increased pressure on communities and provide a barrier (severance) within communities, thus reducing community interactions.

In a scenario that NMUs continue to use the existing national road network and traffic congestion increases volumes of motorised traffic within and around residential areas, there will be an **overall moderate to significant long-term adverse effect** on these users as the volume of traffic increases over time.

7.4.2 Construction Phase Effects

This section of the chapter evaluates the potential for effects arising during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. The assessment is carried out considering the topics of:

- Private Property and Housing;
- Development Land and Businesses (including Socio-economics);
- Community Land and Assets (including Tourism); and
- Non-Motorised Users (NMUs).

In considering potential impacts of the construction phase, there is cross over with respect to the nature of effects on residential receptors and on businesses operating within the scheme area and it is considered appropriate to group these to avoid repetition (see Section 7.4.2.1.1 below). The potential for impacts specific to the demographic profile of the study area is considered in Section 7.4.2.1.2. Impacts specific to employment and economic activity (relevant to development land and businesses on a grouped basis but not to housing) are addressed under Section 7.4.2.1.3 below.

7.4.2.1 Private Property & Housing and Businesses

7.4.2.1.1 Residential and Commercial Receptors and Other Properties – Common Effects

With respect to individual properties, the Proposed Development has been designed to avoid as many residential and commercial / industrial properties as possible as well as minimising impacts through avoidance in the first instance and siting at the edges of properties / less intensively used areas where feasible. However, the Proposed Development will result in the requirement to compulsorily acquire properties through the CPO process (including temporary land take for the purposes of construction activities). This will directly impact the property owners and/ or residents / businesses, commencing at

construction stage. The number of landowners and properties that are to be affected by the Proposed Development, the area of land take and the magnitude of impact is assessed in Chapter 16: Material Assets: Non-Agriculture.

During the construction phase, which is expected to last for approximately 60 months (commencing during 2028 and with an estimated 36-month construction period for each of the three sections of the Proposed Development), it is likely that a variety of construction activities will occur simultaneously at several locations along the Proposed Development but will be phased at any particular location. Construction of the Proposed Development will include activities such as site clearance, earthworks, temporary works, drainage works, pavement, road furniture (signage, etc.), which are detailed in Chapter 4: Project Description.

Impacts to population receptors (including residents, business operators / workers and visitors), which are on the whole considered to be of medium sensitivity, within the three sections of the Proposed Development contribute to potential reduction in general amenity and will occur due to:

- Increases in construction traffic activity and temporary traffic restrictions (including necessary altered access arrangements which have the potential to cause inconvenience generated by additional travel times caused by additional construction traffic (including potential longer delays to those with longer journeys that involve more than one section of the Proposed Development whereby there may be works occurring simultaneously), diversions / closures (which also alter access routes), and/or traffic management measures such as stop-go systems and lane closures);
- Emissions to air (such as dust and noise) arising from construction activities and the movement of construction machinery; and
- Consequently, general amenity impacts both at properties and during journeys associated by disruption and emissions because of the construction works.

Effects will generally be limited in duration locally and with the greatest potential for impact concentrated in areas of substantial works such as river crossings, under/ over bridge construction, significant embankments/cuttings, formation of large junctions and at construction compounds. Effects will either be temporary (lasting less than one year) for localised communities on specific sections of the project area where minor works such as upgrades to local roads are proposed; while short-term effects such as wider delays across the overall road network in the scheme areas for those commuting or otherwise travelling for work or other purposes across longer distances, and impacts from emissions to properties close to areas of more substantial works, are likely to arise. The proposed construction of the project in stages will ensure the duration of impacts is minimised where possible.

There is a high risk of adverse impacts arising from construction dust in the short-term according to Chapter 12: Air Quality (Section 12.6.1), noting that there are 972 properties located within 100m of the Proposed Development and that all three sections have more than 100 properties located within 50m which triggers a high sensitivity to dust soiling and a short-term moderate adverse impact in the absence of mitigation. Sections 12.6.2 and 12.6.3 predict impacts to air quality from construction traffic and construction plant to be short-term slight adverse.

There will be properties that are close to works that are likely to experience unavoidable significant adverse impacts from construction noise for a temporary period, with the magnitude of impact reducing then based on distance and the nature of the particular activity. A breakdown of the main noise-generating activities and the type and severity of effect arising is provided within Section 14.6 of Chapter 14: Noise & Vibration. These impacts, while they affect the general amenity of residential receptors, and to a lesser extent commercial properties (those identified closest to the works area are less sensitive to noise – see Section 7.4.2.1.4 below), are addressed within Chapter 14: Noise & Vibration.

Visual impacts, which will result in unavoidable locally significant adverse effects on some residential and transient receptors associated with the construction phase are addressed within Section 18.6.2 of Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual.

Temporary Traffic Management (TTM) measures will be in place to minimise disruption (see Section 4.11.2.1 of Chapter 4 Project Description whereby the Construction Traffic Management Plan included at Appendix C4.02 in Volume C: Technical Appendices will be updated by the contractor for the construction phase to

include measures to manage access to works areas, signage, routing of construction traffic, road closures, speed limits, road cleaning and condition, working hours, an emergency plan etc.). Chapter 6: Traffic & Transportation concludes that no major impacts will arise from construction traffic.

In general, therefore, the effect of construction works, including construction traffic, during the construction period will be temporary to short-term in nature and is classed as a **moderate adverse** effect, considering embedded mitigation. However, there is potential for likely **significant adverse effects** at a limited number of properties close to more substantive works to arise from noise, vibration, air quality and visual impact. The specific locations are identified, where relevant, within Chapters 12: Air Quality, 14: Noise and Vibrations, and 18: Landscape and Visual.

Due to the extent of the Proposed Development, and the measures to be in place strategically from a construction phase traffic management perspective to minimise disruption to road users and separately, the distance from localised receptors to areas of the Proposed Development other than those works proximate to those receptors, it is not envisaged that substantive intensification effects will arise if works on all three sections are to be progressed simultaneously.

With respect to any potential changes arising if the N14/N15 to A5 Link (EIAR Drawing 4.3) is excluded from the Proposed Development, this will reduce the intensity of construction activity, and thereby marginally the magnitude of impact in the vicinity of receptors along the N15 Castlefin Road area of Lifford. However, for most of these localised receptors these works would be on the opposite side of the proposed roundabout and other road development works in this area, and so would be at a greater remove than works which would proceed nonetheless.

7.4.2.1.2 Demographic Profile

No significant effects are expected to arise with respect to the population levels or demographic profile of the area during construction, though some construction workers may move to the area on a temporary or short-term basis depending on distance from their homes. No further assessment is considered necessary.

7.4.2.1.3 Employment and Economic Activity

7.4.2.1.3.1 Construction Employment

With respect to direct impacts through the generation of construction employment, the methodology provided within the TII Standard 2025 was consulted. Table 7-30 provides the results with respect to estimated construction employment generation (numbers of workers) and value of projected economic output. The detailed calculation is provided in Appendix C7.02 in Volume C: Technical Appendices.

Table 7-30: Construction Employment Generation and Economic Output for TEN-T PRIPD

TEN-T Section	Gross Employment Generation	Gross Employment Generation per Year	Net Employment Generation	Economic Output (€)
Section 1	1,632	544	806	67,357,508
Section 2	1,133	378	559	46,768,186
Section 3	2,119	706	1,046	87,452,188
Total (1-3)	4,884	1,628	2,411	201,577,882

Locally, at any given time it is likely that there will be 400-500 workers on site which will contribute to local economic intake. The wider benefits arise as construction works will generate demand for inputs and services locally, regionally and nationally (depending on the supply-chain employed by the contractor(s) for the Proposed Development), and specialist supporting expertise is provided to the workers on the ground from off-site offices, providing an economic benefit to the local, regional and national economy. These include indirect potential benefits to owners of hotels and B&Bs whereby construction workers may require temporary accommodation; to restaurants, takeaways, shops and retail outlets with deli counters which are likely to supply food to construction workers; and to filling stations which are likely to supply fuel to

construction workers and potentially construction vehicles. Local garages / repair outlets and hardware / materials suppliers are also likely to benefit from the construction activity. Existing national roads will remain open during construction.

The Proposed Development will have positive short-term economic effects on the region.

In considering the potential impact of the Proposed Development on employment within County Donegal, the unemployment rate in County Donegal is higher than the national unemployment rate. This has also been the case in 2011 and 2016²⁹. The population of the county reduced from 2011 to 2016 but has since recovered according to the 2022 Census. The unemployment rate for the scheme area is also higher than the county average based on 2022 Census statistics. The receiving environment is considered to be of medium sensitivity.

With respect to construction employment levels identified in Table 7-30, it is considered that the magnitude of impact associated with the generation of construction jobs is high in the case of the Proposed Development and also when individual sections are considered, where net employment is estimated to be in excess of 500 jobs for each section and over 1,000 for Section 3. This level of job generation, according to the TII Standard 2025, constitutes an example of a material contribution to employment levels relative to the available employment within the scheme area where a ZOI incorporates part of an urban conurbation. In the case of Section 1, the scheme area incorporates parts of the twin towns of Ballybofey / Stranorlar. Section 2 incorporates part of Letterkenny. Section 3 incorporates part of Lifford but predominantly occurs in a rural area where existing available employment would be lower than that available within the urban areas.

It is expected that the Proposed Development will generate a very significant short-term positive effect on the economy.

In the event that the N14/N15 to A5 Link is not progressed, while this would reduce the construction stage economic impact slightly (reduced spending in existing businesses in the area due to the reduction in the intensity of the construction activity in this area of the Proposed Development, e.g. in local service stations, coffee shops, accommodation providers), it is not expected that this would be of such magnitude in the context of the overall development that it would affect the significance rating.

7.4.2.1.4 Effects on Existing Employment (Access and Disruption)

Construction works have the potential to result in disruption to customers and employees of existing businesses, due to delays during construction works, changes to access arrangements and in the case of certain activities, impacts arising from noise, dust and construction traffic.

Specific businesses that have the potential to be most significantly impacted by construction works have been identified through a review of the proposed works, consultation with the design team and reviews of consultation records with commercial operators (property identification numbers are provided that can be identified in EIA Drawings 16-01 through 16-03):

- **Long's Haulage, Ballybofey (1008):** The construction of the Proposed Development will impact on access to the haulage business; however, while the current accesses can be used while the existing national road is realigned, a new temporary access will be provided while the L-6564 Connector Road is being constructed, which will be constructed with the agreement of the landowner. This is estimated to need to be in place for several months. Once a proposed new permanent access is in place, the temporary access will be closed. The nature of the business is not otherwise sensitive to emissions from construction works and the potential for impact on trade and employment is not considered to be significant.
- **Long's Steel Fabrication, Ballybofey (1014):** The works in this location will be limited to road, kerbing, verge and utility works. Disruption during the works is anticipated to be minimal as the current access can be maintained throughout and while part of the shed is included in the temporary CPO line, consultation with the design team advises that temporary works in that area relate to the watercourse

²⁹ CSO statistics show an unemployment rate of 18% for County Donegal compared to 12.9% nationally in 2011 and 26.2% in County Donegal compared to 19% nationally in 2016.

adjacent. The nature of the business is not otherwise sensitive to emissions from construction works and the potential for impact on trade and employment is not considered to be significant.

- **Joe Kelly and Sons (beverage distribution facility), Stranorlar (1063):** Limited disruption will arise in this location as works will be limited to a tie-in here only. The nature of the business is not sensitive to emissions from construction works and access will be maintained during the construction period. The potential for impact on trade and employment is not considered to be significant.
- **Patton's Quarry, east of Stranorlar (1098):** The proposed tie-in of the L-2714 local road realignment is located in advance of the quarry entrance. Local road traffic will be temporarily realigned for a number of months while the new online bridge is under construction. The nature of the business is not sensitive to emissions from construction works. The potential for impact on trade and employment is not considered to be significant.
- **McDaid's VRT testing centre, south of Letterkenny (2009):** A commercial vehicle testing centre on the N13 whereby significant works will be needed to provide an alternate access to the premises when the scheme is in place. The nature of the business is not sensitive to noise and dust with respect to its custom base. A new access will be required here. At the construction stage, the current access will remain open until the new access is constructed. This new access will be constructed in advance of the property on the L-5704 and at the edge of the premises to ensure minimal disruption to the business. While access will be maintained and minimal disruption is expected, it is noted that works on the road network north of the business will be ongoing for >12 months. Alterations to the operating conditions to this business and impacts to employment are addressed under Section 7.4.3.3.2.3; it is not considered that any additional impacts to trade and employment as discussed therein would arise as a result of construction works.
- **Johnston's Caravans, Letterkenny (2068):** Access will be maintained to the business through the works. The business is not considered sensitive to emissions from construction works and the potential for impact on trade and employment is not considered to be significant.
- **Dry Arch Business Park / One Stop Motor Shop, Letterkenny (2069):** Access will change during the works however existing access will be in place until the new access is constructed and no impacts affecting the viability of these businesses are anticipated. The potential for impact on trade and employment is not considered to be significant.
- **Commercial plot occupied by WERS / LK Autos, Bunagee Lane, Letterkenny (2071):** Access will be maintained until the new access arrangement is constructed off the proposed new local road and no impacts affecting the viability of these businesses are anticipated. The potential for impact on trade and employment is not considered to be significant.
- **Tinney Oils and Supermix parking / yard area³⁰, Bunagee Lane, Letterkenny (2071 and 2079):** Works along the Bunagee Lane will include widening over a length of approximately 300m; this will be to the north of this property. However, construction traffic is expected to use the lane during the Mainline 2.6 embankment and River Swilly bridge construction. Periodic disruption is anticipated at the property during construction including impacts from the construction of the proposed LX-2011 local road. Access to the business can be maintained until the new access off the LX-2011 into the property is completed; no impacts likely to significantly affect the viability of the business are anticipated. The potential for impact on trade and employment is not considered to be significant.
- **Letterkenny Glass Company, Letterkenny (2073):** Continuous access to Letterkenny Glass will be provided throughout the construction period. The roadworks to the front of Letterkenny Glass includes widening, kerbing and re-paving of an existing road and are estimated to be two weeks in duration. The roadworks along the L-11141 are similar and likely to be of 4 months duration. Design changes were made through consultation process following concerns raised regarding vibration which may have impacted on sensitive plant. The potential for impact on trade and employment is not considered to be significant.

³⁰ The latter is not directly adjacent to the building owned by Supermix in this area of Letterkenny.

- **NMP Partnership Development Company, Letterkenny (2078):** The north of this property is impacted however the commercial units under construction are located to the south and will be unaffected; the proposed new LX-2005 is offline and will be largely constructed on greenfield lands without impacting the existing access to this development from the L-11141. Disruption will be minimal to business owners on the property. The potential for impact on trade and employment is not considered to be significant.
- **Donegal Farm Machinery, Bunagee Lane, Letterkenny (2080):** Works will be carried out on the northern, gravelled area to accommodate part of the proposed new road. These works, directly adjacent the premises and works and construction traffic along the Bunagee Lane will result in some inconvenience to the premises but access will be retained. The nature of the business is not considered to be sensitive to construction works such as would result in any loss of employment. The potential for impact on trade and employment is not considered to be significant.
- **Green Vehicle Recycling, Norwest (car mechanic) and Snugborough Restaurant, Bunagee Lane, Letterkenny (2083):** Minor disruption will occur while works to the front boundary of the vehicle recycling business are being carried out along with minor disruption from construction works to the north and traffic along Bunagee Lane, however, access will be maintained to all of these businesses throughout and the nature of the commercial activity is not considered sensitive to construction works. While restaurants might usually be considered sensitive to impacts from construction, in this case the existing operating environment adjacent a metal recycling facility and along an access to a fuel company etc. means that the current operating conditions involve large commercial vehicles and noise. The potential for impact on trade and employment is not considered to be significant.
- **Key's & Sons Garage and filling station (Ardosent Ltd.), Ramelton Road, Letterkenny (2091):** Works along the N56 and R245 in the vicinity of the filling station to facilitate road widening, active travel and utility and pavement works will be required, which may involve night-time work for a very small number of nights at the filling station access to ensure continuous access to the business during daytime hours. Generally, there will be disruption in the area due to new road, junction and other tie in construction to the east, south and southeast of the premises which may deter some existing trade during peak periods of works but generate replacement trade arising from the presence of construction workers and suppliers. Alterations to the operating conditions to this business and impacts to employment are addressed under Section 7.4.3.3.2.3; it is not considered that any additional impacts to trade and employment as discussed therein would arise as a result of construction works.

Impacts on individual businesses arising from land take is considered in Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural) with impacts on agricultural operations covered in a specialist assessment within Chapter 15: Material Assets (Agriculture) and impact on tourist facilities and community facilities that operate commercially and provide employment (hotels, bed and breakfasts, creches etc.) are considered later in this chapter (sections 7.4.2.2.2 and 7.4.2.2.3). While some disruption to B&B operators is identified therein, this is not considered to have impacts such as would affect trade or employment.

On the whole, with respect to the potential discernible loss of employment or reduction in net economic output arising from disruption during construction stage, and particularly those businesses as identified above, it is not expected that the construction of the Proposed Development is likely to significantly adversely disrupt commercial activities in the area. The project will primarily take place on undeveloped lands outside of intensive commercial areas and the duration of works in discrete areas of the overall site will be limited in duration.

There are no large-scale individual employers (in excess of 500 full-time equivalent employees) identified as being affected. While total employment in the businesses identified as being potentially most impacted from construction works could at a given point in time exceed 500 no. jobs, works are highly unlikely to be ongoing at or near all of these premises simultaneously. Further, the exceedance of the 500 no. jobs would not be likely to be substantially above that figure (based on consultation with employers) and would include businesses across three separate urban areas whereby the proportion of contribution to the local economy would be relative to total employment across all of those areas and the wider hinterland. Sensitivity is considered medium on the whole.

Traffic delays resulting from construction works are not predicted to significantly impede people from getting to and from their places of employment as TTM will be in place (see Chapter 4: Project Description). However, longer distance commuters to workplaces, or customers of specialist services, may encounter

more than one delay to their journey should works be underway on a number of locations across the Proposed Development as there is potential for works to occur on more than one section of the road simultaneously. Some businesses may experience a reduction in trade where customers perceive inconvenience with respect to works at or adjacent to those premises they wish to visit, however given the nature of the services offered by most of those commercial activities located closest to substantive works areas, this is not considered to result in likely significant effects. Most of the commercial activities identified in these locations are not of a category that would be considered sensitive to construction activity.

On the whole it is considered that due to the foregoing there is potential for at worst, a low magnitude of impact during the construction phase (with significantly less than 100 jobs being directly impacted negatively, if any at all).

The significance of the effect is therefore predicted to be slight, short-term, and overall, any adverse effects would be countered and exceeded by the employment generated by the Proposed Development at construction stage as discussed in the preceding section.

There is no substantive change predicted to the magnitude of impact to this receptor category in the event that the N14/N15 to A5 Link is not implemented.

7.4.2.2 Community Land & Assets (including Tourism)

7.4.2.2.1 Community Lands

Users of amenity facilities such as woodland walks in Ballybofey (Dromboe Woods, Creggan Forest Walk, Holy Well Woods and woods adjacent Dromboe Avenue), the picnic area and Gort na Scith³¹ and the golf course at The Glebe, Stranorlar, (all Section 1), will experience very limited disturbance if any from construction activity during the construction period when works are ongoing in the vicinity of the particular areas or routes are being used for construction traffic. While Holy Well Woods and the woods adjacent Dromboe Avenue are intersected by the Proposed Development, in both cases this is located at the margins of the amenity. In the case of the latter, the most northerly access point into the woods on the western side of the road will be affected due to earthworks and drainage and a tie-in to the existing local road, however, other access points are available further south from which the path and the river can be accessed. In the case of Holy Well Woods, the works are not likely to affect access, albeit there is potential for construction noise while works are actively underway which may deter usage. In each of these cases, usage is low and limited to a small number of walkers. Furthermore, there are alternative facilities available nearby which could be utilised. There is a need to safeguard the archaeological resource within the woods as a cultural heritage resource (See Chapter 17: Cultural Heritage), which is an important focal point, although it is likely the walk would be used for amenity purposes notwithstanding its presence. The predicted impact of construction works on lowering the groundwater levels in the area supplying the well have been considered in Chapter 10: Land, Soils and Hydrogeology, and with mitigation in place to provide a replacement supply to maintain the well as a site of cultural importance and the residual effect is considered to be imperceptible.

Dromboe Woods is considered to be of high sensitivity given its amenity value, location and level of usage. The other woodlands and picnic area are considered to be of medium sensitivity, as despite low usage levels in cases and the availability of other woodland walks locally, these are of importance to those sectors of the community that uses them. Particularly, the community gardens are also the only facility of its type in the area. On the whole the magnitude of impact is considered negligible as limited changes to access or availability will arise and with respect to the woodland walks which will be in close proximity to works, this will be for a short period, and alternatives will be available at a greater remove from construction activity. Therefore, effects will be temporary, imperceptible to slight (at worst) adverse.

There are no similar such facilities within Section 2 or 3 for which any significant likely impacts are expected. There is a hard surfaced playing facility within Croaghan Heights, Lifford close to works planned as part of Section 3 (east of Chainage 16+100) however this by its nature would have a localised function with usage

³¹ See maps provided in Appendix C07-01.

unlikely to be deterred by construction activities in the area. No potential for likely significant effect is identified.

No community lands are directly or indirectly affected by the N14/N15 to A5 Link and no changes to the foregoing would arise if this element of the Proposed Development was not implemented.

7.4.2.2.2 Community Assets and Facilities

Though substantive works are proposed in the vicinity of the Cappry Rovers soccer grounds (landowner plot no. 1178), Ballybofey, access will be maintained and no potential for likely significant adverse effects has been identified.

A relatively small volume of construction works will need to be carried out near St. Joseph's Hospital, Stranorlar, west of the Treanamullin Junction (EIAR Drawing 4.1, sheet 8 of 8) where the proposed N15 Primary Road Connector will meet the existing N15.

This receptor is considered highly sensitive given its nature and level of use (daily). The hospital buildings are set back from the road where upgrade works are to be carried out and there is a reasonable separation between the premises and construction activities, provided by agricultural lands. The magnitude of impact is therefore expected to be low at worst, if not negligible, and effects are expected to be slight adverse in the short-term, at worst.

Archview Lodge Nursing Home (on the L1114 at Dromany), St. Patrick's National School (2037, Chainage +850m), Bonagee Hall (external area) (2139) and the Indian Community Centre (using unit at southern side of landowner plot 2080) in Letterkenny in Section 2 are located within 100m of works areas. These are highly sensitive receptors given the daily usage of the nursing home, the regular use of the school by many of the local community and the nature of the community centres for which there are no alternatives locally. In particular, the new mainline road route will be constructed close to the national school, including a building used for special needs education, and to the community centre, where noise and dust could be disruptive. The magnitude of the impact to these receptors is medium, and the receptors are likely to experience temporary to short-term moderate adverse effects associated with the construction phase arising from congestion, potential disruption to normal access arrangements, and noise and air quality. It should be noted, however, that given the location of these receptors and their proximity to standard road upgrade works that the rating applied to these effects is conservative.

There will be no obstruction to access to Letterkenny Airfield, at Farsetmore, north of the grade-separated junction at Trimragh (EIAR Drawing 4.2, sheet 4), considered of high sensitivity given its usage by emergency services. There is no potential for likely significant effects on this receptor.

At Letterkenny, construction works at the junction between the N56 and N13 roads at the Dry-Arch roundabout and surrounding roads have the potential to impact on this primary route into Letterkenny which provides access to highly sensitive community facilities. TTM measures will be put in place throughout construction to ensure that the 'lifeline' route remains open and accessible until the proposed new Swilly bridge crossing is constructed, and the magnitude of impact is therefore considered to be low and the effect slight to moderate.

In Section 3, there will be works near highly sensitive community facilities at Murlog (east and northeast of the connection from the mainline Chainage 15+100 to the R264) and in the vicinity of access roads to facilities such as St. Columba's Church, Dromoghill (Drumoghill junction and link) and Ray National School southeast of the S2/S3 interface near Manorcunningham (all facilities that many of the local community would use) but access will remain and no specific concerns are raised with respect to for example, construction dust, elsewhere in the EIAR as these facilities are greater than 100 m from the proposed works area. The magnitude of impact is low and short-term slight adverse effects at worst are predicted.

In general, for other community facilities along or near the works, as a receptor these facilities are of high sensitivity given their importance to groupings within the communities they serve, particularly in terms of their need to remain accessible during construction. The magnitude of impact is low overall given the proposals for TTM that form part of the Proposed Development, with short-term, slight, adverse impacts potentially arising.

No changes to the foregoing are considered to arise in the event that the N14/N15 to A5 Link is not implemented.

7.4.2.2.3 Tourism

Most accommodation providers in and around Ballybofey and Stranorlar are generally at a substantive remove from the proposed works area and no potential for likely significant impact is identified (see below re Cappry B&B). No other sensitive receptors were identified. While Dunwiley Ringfort (S1) is an area of interest for a limited number of visitors who may visit informally, other than a roadside sign there is no evidence for example of current online promotion as a formal visitor attraction. Sensitivity is considered low from a tourism perspective. The receptor has been avoided in terms of direct impact from construction work. Potential temporary / short-term significant adverse impacts are identified due to construction work with respect to visual amenity and appreciation of the site within section 17.3.3.1 of Chapter 17: Cultural Heritage. From a tourism perspective, magnitude of impact is considered medium and effect as slight.

Residents of visitor accommodation near works areas (Clanree Hotel on the N56 just west of the Dry Arch Roundabout) and a number of bed and breakfast providers – e.g. Cappry B&B on the R252 (S1), Steeple View B&B (landowner plot 1172), Ard Aoibhinn B&B (2108), Rossgeir Inn (at the junction of the existing N14 and R265) and Douglas Lodge B&B a Cluain Laoi, Coneyburrow, Lifford), and visitors to the Lurgybrack Open Farm south of Letterkenny and west of the existing N13 will experience some disruption due to works. Works will predominantly be carried out during the day (Visitor accommodation being most sensitive to impact from construction noise by night when guests wish to rest). Bed and breakfast facilities are particularly considered to be mainly sensitive to night time construction activity and otherwise to impacts from changes to access, however access will remain to the properties, and the receptors are predominantly at roadside locations in or near urban areas. The Clanree Hotel has a bar and restaurant and also hosts weddings, conferences and other events whereby disruption may also affect the amenity of daytime visitors. However, the nature of the business is predominantly indoors; there are no substantial garden or other outdoor areas in evidence near to the front of the hotel where works will take place. In addition, the hotel has an established location along a main road whereby the magnitude of change is reduced. The main activity area of Lurgybrack Open Farm is at a remove from the works area with the access being the closest to the proposed works. The nature of the facility does not rely on a quiet environment, and it is close to the existing national road. These facilities are of medium to high sensitivity. The magnitude of the impact is expected to be medium given the phased nature of works. The construction phase is likely to result in potential moderate adverse effects on these receptors, noting that Cappry B&B on the R252 is located within 250m from the proposed Finn Crossing and Ard Aoibhinn B&B lies directly adjacent works to the N13 and the new interchange at Trimragh and have most potential for disruption given the scale of the construction works nearby.

The Proposed Development works will be at a remove from Oakfield Park at Oakfield Demesne near Raphoe and no impacts are expected to arise. Works will be carried out close to Cavanacor House (Chainage 1+200 to 1+500 along the proposed link to the existing N14 at Rossgeir in Section 3) but access to the property will remain available, and the facility will only open during Heritage Week based on current information. No likely significant impacts to the venue from construction noise are expected to arise given the distance of the works from the facility and the significantly reduced opening times from previous gallery and garden visitor access.

The proposed construction works will cause a slight inconvenience due to delays to those travelling through the areas where construction is to occur, including tourists on the Wild Atlantic Way, which intersects the works areas in and around Letterkenny and east towards Manorcunningham (N13, N14 and N56/R245). However, the impact will be negligible given the nature and scale of the receptor; no loss of tourism revenue is anticipated to arise due to construction works. The receptor is of very high sensitivity given that it is a nationally important touring route and is marketed to the overseas and domestic market. A slight short-term adverse effect is predicted at worst.

Visual impact on the landscape character of the scheme area is addressed under Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual whereby localised significant adverse effects are identified during the construction stage. Such effects are less significant for transient receptors (as opposed to residents) and given that they are localised are not expected to result in likely significant impacts for the tourism sector of the area.

No changes to the foregoing are considered to arise in the event that the N14/N15 to A5 Link is not implemented.

7.4.2.3 NMUs

Given the length of the North West Trail and the fact that it is located across several counties, the route is of high sensitivity. Likewise, the Barnesmore Gap is assigned a high sensitivity given its length and proposed greenway plans. The Donegal Cycle Route (intersection at Chainage 2+300m at Dromore) is of high sensitivity; it connects the North West Trail to SusTrans Route 92. Likewise, the Lifford section of the Lifford-Strabane Greenway and the Lifford-Castlefin Greenway are assigned high sensitivity.

The disused rail line south of the Finn Crossing (S1 Chainage 2+300m mainline), and the former rail route east of the Dry Arch Roundabout (S2 Chainage 2+200m mainline 2.2) while currently disused, and sections of disused rail line along Section 3 (Chainages 2+500m mainline, 14+100m mainline and 0+400m L2444 Ballindrait side road) are assigned a medium sensitivity rating, upgraded from a lower rating for these facilities not in use due to the policy for greenway development contained within the CDDP.

A disused track near Ballyraine in Section 2 (landowner plot 2086) is negligible to low in terms of sensitivity.

Existing footpaths, access points and crossings are assigned high sensitivity given their importance for the community, and particularly more vulnerable users.

There will be temporary closures or rerouting of existing active travel facilities and access to facilities by NMUs during the construction phase.

To mitigate road closures and inconvenience associated with construction works for all road users including NMUs, the TTM measures will be in place for the construction period (see Section 7.5.1.1). The TTM measures will be designed to minimise the disruption to local traffic and other road users and provide safe and secure routes throughout the construction period. Delay and disruption can be expected, particularly where unavoidable Stop / Go and traffic light systems, road closures and/ or diversions are required. These will be mitigated by the proper planning and phasing of the work.

During construction, there will be slight disruptions along the Northwest Trail cycling route where the route intersects with the Proposed Development, at Lifford (S3 Chainage 16+100m) and north-east of Stranorlar (Chainage 2+300m on N15 Primary Route Connector, L2714 at overbridge N15O028), and also to the Donegal Cycle Route (S2 Chainages 2+300m Mainline 2.2 at overbridge N13O023; 0+050m and 0+250m on L-1154). This will be short-term in nature and alternative access will be provided (S3 Chainage +250m Mainline, L-1154).

Likewise, while works are ongoing close to community and commercial facilities requiring access by NMUs, including more vulnerable users, disruption to existing access arrangements will arise for NMUs availing of footpaths, crossing points and other NMU facilities in the area. Again, this will be temporary to short-term at any individual access point and alternative arrangements will be made for access.

Community and social severance can arise where access to community amenities or between neighbourhoods is impeded by a physical barrier such as a road development or journey times are lengthened, which discourages community interaction. This potential effect is generally associated with the operational phase of the road development, but temporary severance can also arise during the construction phase if works present barriers to movement. The potential for community severance is dependent on the location of existing communities, clusters of receptors, or other such facilities within the vicinity of the Proposed Development, as well as the level of use of the facilities, the sensitivity of the population affected and the geographic spread of the community. While any physical severance during the construction period will be short-term, some construction work may introduce social severance between properties, agricultural holdings, and communities either side of the Proposed Development. There are a number of instances along the proposed route where this may arise, such as for clusters of residences in rural areas to the north of Ballybofey / Stranorlar where the works to construct the new road will lie between those dwellings and the built-up areas of the towns and other neighbours, along with residential areas east of the Proposed Development to the east of the Dry Arch Roundabout at Dromore (the latter is assessed under operational impacts as permanent severance arises notwithstanding that it commences at construction stage).

However, these routes are roads where active travel facilities are not existing and NMU movements are limited and shared with motorised vehicles. Section 6.5 of Chapter 6: Traffic & Transportation confirms that *“Existing cyclist and pedestrian movements will be facilitated throughout the construction period. During construction, detailed traffic management plans will be prepared by the appointed contractor, developed from the Construction Traffic Management Plan contained in Appendix C4.02 in Volume C of the EIAR, and in accordance with the requirements of the ‘Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 8 – Temporary Traffic Measures and Signs for Roadworks’ published by the Department of Transport in August 2019 and the ‘Temporary Traffic Management Design Guidance’ 3rd Edition 2019 published also by the Department of Transport, to facilitate the safe and efficient construction of the Proposed Development.”* Any potential for severance effects are therefore limited and will be temporary to short-term with respect to the construction phase and no major impact is predicted by the assessments carried out with Chapter 6. Permanent effects will arise and this issue will therefore be considered under Operational Phase Effects below.

It is noted that Dromboe Woods, Troopers Hill / Creggan Forest to the north of Ballybofey and Stranorlar are some of the main recreational areas for walkers serving Ballybofey / Stranorlar. During construction works access to these areas via Dromboe Avenue where the new road intersects same, will remain available during works via TTM. Impacts have been discussed under the Community Lands topic above.

Access to St. Patrick's National School south of Letterkenny (2037) will remain in place throughout the construction phase, again using phasing of the process to ensure the new development, including active travel links, is open before the planned closures of existing roads in the area are implemented. From the outset of the construction works to construct the new mainline national road at Dromore, however, a current access route between two groups of residences will be unusable. The latter is considered under Operational Phase Effects below as the effect will be permanent.

Severance issues for communities on both sides of the proposed N14 from community facilities at Ray, Drumoghill and Murlog are to be avoided using temporary diversions. At the southwest of Lifford, an area of housing development (Beechwood) located off the existing N15 will be impacted with the construction of the Proposed Development between this estate and Lifford town. However, during construction, access along the N15 or via temporary/ permanent roads through to Lifford Town will be maintained, with temporary diversions at times onto the new N14 to facilitate the completion of tie-ins. At Ballindrait, temporary severance can be avoided as no closures of existing roads are proposed and traffic access can be maintained as the L2444 is realigned alongside the construction of the N14.

Impacts are low to medium in magnitude given that some alterations to the usage of existing routes taken by NMUs will arise but for the most part, significant increases in journey length will not arise. The amenity of the journeys will reduce for the temporary / short-term periods due to the impacts of construction works and vehicles including emissions and visual aspect.

The magnitude of impact is expected on balance to be low to medium and in the absence of mitigation, these represent at worst, short-term, moderate adverse effects to the affected receptors.

In the event that the N14/N15 to A5 Link is not implemented, no changes to the foregoing assessment are expected to arise.

7.4.3 Operational Phase Effects

Once operational, the Proposed Development will, in general, provide for improved journey times, safety and amenity along the existing and new road network within the scheme area. Chapter 6: Traffic & Transportation provides comparisons on the Do-Minimum and Do-Something traffic flows and journey times based on modelling outputs and addresses improvements in safety (reduced collision rates) and accessibility that will result from the scheme, including improved accessibility for NMUs. Improvements in accessibility will arise due to the increased active travel provision and active mode connections to health, education and community facilities and to businesses and tourist facilities.

As a result, there will be a positive effect on general journey time, safety and amenity for the resident, working and visiting population. The detail of the impacts of same are not discussed under each sectoral heading below as this detail is provided in Chapter 6: Traffic & Transportation but the effects are referenced where appropriate.

7.4.3.1 Private Property & Housing and Development Land & Businesses (Common Impacts – Growth and Development)

The Proposed Development is situated in the Northern and Western Region, for which the NPF³² anticipates growth of approximately 150,000 additional people over the period 2022-2040, with 85,000 of this projected increase to be accommodated by 2030. Galway City and Sligo are expected to be the largest growth centres, with a role for Letterkenny, which along with Derry City and Strabane in Northern Ireland, functions as a polycentric cross-border city region.

Growth overall is expected to be of a high level relative to the targets of the NPF for the county (c. 15,000 additional people from 2022 to 2031 in a mid-range growth scenario³³); the projected growth for the scheme area is c. 9,000 additional people³⁴ between 2022 and 2030 as per the local statutory planning policy documents. Letterkenny, as a Regional Growth Driver, is to accommodate 30% of the growth of County Donegal as per the core strategy of the CDDP. Ballybofey-Stranorlar is included on the second tier of the settlement hierarchy and along with a small number of other towns is planned to accommodate c. 26% of projected growth. Commercially, the scheme area is of high importance to the region given the importance of Letterkenny in particular for economic activity and employment. The receptors in this case are therefore considered high overall in terms of sensitivity; the rating being somewhat skewed by Letterkenny, with other areas of the scheme area considered to be lower in sensitivity in this respect.

The Proposed Development is also part of a strategic road network; the objective of the TEN-T network being to close gaps, remove bottlenecks and eliminate technical barriers between transport networks of EU Member States, strengthening the social, economic, and territorial cohesion of the EU and contributing to the creation of a single European transport area. Enhanced connectivity is of benefit to both local and wider communities as journeys will become safer and more efficient. The Proposed Development will connect significant population centres in the northwest of Ireland providing an efficient transport route and significantly reducing journey times into key urban centres while also providing a bypass of Ballybofey / Stranorlar. Section 6.4.3.4 of Chapter 6: Traffic & Transportation states that *“Each of the three improvement sections considered contribute to the journey time benefits delivered by the Proposed Development. The largest journey time improvements arising from the Proposed Development occur through Ballybofey and Stranorlar.”* Selected routes assessed are shown on Figure 6-5 of Chapter 6. Approx. 4-minute time savings are predicted to arise at peak times and approx. 3 minutes at inter-peak times for journeys in the immediate area. Notably also, time savings of over 6 minutes for 2032 usage are modelled for the commute from Strabane to Letterkenny at peak time, with these savings maintained at over 4 minutes for 2062 due to the reductions in congestion that will be achieved at these times. It is noted that motorised road-based transport is the main transport mode within the scheme area as per the census data discussed in the Existing Environment section above³⁵.

As discussed in Chapter 6: Traffic & Transportation, journey times across the scheme area will, in general, reduce through the provision of new road infrastructure and resultant reduction in traffic volumes on existing routes, particularly through Ballybofey / Stranorlar and at the Dry Arch area of Letterkenny. Some localised, short journeys may increase in duration due to changes in local access arrangements (e.g. permanent road closures) for small groups of residents or other property owners. Such changes will be outweighed by the wider benefit to the resident and working communities, including increased safety and amenity. Modern safety standards will be applied to the Proposed Development and dangerous junctions will be removed. Strategic traffic will be diverted from urban streets and smaller settlement clusters along the existing national roads. According to Chapter 6: Traffic & Transportation, the Proposed Development is predicted to result in significant reductions of collisions and casualties, based on default accident rates, indicating that the Proposed Development will result in significant safety improvements for the residential, working and visiting population.

³² The NPF (First Revision, 2025) along with the National Development Plan forms Project Ireland 2040.

³³ The population of County Donegal in 2022 was 166,231 according to the CSO; the CDDP projects a 2031 population of 179,500 to 185,500 by 2031.

³⁴ Table 3.7 of the CDDP projects increases from 2022 population levels to 2031: Letterkenny to grow from 22,549 to 29,357 (+6.808); Ballybofey-Stranorlar to grow from 5,406 to 7,218 (+1,812) and Lifford to grow from 1,613 to 1,935 (+322). Total projected growth in these three settlements is therefore 8,942 people with additional low level growth also likely to occur in the smaller settlements and rural areas within the study area.

³⁵ There is no rail network within County Donegal which heightens the need for a safe and efficient road network.

It is considered that the permanent improvement in accessibility will result in a very high magnitude of impact for the receiving resident and working population.

Overall, improvements to the standard of the local road network will therefore have a profound positive long-term effect on those living and working in the area.

As reduction in journey time will still arise, and the N14/N15 to A5 Link comprises only one element of a substantive road scheme, no significant change to the magnitude of impact is expected to arise.

7.4.3.2 Private Property & Housing

7.4.3.2.1 Impact on Existing and Future Housing Supply

With respect to the context of the Proposed Development, the existing population and projected increase in housing development within the scheme area is considered high with respect to the overall population of and planned new housing projections for County Donegal under the NPF, noting again that the largest share of planned new housing for County Donegal is to be allocated to Letterkenny, with other settlements and the remainder of the scheme area projected to have much lower growth in the wider context. Sensitivity is considered as high for both existing and planned housing areas.

A relatively small number (26 no.) of residential properties are required to be demolished to accommodate the Proposed Development³⁶. 11 no. houses will be acquired but retained by DCC³⁷.

It is considered reasonable to assume that the occupants of acquired residential properties will seek new accommodation within the local area and notwithstanding same, the numbers of households affected is small in the context of the receiving environment. Consequently, while there is no potential for perceptible adverse effects on the overall demography of the area, the impact is considered high as there will be some permanent loss of existing houses. This will result in a permanent very significant-profound adverse effect.

With respect to lands zoned for future housing development where population increase may be expected to occur, the Proposed Development does intersect two particular areas of land which are zoned for new residential development, or which include residential development as part of a broader mixed use zoning objective (noting that the objectives within the CDDP for these areas include provision for the Proposed Development to be accommodated within these lands):

- One such site is an Opportunity Site for which the indicative Masterplan includes for an area of new residential development, which is located west of Ballybofey town centre (See Figure 7-4 and associated text earlier in this Chapter). The proposed design makes provision for the western link road to provide access into this site which will facilitate its future development. New road access into this site would have been required to be provided in this location in the absence of the Proposed Development.
- The second site is located at the northwestern extent of Section 2 (See Figure 7-7 and associated text earlier in this chapter) of the Proposed Development in Letterkenny, with a very minor intersection arising.

No adverse impact on the viability of those sites is identified, and overall, through improved access, viability will be improved.

There are other sites within the settlement boundaries of Ballybofey / Stranorlar and Letterkenny which are zoned for 'established development' or 'local environment', both of which have limited potential for small scale future housing provision. However, the zoning objectives for these lands again makes provision for the Proposed Development and therefore no perceptible impact is identified.

³⁶ The effects of demolition of dwelling houses and other land take associated with residential properties are assessed under Chapter 16: Material Assets: Non-Agricultural. Two disused former dwelling houses are also to be demolished.

³⁷ A small number of dwelling houses are to be acquired by DCC as part of the CPO process but will not be demolished. They will be retained by DCC and may be sold or rented to new occupants in future.

The only other settlement whose defined settlement boundary is intersected by the Proposed Development is Lifford, however, the route of the Proposed Development in this location skirts the edge of the settlement boundary and no lands zoned specifically for new residential development are impacted.

The Proposed Development therefore will on the whole facilitate rather than remove opportunities for new residential development within the scheme area when considered against the context of the statutory planning policy objectives for its future development. The level of future housing facilitated however will be small and receptor sensitivity is considered low-medium.

Overall, the magnitude of impact is low in terms of beneficial access to zoned lands for residential development. This will result in a slight, permanent, positive effect.

No changes to the foregoing are anticipated to arise in the event that the N14/N15 to A5 Link does not proceed.

7.4.3.2.2 General Amenity for Residents

With respect to general amenity for the population receptors, as identified in Chapter 12: Air Quality, there are long-term substantial adverse effects likely to arise for some receptors located close to the Proposed Development that will see an increase in emissions locally, and conversely long-term substantial beneficial effects for receptors that will experience a reduction in local traffic and congestion and a decrease in emissions locally, e.g. in bypassed town centres.

Section 12.6.7 of Chapter 12: Air Quality concludes that *“For the properties (including schools and other sensitive receptors) that are located within 100m of the existing alignment there will be a net reduction in pollution as a result of the alignment moving away from higher density areas such as Letterkenny, Stranorlar and Ballybofey. Residents and occupants of these properties will experience a net reduction in exposure to traffic pollution that will range in scale from **neutral to substantial beneficial** impact to air quality.*

*For the properties that are located along the proposed alignment, there will be a net increase in exposure to air pollution from road traffic. Residents and occupants of these properties will experience a net increase in exposure to traffic pollution that will range in scale from **neutral to moderate adverse** impact to air quality with **substantial adverse** impact for one property.”*

Of the specific receptors modelled for potential impacts to air quality, with respect to impacts on residential amenity, the following receptors are expected to be impacted negatively:

- Section 1: A row of houses along the R252 south of Ironworks, cottages at Dromboe and a single residence at Teevickmoy will experience neutral to moderate adverse impacts.
- Section 2: One residential property at Drumany is expected to experience slight to substantial adverse impacts.
- Section 3: A group of residences at Mondooy Lower and residential properties at Beechwood Grove are expected to experience neutral to slight adverse impacts.

Of the specific receptors modelled for potential impacts to air quality, with respect to impacts on residential amenity, the following receptors are expected to be impacted positively:

- Section 1: A residence at Goland, a row of houses at Meenavoy and two houses at Tyrallen will experience neutral to moderate beneficial impacts.
- Section 3: Three houses at the intersection of the N14 and R236 will experience neutral to slight beneficial impacts.

There is potential for significant adverse impacts on residential properties across the proposed scheme area as identified in Chapter 14: Noise & Vibration. Overall, an increase in predicted noise levels at individual

receptors based on modelled output as discussed in Section 14.7.4 such as it meets levels requiring mitigation as per TII guidance arises at 36 no. properties which are being retained³⁸.

Section 14.7.4.4 however also finds that “[...] *the Proposed Development results in an overall positive impact with a 22% decrease in the number of receptors with predicted noise levels greater than 60 dB L_{den}. Therefore, the Proposed Development as a whole is judged to have a **significant positive effect** for RTN³⁹ within the study area.*”

Residential receptors are more susceptible to visual changes than those commuting to or through or visiting an area. Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual (sections 18.6.5.2 to 18.6.5.4) identifies 123 no. residential properties whereby predicted adverse visual impacts are expected to be moderate to profound in the absence of mitigation.

The potential effects of land take on residential amenity are assessed under Chapter 16: Material Assets: Non-Agricultural where embedded mitigation addresses loss of amenity. Any land take carries with it the entitlement to claim compensation in accordance with relevant legislation. There will be a perceptible reduction in general amenity for a relatively small number of individual receptors in the context of the scheme area.

Outside of the properties included within the CPO, receptors are medium to high sensitivity and the magnitude of impact ranges from negligible to medium for those properties, noting that a high magnitude of impact would only apply whereby the change in general amenity at an individual property were to be such that it would render the property unviable as a residence. No such individual property has been identified. The significance of effect of which will vary from slight to moderate overall. There will also be properties whereby positive effects arise as traffic volumes and noise reduction arise due to the Proposed Development as evidenced above.

There is likely to be reduction in traffic volumes and associated noise for receptors along the N15 Castlefin Road at Lifford in the absence of the N14/N15 to A5 Link when compared to the Proposed Development with the N14/N15 to A5 Link in place.

7.4.3.3 Development Land & Businesses (including Socio-economics)

7.4.3.3.1 Demography

The Proposed Development is likely to support, the retention of population within the area and county and the planned population increases as per the planning policy / core strategy for County Donegal infrastructure. Population levels of the receiving environment are rated high with respect to sensitivity. This is likely to arise through substantial improvement in accessibility and safety which will impact positively on the quality of life within the scheme area. Further, the reduction of traffic volumes from, in or close to settlements in the scheme area will support such objectives. The Proposed Development is therefore likely to impact on a medium magnitude, population growth in the scheme area and county (the latter had a slower growth rate than national levels in the last intercensal period) in the long-term, resulting in a significant to very significant positive effect. This is the case with or without the N14/N15 to A5 Link in place.

7.4.3.3.2 Economic Impact

7.4.3.3.2.1 Direct Employment Generation

Some direct employment will be generated relating to the maintenance of the new additions to the road and active travel facility network (resurfacing, landscaping, drainage maintenance etc.). This is considered a negligible to low impact on a low sensitivity receptor given the likelihood that this will not be discernible in the context of the scale of the wider economy, with the overall effect considered to be imperceptible to slight, positive and long-term.

³⁸ An additional 6 no. properties are identified with increases in noise levels such as would trigger mitigation measures, however these are within the CPO line.

³⁹ Road Traffic Noise

7.4.3.3.2.2 Contribution to Employment and Economic Growth of the Zone of Influence, County and Region

On a broad scale, the Proposed Development will provide improved access to the north-western region. The Proposed Development improves accessibility between Lifford and Letterkenny and subsequently to / from Dublin. It will also improve access from Sligo to Letterkenny thereby improving access and connectivity to employment opportunities. The Proposed Development also forms part of a wider European network and will reduce impediments to transport in this area of the common transport area.

The CDDP places high importance on the role of Letterkenny regionally, particularly as it forms part of the North West City Region which includes the council areas of both Donegal and Derry and Strabane. The campuses of the Atlantic Technological University at Letterkenny and Killybegs are highlighted within the CDDP and their contribution to the economic development of the county and region emphasised.⁴⁰

For these reasons, economic objectives of the CDDP are supportive of the Proposed Development and other key access infrastructure projects with respect to having “*effective strategic connections to and throughout the County*” (Objective CS-O-6).

The N56 Bonagee link and new bridge over the River Swilly will provide a second strategic access into Letterkenny and remove reliance on the N56 Four Lane Road Improved access to existing and zoned commercial lands will arise. The Proposed Development will remove strategic traffic from the town centres of Ballybofey and Stranorlar and reduce traffic flow from the centre of Letterkenny to support regeneration schemes. Traffic will be reduced around the Three Coins area of Lifford improving accessibility to the town centre from the west. This will enhance town centre amenity, which tends to attract visitors to those areas and increase footfall with resultant potential for increased trade for businesses.

The enhanced accessibility and safer and more amenable environment will support job creation in Letterkenny, Ballybofey, Lifford and other areas of the scheme area.

An impact assessment on the Macroom Bypass⁴¹ confirmed increased footfall in the town centre with the bypass in place and the following output from consultation with business owners in the town:

“When going back in 2023, we spoke to 25 business owners, 19 of which said that their own business was either positively or very positively affected by the bypass, and one responded that their business was negatively affected. All 25 business people surveyed in 2023 thought that the bypass affected Macroom overall either positively or very positively. As indicated below, 18 out of the 25 saw increases in their number of customers and 12 saw increases in their turnover, with none reporting significant decreases in customers or turnover.”

There will be clear benefits to the regional economy as improved linkages between the main urban centre of Letterkenny to Derry and onwards to the east, and to Killybegs (an important fishing port and third level education centre) to the southwest will arise. Wider impacts will result as improved access on and between sections of the Wild Atlantic Way, improved access to the ATU campus in Letterkenny and connectivity to Killybegs fishing port and a further ATU campus are also enhanced.

The PBC for the Proposed Development includes a TUBA⁴² analysis. The overall economic impacts over a 30-year appraisal period are provided in a Transport Economic Efficiency table and indicate that user benefits of €762 million will arise, with major benefits arising to business users which will account for €438 million of the foregoing.

⁴⁰ P7 CDDP: “The importance of the Atlantic Technological University (ATU) campuses at Letterkenny and Killybegs is acknowledged key economic drivers for the county and wider region, increasing the attractiveness of the county as a potential investment location by both providing a pool of educated and skilled prospective employees and building the research and innovation capabilities that strengthen the county’s economic resilience and competitiveness. The contribution of the ATU to the economy and employment offering of the county and wider region is set to grow, amid continuing collaboration on a cross-border further and higher education cluster with Ulster University, North West Regional College and Donegal ETB (Education & Training Board), and in terms of its strategic partnerships and its growing research and development capabilities.”

⁴¹ TII (2024) Bypass Impact Evaluations - Macroom

⁴² TUBA is a software that undertakes economic appraisal of transport schemes.

The PBC advises that “*the overall scale of impact is assessed as moderately positive for Economy.*”

The economic context is of medium sensitivity given the slightly lower numbers of working population than the state average and with magnitude of impact considered medium with a material change in the economy expected to arise (with peripherality being a consideration in this part of Ireland). This assessment thereby concurs that there will be a moderate to significant positive effect on the economy because of increased employment / economic activity within the scheme area. This effect will be long-term.

With or without the N14/N15 to A5 Link in place, connectivity will improve, and economic impact is predicted to be very significantly positive in the long-term.

7.4.3.3.2.3 Employment (Direct and Indirect Impacts on Existing Businesses)

Demolition of Commercial Premises

One privately owned commercial premises will be demolished within Section 1 and 3 no. within Section 2 as a direct result of the scheme. These businesses will not have capacity to absorb the losses unless they are part of wider operations or have or can source alternative premises. There is therefore a possibility that some businesses may cease trading.

In this context, it is noted that one of the receptors proposed for demolition is not currently fully operational, i.e. Supermix Concrete Ltd., Letterkenny (2079) is advised to be used occasionally by the business (which has premises elsewhere) when necessary for manufacturing and storage purposes⁴³. While this will have an impact on the operators in terms of land take and a premises for certain aspects of their service provision (See Chapter 16: Material Assets), there is no clear evidence of whether jobs would or would not be lost. Records for Supermix premises at other locations in the northwest indicate between 2 no. and 19 no. employees. Given the occasional use of this particular depot, at worst job losses of less than 10 no. employees are estimated, and none may occur.

In the Ballyraine area of Letterkenny, a commercial premises is to be fully acquired requiring the demolition of a building which partly accommodates a garage (Maxus dealership for sales and repair, 2183) that also utilises the yard area of this plot. 9 no. people are employed by this business. Consultation indicates that the operator would wish to keep this business in operation, however this cannot be guaranteed as a new suitable premises would need to be procured or constructed. The other part of the building formerly operated as The Pin Tavern; however, this is closed. In the worst-case scenario, a loss of less than 10 no. jobs would arise.

A third, Glenmore Interiors and Linens (1021), is a family business run from the owner’s residence; from consultation⁴⁴ it is hoped to relocate this business to maintain employment for its two employees. The company also outsources work on a part-time basis depending on demand. No loss of jobs is anticipated.

The largest-scale employment receptor in the context of the area is Bonagee Business Park (2081) where there are a number of commercial rental units. Information is not available on the numbers employed at all of the units or at the overall premises but liaison officers (LOs) for the project team have been advised that 7 no. units were occupied in October 2025. These are:

- **Value Centre (a cash and carry / wholesaling business with nationwide locations):** From consultation with the tenant, the LO is advised that the main centre for Letterkenny for this company is located on the Port Road and in the event of the CPO of the Bonagee Business Park it is likely that the business would be expanded in that location. Two staff attend the premises at Bonagee Business park on working days. Given the function in connection with the other premises, job losses are not anticipated.
- **Smarty Pants (an indoor play centre):** Staff numbers are unavailable, but it is considered reasonable to assume based on site visit that the facility has a total of less than 20 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

⁴³ Telephone call with author 17th October 2025.

⁴⁴ Telephone call with author 21st October 2025.

employees. Relocation cannot be confirmed therefore when considered conservatively; there is a risk that job losses may arise.

- **G8 Fitness (gymnasium):** Staff numbers are unavailable, but it is considered reasonable to assume based on site visit that the facility has a total of less than 20 FTE employees. Relocation cannot be confirmed therefore when considered conservatively; there is a risk that job losses may arise.
- **Vestas (wind energy firm):** Based on site visit and LO enquiries there would appear to be limited, if any, presence by Vestas at this premises at the time of writing. Conservatively, it is considered reasonable to assume that the company may use the premises in connection with wind farm projects being constructed within the region as necessary for storage purposes primarily and potentially as an office base for staff who might need a small office facility to support primarily site-based work (estimated at less than 5 no. employees). It is also considered reasonable to assume that should Vestas need a premises in the area that they would relocate. No job losses are anticipated
- **DX Overnight Delivery (depot):** The company has depots elsewhere in the Republic of Ireland and also in Northern Ireland⁴⁵. On the basis of the nature of the type of business, it is assumed that, conservatively, there would be a maximum of 10 no. FTE employees based at this location⁴⁶. Should a suitable unit to relocate to not be available, in a worst-case scenario these jobs would be lost.
- **Michael Murphy Sports (sports and leisure equipment understood to be a warehouse related to a shop elsewhere in Letterkenny):** Staff numbers are unavailable, but it is considered reasonable to assume based on site visit that the facility has a total of less than 5 no. FTE employees. Relocation cannot be confirmed therefore when considered conservatively; there is a risk that job losses may arise.
- **The Office of Public Works (OPW):** No confirmation that the OPW uses this facility is available. It is considered reasonable to assume that the unit may be used for storage of maintenance equipment for the nearby flood protection features and is accessed occasionally and would not affect any associated employment.

The landowner has advised the LO that two further units were to be occupied in the near future but no detail on the nature of the future uses was available. Conservatively an estimate of less than 10 no. FTE employees per unit is applied. As of 3rd November 2025, one of these units has been occupied by MH Refrigeration & Catering Equipment⁴⁷.

A worst-case scenario of a loss of less than 70 no. FTE jobs is estimated following the proposed demolition of the business park, noting that some of the employers affected may relocate resulting in a reduction of these figures.

It is noted that there is a haulage company (TC Quinn Ltd.), along the route (Section 3) employing 6 no. employees which uses land owned by DCC (within CPO) adjacent to the operator's home, which may close on foot of the Proposed Development.

Collectively therefore, demolition of commercial premises will, in a worst-case scenario result in the loss of a maximum of 90 no. jobs (or 96 no. if a replacement for the truck parking area for TC Quinn Ltd. is not sourced by the operator), with a reduction in these numbers likely in the case of unconfirmed relocations.

Individual impact of land take is considered in Chapter 16: Material Assets: Non-Agricultural in which the complete acquisition of a holding is considered to be a profound impact. Any land take carries with it the entitlement to claim compensation in accordance with relevant legislation.

⁴⁵ [Depot Network | DX Delivery Service](#)

⁴⁶ On consulting with the tenant's head office, the LO was advised that this company is not currently operating from this location, however a number of vans were noted to be present at the site during November 2025 (4 no. on 3rd).

⁴⁷ [Our new warehouse is now open in Letterkenny for sale in Co. Donegal for €123 on DoneDeal](#)

Changes to Operating Conditions / Access Arrangements at Commercial Premises

Within the CPO boundary there are other commercial premises where potential for changes to the operating conditions / access arrangements may arise as a direct result of the Proposed Development; these include:

- **Long's Haulage, Ballybofey (1008):** The Proposed Development will have a direct impact on one of the multiple existing accesses to the haulage business at the northwest of the plot. This will be closed, however an access further east off the new local road is provided for. Two accesses to the property will be retained and regraded as necessary along south of property from the current national road which will be downgraded. A number of small structures associated with the overall landholding as located within the CPO boundary for the property and will be demolished / relocated and a very small area of commercial yard space will be impacted, however the structures within the CPO line are primarily associated with the residential function of the overall landholding, and there is ample space available on the overall plot to facilitate re configuring of any commercial usage. It is considered reasonable to assume that the Proposed Development will not result in the loss of employment at this entity.
- **Long's Steel Fabrication, Ballybofey (1014):** In terms of access, the new road, once operational, will reduce traffic volumes north of the new roundabout junction which will assist traffic and make for easier access into the business. At the front of the property, levels will be similar to existing following tie-in works. It is considered reasonable to assume that the Proposed Development will not result in the loss of employment at this entity.
- **Joe Kelly and Sons (beverage distribution facility), Stranorlar (1063):** A small reduction in yard space at the boundary will not significantly impact operations and a tie in is located here only. It is considered reasonable to assume that the Proposed Development will not result in the loss of employment at this entity.
- **Patton's Quarry, east of Stranorlar (1098):** The quarry will remain accessible with the new road in place. It is considered reasonable to assume that the Proposed Development will not result in the loss of employment at this entity.
- **McDaid's VRT testing centre, south of Letterkenny (2009):** Changes to access will arise here which has implications for the manoeuvring of some larger vehicles which utilise the facility. Once the new access is constructed the works along the existing national road will include a new barrier / fence along the property line to close the existing direct access onto the national road which will also provide security for the property. The iterative design and consultation process involved the review of several design options at this property, noting that the building interior is laid out as such that vehicles must enter from the existing national road side to the front (noting direct accesses from national roads are not permissible). The custom base of the commercial entity here comprises of a range of vehicle sizes, some of which are very long and require substantive manoeuvring space. Consultation with the design team indicates that the proposed access design is the optimal outcome of several options considered and considers auto tracking for the various vehicle sizes that utilise the facility, as provided by the owner. The auto tracking exercise confirms that vehicles range from 9m to 18.75m in length that would use the facility can be accommodated. However, vehicles that range from 22m to 31.6m in length cannot be accommodated with the Proposed Development in place. In this respect, DCC has advised that under the existing scenario, certain reversing manoeuvres are not feasible without reversing onto a national road, which is a prohibited movement. From consultation meeting records, the operator has advised that the greater proportion of the custom base involves vehicles within the 55ft to 60ft range (16.8m to 18.3m), with the larger vehicles (in excess of 19m), using the premises less frequently. Discussions have been held with the operator regarding changes in entry and exit configurations of one of the buildings (Unit 3) to address some of the concerns; it is noted that it would take time to rearrange the system and there is no definitive clarity on the feasibility of this arrangement. While the range of vehicles that will potentially not be accommodated at this facility with the Proposed Development in place does not form the main source of revenue for the business, there is a potential impact on the intensity of commercial activity at this premises. There are currently 25 no. employees at the facility. In a worst-case scenario, whereby the operator decides on the basis of revised arrangements, to discontinue to the business, these jobs would be lost. However, a reduction in intensity of activity at the existing site is a potential outcome, with a conservative estimate of a loss of 5-10 no. jobs.

- **Johnston's Caravans, Letterkenny (2068):** Access and feasibility of delivery of mobile homes in the context of the height of a new structure were discussed during landowner consultation. A new access will be in place which will facilitate longer vehicles and sufficient bridge clearance height has been confirmed by the design team; the land take from this plot is from an unused area adjacent to the operational business and will not affect the viability of the business. It is considered reasonable to assume that the Proposed Development will not result in the loss of employment at this entity.
- **Grouping of businesses north east of the Dry Arch Roundabout, Letterkenny (One Stop Motor Shop, NCT Centre, TJ Autos, McGettigan Travel, First Choice Tyres and Hi Foam Car Wash) (2069, 2065, 2064 and nearby uses):** While access will change, a new access will be provided off the new local road LX-2009 and no impacts affecting the viability of these businesses are anticipated at operational stage. It is considered reasonable to assume that the Proposed Development will not result in the loss of employment at this location.
- **Commercial plot owned by Tinney Oil, Bunagee Lane, Letterkenny and occupied by WERS Donegal and LK Autos (2071):** A hard surfaced area is to be acquired at the southern end of this plot which appears to be used for parking of vehicles, with the parking / circulation area reduced, but not to a material extent, to the units on the northern part. While the separately fenced hard surfaced area at the south will be lost, it is considered reasonable to assume that no job losses would arise on foot of same, or if any this would be minimal, and a new access will be provided from the new local road LX-2001 to the more intensively used area at the north of the fence which will not impact materially on the operation of the units or on employment. It is considered reasonable to assume that the Proposed Development will not result in the loss of employment at this location.
- **Letterkenny Glass Company (2073):** The L-11141 will be closed to vehicles immediately to the west of Letterkenny Glass; a turning head for vehicles will be provided. An underpass for Active Travel users will be provided to continue travelling west. New access points for Letterkenny Glass will be from the Trimragh Junction on the N13 and from the Bonagee Junction to the Dromore Local Roundabout via the new LX0025 local road connection. It is considered reasonable to assume that the Proposed Development will not result in the loss of employment at this location.
- **Tinney Oils (2071):** Access to this business is from the existing Bunagee Lane (ref. L-11142 Connector) from the N56. The existing Bunagee Lane is crossed by the proposed Mainline 2.6 on its southern approach to the River Swilly crossing and a new structure, Underbridge N56U011 will cross over the existing Bunagee Lane. This will have sufficient height clearance for vehicles of the nature used by the business. A new access off the LX-2011 into the property will be provided and it is considered reasonable to assume that the Proposed Development will not result in the loss of employment at this location.
- **Supermix Ltd. (2079):** An area of parking /storage yard space which over time appears to have been used by vehicles from other businesses (not adjacent to the commercial building proposed for demolition) will be retained by this company adjacent to Tinney Oils. Access will also be available via the above-mentioned underbridge to this plot, and its future use will not directly be affected by the Proposed Development. It is noted that any parking / storage use which is secondary to the activity carried on in the commercial building to be demolished but this is accounted for in the considerations relating to the proposed demolition. It is considered reasonable to assume that the Proposed Development will not result in the loss of any additional employment at this location.
- **Donegal Farm Machinery (2080):** Access will be improved to this business and while there is hard surfaced area within the CPO line, there is ample space remaining and no impact on viability or continuation of existing trade is anticipated. It is considered reasonable to assume that the Proposed Development will not result in the loss of employment at this location.
- **Green Vehicle Recycling, Norwest (car mechanic) and Snugborough Restaurant (2083):** The front boundary of the premises occupied by the vehicle recycling business onto Bonagee Lane will be set back with the new arrangement which will marginally reduce external storage. Adjacent south, minor works to the corner of the premises occupied by the other businesses is proposed, however this is not currently in use for the commercial activity and is incidental space only outside of the access point. Access will remain available. No potential for likely significant impact to activity or employment is anticipated; the customer base for the restaurant is likely to change over time as existing units are

demolished to the north, but new development will likely be completed in the area as enhanced access is provided. While a restaurant use could be sensitive to new road development, this use is sited within a commercial area and will be separated from the new road by the vehicle recycling facility directly to the north. It is considered reasonable to assume that the Proposed Development will not result in the loss of employment at this location.

- **Service Station / garage owned by Ardosent Ltd. (Key's & Sons) (2091):** This business currently has access from two roads (N56 and R245 Ramelton Road) which contribute to the customer base. The design process considered several options and the design team advises that the design standards required at roundabouts and the traffic volumes arising have resulted in a need to reconfigure access arrangements for this business; on the R245, a left-in / left-out access for cars and light good vehicles travelling to the north-east is provided with a left-in access for fuel trucks also provided; these trucks will exit on to the N56 (left out). Those vehicles travelling southwest on the R245 will need to access the filling station by travelling around the Ballyraine Roundabout. On the N56, all vehicles will have a left-in and left-out arrangement. Those vehicles travelling north on the N56 seeking to use the filling station may take the R245 exit from the Ballyraine Roundabout for access and again use this roundabout on exit to continue their northbound journey. These revised arrangements have the potential to have significant impact on the filling station use, but less so on the servicing aspect of the commercial activity. The premises has 5 no. employees. The operator has advised that the lack of a right turn onto the R245 will impact viability. In the worst-case scenario were this to arise, a loss of 5 no. jobs would occur. However, following a period of adjustment to new access and egress arrangements it is also feasible that the business would whereby some existing custom that might elect for an alternative filling station could be replaced with new custom generated due to safer access and egress being in place, and significantly, an increase in passing trade generated by motorists using the new route from the east. On balance, it is not anticipated that job losses will arise.
- **Dry Arch complex with filling station, shop, diner (2180):** Amendments to access will be in place here, however, right turn access has already been removed from the N56 Four Lane Road due to previous road improvements. The premises will have 2 no. entry and exit points and a further exit only location on completion of the Proposed Development and no impacts to trade and employment are anticipated.

The commercial operations discussed above are not considered to be of particular sensitivity to emissions from the new road network given the nature of the commercial activities carried on therein or in the vicinity.

In the worst-case scenario, albeit unlikely, whereby full closure of two commercial entities occurs, up to 30 no. jobs could potentially be lost at two locations arising from the Proposed Development, but a figure of less than 15 is considered more likely.

Impacts Arising from Loss of Passing Trade

The possibility of impacts on business that benefit from passing trade and unscheduled visits (e.g. service stations, food outlets, hotels that have been identified along the existing national routes from which strategic traffic will be diverted), may experience a reduction in trade is also considered. Grocery stores / supermarkets are not considered to be adversely affected to a significant extent given the local demand for such necessary commodities that will continue to arise.

The primary business of hotels is to provide accommodation, leisure facilities, function / meeting spaces, with food and drinks also offered. It is considered that the Proposed Development will not impact adversely on the demand for accommodation, leisure facilities, function and meeting space along or close to the routes whereby strategic traffic is to be diverted from. Likewise, demand for accommodation in bed and breakfast / or online property rental facilities is not likely to be affected significantly. Notwithstanding that there will be a reduction in visibility of the existing facilities, in line with roads and planning policy, the new national road will not have accesses provided to new competing facilities and thus those who seek accommodation will still need to use the provision within the settlements and along downgraded national roads. It is noted from site visits that bed and breakfast providers do not rely on roadside signs and visibility with a shift to online presence evident.

While there is potential for reduction in passing trade for food / drinks offer, it is considered reasonable to assume that those on journeys with a preference for the nature of such provision offered by hotels will likely

divert from the new national road network to seek suitable facilities. This also applies to restaurants, cafés and bars and the impact assessment of the Macroom Bypass is again noted whereby businesses reported improvements on the whole with the bypass in place.

The True Brew coffee container and the Roadhouse Bar on the existing N15 (1022) would currently benefit from passing trade given its accessibility and visibility on the approach to Ballybofey. It is likely that on opening there will be an initial reduction in trade as strategic traffic on the N15 diverts. The premises is however located close to the proposed new interchange with the new N15 and will provide an attractive option for passing traffic to divert without losing time on a longer journey given this proximity to the junction and the parking available for motorists. It is also likely to retain custom from motorists travelling into Ballybofey and Stranorlar from this side of the twin towns catchment. It is not considered therefore that following an adjustment period that the viability of the business will be compromised.

Overall, no likely significant adverse effect on employment in this category of commercial operation is identified⁴⁸. It is also likely that reduced congestion along the current national routes serving these facilities and increased footfall in the town centres that will experience reduced through traffic volumes will at the least replace the loss of any passing trade and may in fact result in an increase in business.

Some service station owners have indicated during consultation meetings that their businesses will experience reduction in trade once the Proposed Development is in place, indicating potential closure or reluctance for further investment in the business. It is noted that service stations benefit from passing trade from motorists given the nature of their offer and that in the case of the Proposed Development, up to ten service stations located along the existing national road network in the study area will no longer be located along a national road with the Proposed Development operational⁴⁹. In considering employment levels associated with these service stations, consultation with the operators indicates that the employee numbers at each individual service station ranges from 6 no. to c. 50; and a total employment across the study area of between 150-200 no. persons.

There is, however, no certainty around potential closures or substantive loss of trade to this sector. Local business will continue to contribute to trade and in terms of passing trade, drivers will still require fuel, charging / servicing facilities, food and drinks and restroom facilities during their journeys. No online service stations form part of the Proposed Development. Signage will be provided to bypassed settlements. Further, there are external factors that may also result in trade reduction or closures with or without the Proposed Development in place (e.g. an economic downturn, a need for significant investment in a premises that is not financially viable or move to competitors by customers etc.). Conversely positive effects may arise in the event of external factors (e.g. increased trading due to town centre regeneration schemes, economic upturn etc.).

Outside of the study area, there is ample evidence of service stations that have remained operational with bypasses in place; for example, Inver Fermoy is a busy service station and shop at the northern side of Fermoy, c. 1.5km offline from the M8 Motorway which remains operational notwithstanding the bypassing of the town and further, the opening of Circle K Junction 14 at Moorepark just offline from the motorway.

These receptors are at worst-case, of medium sensitivity. This is noting the scale of the enterprises identified and numbers that would be employed in those particular commercial premises in the context of the wider scheme area, which includes parts of three urban conurbations and has an extensive geographical reach. The assignment of medium sensitivity is also applied conservatively in the context of consultation output which indicates that some business owners consider that they have little or no capacity to absorb the impact without experiencing significant loss.

The existing roads will remain operational in the case of those benefitting from passing trade however and local / hinterland traffic will remain which will allow the retention of a proportion of passing trade. Further, the enhanced accessibility and amenity achieved through the reduction in traffic volumes and congestion along routes serving the outlets currently, may attract new custom, which, at least in part, can reduce the severity of any potential adverse effects on trade. Finally, no new online services are to be provided as part of the

⁴⁸ Land take considerations relating to the Clanree Hotel, Letterkenny are considered in Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural).

⁴⁹ Assuming all will remain operational / will reopen following works.

Proposed Development, and passing motorists will still need to divert to the existing businesses offline to meet needs on a journey.

According to Section 4.5.9.4 of Chapter 4: Project Description, Directional signage will be provided along the new national roads to direct users of the route to key destinations (including settlements with their generic services) in accordance with a signage scheme based on the policy guidance set out in the TII (2011) '*Policy on the Provision of Tourist and Leisure Signage on National Roads*'. Where existing official authorised signage requires removal or updating arising from the Proposed Development (for example due to construction works associated with the Proposed Development, or outside of the Proposed Development where a route is downgraded or realigned), such signage will be replaced appropriately by a separate contractor and in agreement with Donegal County Council in accordance with standard practice following the main construction works.

Some additional custom is likely to be generated for service providers along the N15 in Lifford with the N14/N15 to A5 Link in place and operational, however this is not likely to be of such magnitude that the assigned ratings above would be expected to change if the N14/N15 to A5 Link is not implemented.

While there is potential for some reduction in trade and job losses at individual service stations arising from changes to traffic movements, overall, it is considered highly unlikely that more than 25 no. jobs would be lost in a worst-case scenario given the necessary services provided by these commercial facilities.

Summation of Foregoing

In considering the foregoing, it is concluded that in the short-term there is potential for job losses from existing individual businesses of between 100 and 200 people, which according to the TII Standard 2025 falls within the lower end of the range provided for a medium magnitude of impact where the Zol incorporates part of an urban conurbation. In the case of the Proposed Development, the scheme area incorporates part of three separate urban conurbations (Ballybofey / Stranorlar, Letterkenny and Lifford) and therefore the medium magnitude of impact is considered conservative in this case as the proportion of contribution to the employment provided in those settlements collectively is then lower.

In cases (e.g. where demolition is required), there is no capacity for some of the businesses to absorb the impact at their current location and relocation is the only potentially available option. In these cases, sensitivity is considered high and a short-term, significant adverse effect would result.

However, the numbers of businesses involved are extremely small in the context of the existing businesses operating within the Zol, with a significantly greater number of businesses in the Zol having ample capacity to absorb the changes and a large number likely to experience positive changes due to commercial benefits arising from the Proposed Development both locally and in the wider area.

When the positive effects of the Proposed Development with respect to improved access to commercial areas (particularly in Letterkenny), improvements to town centre accessibility and amenity (for example Section 12.6.7 of Chapter 12: Air Quality predicts a slight to moderate beneficial impact on air quality on Main Street, Ballybofey) with potential for increased footfall arising from bypasses, and adjustments in the medium and longer term (through relocation of business, modification of configuration of premises, movement of employees from one business experiencing reduced trade to another experiencing growth, change in source of trade or an adjustment period for existing customers to new arrangements), and benefits to the wider region are considered, it is reasonable to predict that the change in net economic output relative to the geographical area will be positive.

Therefore, given the extent of positive geographical impact anticipated to arise, these effects will outweigh, the more localised negative effects on a small number of businesses and on the whole a moderate positive effect is expected to arise in the long-term.

7.4.3.3.3 Future Commercial Development

Chapter 7 of the CDDP on Economic Development identifies deficits in key enabling infrastructure as restricting the county in meeting its full potential, with the need for serviced land for economic development and job creation and the need to release land for investment emerging as essential requirements. The CDDP identifies land that could be released to provide local and inward business investment. Objective ED-

O-20 supports the development of key enabling infrastructure such as roads and town centre congestion is identified as a negative aspect of the existing environment.

Areas of land zoned for future commercial uses include a plot zoned as an Opportunity Site southwest of Ballybofey town centre; objective BS-OPP-P-1 within the Ballybofey / Stranorlar Area Plan of the CDDP (see section 7.3.1.2 above) seeks to facilitate business / enterprise uses (including light engineering / manufacturing, logistics / warehousing, service-based enterprises)⁵⁰ along with the afore-mentioned residential development. The zoning objective however also provides for the delivery of the TEN-T PRIPD including pedestrian and cycle infrastructure between the proposed link road and Glenfin Road, which will provide opportunities for improved access to this site, in line with identified routes set out within the LAP (facilitating the link from the Glenfin Road to the Donegal Road). Access to this site would require new road construction to open it up for development notwithstanding the construction of the Proposed Development.

Two areas of land zoned for commercial uses within Letterkenny by the LPLTP are intersected. These are a substantial plot zoned for General Employment (c. 5.8ha) in the Bonagee area; and Opportunity Site 4 which comprises of c. 2.2ha zoned for commercial and employment uses, along with neighbourhood-level retail uses⁵¹. The zoning objectives included in the LPLTP for both sites (TEN-T PRIPD / General Employment and Commercial; TEN-T PRIPD / OPP Site 4 – see Section 7.3.1.3 above) however provide for the Proposed Development as part of the development of the sites.

The LPLTP also notes that “lands have also been identified to the east of previously-zoned lands at Bonagee/Dromore arising from opportunities created by the TEN-T project and associated service roads, given their excellent profile and connectivity to the national road network” (p28, LPLTP). This area comprises of c. 9.1ha.

No lands specifically zoned for employment uses are intersected by the Proposed Development within Lifford or other settlements.

The zoned lands directly affected are of low to medium sensitivity as they cover a small to moderate area relative to other land uses within the zone of influence. The magnitude of impact is considered high; as there is a permanent material change to access to these sites. In the case of the Ballybofey Opportunity site particularly this represents a significant enabler for the future development of the site. The proposed road development will also improve access indirectly to lands in Bonagee and Dromore and remove strategic traffic from the town centres of Ballybofey, Stranorlar and Letterkenny. The significance of the positive effect is therefore moderate in the long-term.

Land under development by NMP Partnership Development Company at Letterkenny (2078) is likely to have commercial units occupied by the opening year of the Proposed Development. Construction of the new Local Road LX-2005 will enable a new access to any of these potential businesses and no potential for likely significant impact is identified.

No changes arise to the above assessment if the N14/N15 to A5 Link is not implemented.

7.4.3.3.4 Irish Language

The Donegal Gaeltacht is of medium sensitivity as while it is one of the most sizeable Gaeltacht areas nationally, the scheme does not intersect or directly serve the area. However, there is potential for some positive indirect impacts to arise due to the strengthened connectivity within the wider vicinity of the Donegal Gaeltacht which may contribute towards strengthening its identity and stimulating economic activity through improved accessibility as offered by the Proposed Development. The magnitude of impact is considered low. This is likely to give rise to a slight, long-term positive effect on the Irish language.

No changes arise to the above assessment if the N14/N15 to A5 Link is not implemented.

⁵⁰ The B-SAP does not include employment projections for the site.

⁵¹ No employment projections are provided for within the LPLTP for these sites.

7.4.3.4 Community Lands & Assets (including Tourism)

7.4.3.4.1 Community Lands

Community lands are located within and near to Ballybofey / Stranorlar include Dromboe Woods (considered of high sensitivity given its quality, scale and usage); and Troopers Hill and Holy Well woods, woodland at Dromboe Avenue, Gort na Scith Picnic area and the Ballybofey and Stranorlar Community Gardens (all considered to be of medium sensitivity for reasons of scale, usage and amenity value). See maps in Appendix C7-01.

All the above recreational and amenity areas will remain accessible to the local population. Connections (including underbridge and overbridge where necessary) will be available via local roads when Section 1 of the Proposed Development is operational. At Drumboe Avenue, the existing road will pass under the mainline route and vehicular / pedestrian connection to the amenities provided by the woodlands in the area will be retained for the local population; while the most northerly of the pedestrian access points into the area of woodland at the western side of the woodland area will be closed off and a small area of trees will be removed as a result of the Proposed Development, two other access points will be unaffected. Active travel connection to both Dromboe Woods and Holy Well Wood will also be provided as part of the works. Potential for impact on the archaeological resource in the Holy Well Wood is identified in Chapter 17: Cultural Heritage and on the water supply to same under Chapter 10: Land, Soil and Hydrogeology. There is no loss of land associated with any of the lands such as would render them unviable for future use by the population. The design team has also liaised with consultants preparing a wider plan for the amenity offer of the town and the Proposed Development is not considered to constrain the future enhancement of the amenity value of the woodlands and trails in this area of Ballybofey. The picnic area and community gardens are at a remove from the proposed new roads but may benefit from enhanced accessibility for NMUs within the wider area.

No residual effects to the amenities listed are identified within Chapter 12: Air Quality, Chapter 14: Noise & Vibration or Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual.

The provision of active travel links to two of the woodland walks is considered to outweigh any potential adverse effects, particularly access to the Holy Well woods will be opened up to the south; the magnitude of impact is considered low to medium. Effects are therefore considered to be permanent, positive and slight to moderate.

A playing facility within the housing estate at Croaghan Heights (on the outskirts of Lifford) was identified near the Proposed Development however impacts are not expected to arise given its location near the existing national road and given that it is separated from the proposed new road by existing houses.

No other community lands have been identified for which there is potential for likely significant impact other than general positive impacts with respect to wider accessibility.

Any official or authorised signage that requires removal or update as a result of the Proposed Development will be replaced as appropriate (see Section 4.4.9.4 of Chapter 4: Project Description).

No community lands are directly or indirectly affected by the N14/N15 to A5 Link and as such, if this is not implemented, the foregoing remains valid.

7.4.3.4.2 Existing Recreational Facilities

Access to recreational facilities within urban settlements, which are considered highly sensitive as a receptor grouping, will improve to varying degrees. For example, in Ballybofey / Stranorlar, traffic not related to the use of the larger facilities will be able to bypass the affected areas (e.g. access to MacCumhail Park in Ballybofey on match days).

There will be changes to the environment at Cappry Rovers soccer grounds (1178), which is of medium sensitivity. Access will be altered in this area however there will be no impact on the viability of the facility. In fact, the changes are expected to improve existing vehicular access, and a new active travel link will also be provided. The new eastern link road at Ballybofey / Stranorlar will be located within 500m of the Ballybofey and Stranorlar Golf Club and Lough Alaán, which are the only locally provided facilities of this nature and are

also considered to be of medium sensitivity (no significant residual impacts to Lough Alaán are identified within Chapter 9b Aquatic Ecology and therefore no potential significant effects to the angling activity are identified). The North West Equine Assisted Therapy Centre (Dunwiley, north of S1), though of high sensitivity, is located over 300m from the Proposed Development.

At Letterkenny, recreational facilities such as Bonagee United F.C. grounds (2139) and the astroturf pitch facility (currently closed but formerly operating as Sweeney's Astro's and Boals Goals (2093)), and The Moss (Drumoghill F.C.) at Drumoghill (Section 3) will benefit from improvements to the road network.

No residual amenity effects on any of these facilities have been identified within Chapter 12: Air Quality, Chapter 14: Noise and Vibration or Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual.

Any official or authorised signage that requires removal or update as a result of the Proposed Development will be replaced as appropriate (see Section 4.4.9.4 of Chapter 4: Project Description).

The magnitude of impact is considered medium with respect to improved accessibility, with effects considered moderate, positive and permanent.

No existing recreational facilities are directly or indirectly affected by the N14/N15 to A5 Link and as such, if this is not implemented, the foregoing remains valid.

7.4.3.4.3 Health, Education and Other Community Lands

Community facilities such as hospitals are of high sensitivity. The removal of strategic traffic from routes accessing important community facilities will improve accessibility for users of those facilities (for example, hospitals in Stranorlar, Letterkenny and Lifford, the Atlantic Technological University, Donegal campus in Letterkenny, St. Patrick's National School in Letterkenny (2037), and the Clonleigh Resource Centre, Coneyburrow in Lifford). When Section 2 of the Proposed Development is operational, including the second crossing over the River Swilly, this will improve access for emergency services to/ from the east and south of Letterkenny. Access to Letterkenny University Hospital will be greatly enhanced. In addition, connectivity to the Atlantic Technological University, Donegal campus on the N14 Port Road will be enhanced. The magnitude of impact is considered high, and this is considered a profound positive effect in the long-term.

The Proposed Development will be in cut (i.e. below existing ground level) adjacent to St. Patrick's National School, Letterkenny, and will be further from the school grounds than the existing national route, which will reduce noise experienced from operational phase traffic. Air effects from operational phase traffic have been assigned a neutral to moderate beneficial impact rating in Chapter 12: Air Quality, and noise levels experienced at the facility will reduce when the new road is operational. The school community will benefit from the removal of strategic traffic from the public road adjacent (parking at drop off and collection times occurs on the road) and the provision of the proposed active travel measures, which will improve accessibility once the project becomes operational within this area. This high sensitivity receptor will on balance, experience a medium positive impact at operational stage, resulting in a moderate positive long-term effect.

At most other facilities, similarly to the above, no site-specific noise or air mitigation measures are required with respect to potential impacts from operational phase traffic noise and air quality on this category of receptor. For some of these sensitive receptors that fall under this category noise effects currently experienced for example, will reduce when the new road becomes operational (for example St. Joseph's Hospital Stranorlar), or otherwise where increases are experienced at certain points on sensitive premises, the levels will remain below the threshold for which mitigation is needed. Air quality is expected to improve moderately at Ballyraine National School and slightly at Letterkenny Christian Fellowship and is also likely to improve at the Busy Bee Playschool at Lifford (See Chapter 12: Air Quality). Effects are expected to be neutral at Lifford National School and community facilities in Murlog.

There are potential adverse noise impacts arising at Ballyraine Industrial Estate where there are health and education training facilities and the new mainline will run to the south (Chapter 14: Noise and Vibration). Impacts to air quality are expected to be neutral at Archview Lodge Nursing Home (See Chapter 12: Air Quality).

The community facilities at Lifford in the vicinity of the N14/N15 to A5 Link are likely to experience a slightly reduced passing traffic volume in the absence of the link, and an additional access option would be removed from the Proposed Development. Neither change is considered to alter the above conclusions.

7.4.3.4.4 Lands Zoned for Amenity and Community Facilities

Relevant zoned lands comprise of Open Space and Recreation zonings which include for the project. These are large tracts of land to the north of Ballybofey / Stranorlar and at the eastern side of Letterkenny (See Section 7.3.3 and Figures 7-3, 7-4 and 7-7). In all cases substantial areas for future open space provision will remain available adjacent to the new road network and it is mainly the corridor reservation which intersects the lands to the north of Ballybofey / Stranorlar. Other substantial tracts of zoned land area are available in both towns which are not zoned to accommodate future road development, and in the case of Letterkenny, the nature of future development on some of these lands will be limited regardless given the presence of the flood plain of the Swilly. In Lifford, the area of zoned open space is an existing green area within a housing development which is only intersected by the corridor identified in the CDDP as opposed to the Proposed Development footprint.

The areas of land affected are considered small in comparison to the overall provision within the development plans of relevance, and the areas of land affected are to provide for the road development within the zoning objective. Therefore, sensitivity is low. The magnitude of impact is medium, and effects are expected to be adverse, slight and long-term.

Part of the opportunity site zoning in Ballybofey includes for a community / residential area including inter-alia a multi-use games area, but as discussed in Section 5.4, new suitable road infrastructure is required to release this area for development. There is sufficient scope to provide the community facilities envisaged within the land remaining post road construction. Sensitivity and magnitude of impact are considered medium and the effect moderate positive.

No lands zoned for community facilities and amenity are affected by the proposed N14/N15 to A5 Link and should this not be implemented there are no changes to the foregoing assessment.

7.4.3.4.5 Tourism

Tourism is a major contributor to the national economy and likewise is a significant source of full-time and seasonal employment in Donegal. It is a relatively labour-intensive sector when compared with other sectors. Improved access, through safely designed, readily navigable routes with reduced journey times can have an impact on tourism levels in an area. Connectivity to tourist destinations can be improved or disimproved depending on local arrangements. Given the location of County Donegal at the northwest of the country, its peninsular geography and the remote nature of many of its natural attractions, accessibility in terms of journey time, safety and amenity is an important factor.

Once operational the Proposed Development will provide for improved connectivity between prominent tourism destinations of County Donegal and other parts of Ireland. This will assist in sustaining tourist numbers and will provide for additional tourism development opportunities with lengthy journey times currently a potential deterrent to some of the visitor market. It is considered that the Proposed Development will contribute to the economic development in a predominantly peripheral economic region by supporting the tourism sector. Further, the provision of a substantial level of new active travel routes is also likely to attract additional cycle tourism. Lurgybrack Open Farm is at a remove from the proposed mainline and is anticipated to benefit from enhanced accessibility generally, as will facilities used by tourists within the urban areas that will benefit from the Proposed Development. A signage scheme will include for Lurgybrack Open Farm, Letterkenny and Oakfield Park, Raphoe in line with the afore-mentioned relevant policy.

Tourism as a sector is considered to have a high sensitivity rating on a county and regional level with the magnitude of impact considered to be medium. Overall, the Proposed Development's contribution to tourism is likely to result in a moderate to significant long-term positive effect.

The reduction of congestion, with associated improvement in air quality, and in some cases an improvement in noise levels (for example the Clanree Hotel on the N56), within the environs of most accommodation providers along existing routes from which strategic traffic will be diverted (i.e. the hotels and bed and breakfasts along the N13, N14 and N56 which are considered medium-high sensitivity receptors) and will experience a medium magnitude of impact resulting in a moderate long-term positive impact. It is noted that

while there may have been a greater degree of concern regarding loss of passing trade within the accommodation sector in the past, it is evident that there is significantly greater reliance on online marketing for business generation in the current environment than on on-site signage (a number of the B&Bs identified within the Zol do not have on-site signage).

The N56 at Letterkenny is currently part of the Wild Atlantic Way, as is the N13 from the Manorcunningham direction towards Letterkenny. This is a highly sensitive receptor given its national and international profile. However, according to the project description provided in Chapter 4, directional signage will be provided along the new national roads which will include routes to key destinations, and such destinations will be agreed with DCC and Fáilte Ireland in accordance with the TII document 'Policy on the Provision of Tourist and Leisure Signage on National Roads' March 2011. Further, the project description confirms that existing official / authorised signage that needs to be removed or updated will be replaced appropriately by a separate contractor in agreement with DCC in accordance following the main construction works. It is standard practice to conduct a way finding audit on the revised road network following developments of the nature proposed and to erect signage as appropriate and it is considered reasonable to assume that the Wild Atlantic Way will be suitable signed both along the new national roads and along existing roads as appropriate. Impacts are considered negligible and any resultant effect not significant, reducing to not significant / imperceptible neutral in the long-term as any changes become established as a new baseline.

The proposed introduction of active travel access to Dunwiley ring fort and the provision of visitor information is considered a positive development. The feature would be considered negligible to low in terms of sensitivity from a tourism perspective given the likely low numbers that visit at present, the magnitude of impact is considered high given the significant improvement in access that would arise with the Proposed Development in place. A slight to moderate permanent positive effect is anticipated. With respect to visual impact at the ring fort, this has been addressed under Chapter 17: Cultural Heritage (section 17.4.3.4 identifies a significant negative permanent operational stage impact on this prominent feature) and Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual.

No changes to the foregoing are anticipated in the event that the N14/N15 to A5 Link is not anticipated; strategic access to the visitor attractions of the receiving environment will improve substantially with or without the link.

7.4.3.5 NMUs

7.4.3.5.1 Overview

The Proposed Development has the potential to impact on the local population if it affects regular journeys either beneficially or adversely. Journey length for NMUs can be affected by the quality of infrastructure available (e.g. cycle infrastructure and pedestrian crossings). Journey amenity relates to the safety and overall experience of users of the infrastructure, and for NMUs can be particularly influenced by journey times perceptions of safety and actual safety, visual intrusions, positioning of footpaths and cycle paths, as well as the legibility of a journey. Provision for NMUs is particularly important as the lack of access to a private car among lower earning socio-economic groups affects access to employment opportunities, public services and commercial outlets for household needs.

Once constructed, large road developments can sever properties and communities either side of the Proposed Development, or between residential areas and services used by that population group. Conversely, new active travel facilities can enhance community connectivity for NMUs by improving journey times and amenity along strategic routes, as can improvements of NMU usage of existing minor roads through reduced traffic volumes along these roads and also in town and village centre areas. This promotes greater travel independence among NMUs.

7.4.3.5.2 New Active Travel Facilities and Removal of Reallocation of Road Users

The transfer of traffic associated with the Proposed Development will facilitate the reallocation of road space to different road users and will also facilitate greater active travel facilities for non-motorised users, e.g., walkers and cyclists. This will provide for a multi-modal choice of travel that includes both walking and cycling and will overall create a more balanced transportation system. Other facilities proposed include park and share/ cycle hubs which will have both an amenity and active travel function for the receiving population. The proposals are in line with and will support the recently published regeneration strategy which seeks to improve amenities, connectivity and create civic spaces and people-friendly streets within Ballybofey /

Stranorlar specifically. The reduction in through-traffic volumes from, particularly Ballybofey and Stranorlar town centres, and from the roads in the vicinity of the Three Coins Roundabout in Lifford has the potential to improve connectivity and amenity of journeys in those areas for residents accessing the services provided in those locations. The Letterkenny 2040 regeneration strategy will also be supported by the Proposed Development, whereby it will contribute to the reduction of vehicular traffic in the town centre.

The predicted accident reduction rate as outlined in Chapter 6: Traffic & Transportation includes for reductions in accidents of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists due to removal of regional traffic from local traffic routes through towns, villages and rural communities and the provision of new facilities for cyclists and walkers which will include a segregated shared cycleway and footway.

Overall, the Proposed Development includes for c. 63 km of these new 3 m wide, separated active travel facilities. This is distributed as follows: 21 km as part of Section 1, 16 km as part of Section 2 and 26 km as part of Section 3. Complementary to same are 8 no. new Park and Share facilities in total; 3 no. of which will be provided along Section 1, 1 no. along Section 2 and 4 no. along Section 3. Connections to existing Active Travel Networks (ATNs) will be provided. With respect to the NCN, the ATN for the Proposed Development will align with plans to connect the identified Primary Nodes of Letterkenny, Strabane and Sligo.

In and around Ballybofey / Stranorlar, active travel links will be provided to local amenities including Cappry Rovers sports facility, Holywell and Dromboe Woods, Dunwiley Ring Fort and to the community at Meenavoy where the existing road will be downgraded. The existing disused rail line parallel to the R252 will be accommodated by the River Finn crossing to ensure adequate headroom should a greenway be developed in future.

South of Letterkenny, active travel links will be provided to existing communities at Cullion Road and Lurgybrack, to St. Patrick's National School (where alternative route for car access is necessitated) and to the Donegal Cycle Route at Dromore. East of Letterkenny, provision is made for the development of a future greenway at Dromore along a disused rail line and connection is also provided for nearer Trimragh towards the eastern extent of Section 2 of the Proposed Development. At Letterkenny, the Donegal Cycle Route will be maintained along the local roads and will be supplemented by the new active travel measures. A former rail line close to the Dry Arch roundabout will be intersected by the new road but any future opportunities where potential is available for a cycleway along the line (east of the Proposed Development's interaction with the former route) are not prevented by the Proposed Development. There is potential for connection to the proposed new active travel facilities.

The proposed ATN includes NMU facilities at the Ballindrait Link Road (R264 to N14) at Rosgeir; an active travel link from the mainline to the church and school at Murlog; to part of the Northwest Greenway Route 3 (Strabane to Lifford) which will be maintained along the L-2714 and will avail of an overbridge at Lifford; and connections to the local road network will be provided to accommodate a potential future greenway on the disused rail line at Drumoghill by way of an underpass (all within Section 3 of the Proposed Development).

Numerous other junctions providing access to the existing road network are provided for including provision for connectivity for all road users including NMUs for communities that use facilities at Ballindrait, Ray, Drumoghill and Murlog.

An active travel overbridge over the N14 will be provided to connect the ATN to an existing residential area in the southern part of Lifford (Beechwood) and a modification to facilitate the tie in of the Lifford-Castlefin Greenway which has been recently development will be provided for at the eastern extent of the scheme. NMUs will be able to use the N14/N15 to A5 Link to travel to and from the southern areas of Lifford and Strabane which will shorten journey times for some users.

The Donegal Cycle Route will connect to the Proposed Development from the L1294 replacing the current arrangement whereby it crosses the existing N14 at this location at an at-grade crossing. These are considered improvements to the active travel network. A connection from the scheme active travel network to the North West Trail will also be provided.

Receptor sensitivity is considered high and magnitude of impact medium. Given the scale of the active travel provision particularly, very significant long-term positive effects are expected to arise for NMUs generally. Notwithstanding same, it is important that new directional signage is provided to ensure clarity in wayfinding for users of routes such as the North West Trail and the Donegal Cycle Route.

Without the N14/N15 to A5 Link in place, one additional new route option for NMUs will be removed from the Proposed Development however the overall effect would still remain very significant for NMUs.

7.4.3.5.3 Severance

In terms of identified potential locations for community severance at operational phase for clusters of residences in rural areas within and close to the north of Ballybofey / Stranorlar, consultation outcomes and design iterations developed collaboratively between the design team and DCC informed the options to accommodate the route of the Proposed Development in these areas. In these areas, the new national road will be located between those areas and the towns' services and amenities. Therefore, a series of connecting overbridges and underbridges will be provided and the ATN and the downgrading of existing roads in places will provide relief from severance.

In particular, the following areas have been provided with specific design measures (with respect to access generally including connectivity for NMUs):

- **Dooish** - No potential for severance from the local national school has been identified and connection to Cappry and onwards has been maintained using a route which will replace the function of the existing national road in this area.
- **Cappry** – An interchange is to be provided within this area, and clusters of residential development will be separated by same. The Cappry Rovers soccer pitch will be on the opposite side of the interchange to some of those houses. However, an underbridge and an overbridge for motorised traffic is to be provided to maintain connection, a shared use active travel path is to be provided running east from the interchange, and an active travel route is also being provided as part of the proposed active travel measures to the north of the main works area.
- **Drumboe** - A residential cluster to the north of Section 1 will have connectivity to the towns and wider area maintained by way of an overbridge to the south, allowing continued use of a local road.
- **Tyrcallen** – An interchange will be provided within this area; the cluster of existing residential properties will retain connectivity with services and the wider community using the existing N13 national road, which will be retained and downgraded.
- **Meenavoy** - The L6674 will tie into the existing N13 and connectivity will be maintained by an overbridge to the south. Accessibility for a group of residential properties in this area to the town and wider area will be improved as a result of the works.
- Near **Castlebane**, the L2714 local road is being retained in response to requests from the local community.

Receptor sensitivity is considered medium albeit numbers affected are small in the context of the overall scheme area. However, it is not considered that within the areas above, any changes will arise that will dissuade populations from making established journeys or promote additional journeys. Nor is it considered that alternative routes that are onerous in terms of distance for example, will require to be utilised. The safety and quality of the routes to facilities are expected to improve. The potential magnitude of impact is therefore considered low. While changes to precise routes or the environment of those journeys will be perceptible (e.g., passing through an underbridge), following an adjustment period slight effects are expected to arise at worst, and some may consider these to be positive effects.

At locations east of Letterkenny, connectivity at Dromore and Trimragh has been considered at design stage to avoid significant severance issues (e.g. an access road to the L-1114 from a group of housing at Dromore that would otherwise be cut off by the mainline will shorten and improve connection to the local road).

A new access road at Dromore will be provided to facilitate the small group of houses that would otherwise be isolated by the mainline. An active travel route will connect into an existing way-marked cycle route in this location. Walking distance to a small group of current neighbours will increase to an extent; a grouping of 4 no. houses will in future lie on the opposite side of the mainline from a larger cluster of neighbouring housing. These residents will in future need to use the new access road to the L-1114, cross the new mainline and use the existing access from the L-1114 to get to the neighbouring housing cluster. The

converse also applies. Distance in this case will increase from c.200m to c.1km. Effects are permanent, adverse moderate to significant based on a medium sensitivity rating and medium to high magnitude of impact given the change in distance which though it also applies to vehicular journeys has more effect on NMU journeys. The significance rating is applied in the absence of a reasonable alternative. A bridge option was explored but was considered to generate significant adverse effects on some properties in its vicinity and therefore the adverse effect is considered unavoidable.

At Trimragh, an existing underpass is to be retained only for walkers and cyclists. Motorised vehicles will be prohibited due to the unsuitability of this structure for use due to its narrow width and an overbridge will be provided close by. This is considered a medium magnitude impact whereby the amenity of the route will be improved, for NMUs of medium sensitivity. This will result in a moderate, positive, permanent effect.

Concerns pertaining to potential for community severance in the vicinity of the Dry Arch Roundabout were raised at an earlier stage of the design process. The design and layout of the Proposed Development has facilitated enhanced permeability with this area that is cognisant of the community connectivity to the existing facilities and premises at this location.

Design measures are also in place for NMUs regarding access to community facilities within the smaller nodes in the rural areas (i.e., at Ballindrait, Ray, Drumoghill and Murlog), and in places downgrading of existing roads and removal of strategic traffic will be of benefit.

The design of the project has considered potential for severance between housing southwest of Lifford (Beechwood) and services at the opposite side of the new road including those within the town centre, through the provision of an active travel overbridge.

The magnitude of impact is considered as low, to a medium sensitivity receptor, with long-term, slight adverse effects to the affected population anticipated at worst following an initial period of adjustment to alternative local arrangements.

While the impact of one new connection would be removed from the Proposed Development, no new severance is created in the event that the N14/N15 to A5 Link is not implemented.

7.5 Mitigation Measures⁵²

7.5.1 Construction Phase

Construction phase impacts such as air and dust, noise, traffic and visual impacts relating to socio-economic factors / amenity value for the resident, working and visiting community are discussed in the relevant chapters of this EIAR. This section identifies the measures proposed to mitigate the likely significant effects identified in Section 7.4.

7.5.1.1 General (Private Property & Housing, Businesses, Community Lands and Assets, Tourist facilities and other land uses)

Mitigation measures with respect to air quality, noise, human health, traffic and landscape and visual impact are provided in the appropriate EIAR chapters and shall also be implemented for the benefit of the resident, working and visiting communities (See in particular Chapter 6: Traffic & Transportation, Chapter 8: Human Health (as it relates to environmental conditions), Chapter 12: Air Quality, Chapter 14: Noise & Vibration) and Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual.

An Environmental Operating Plan (EOP) has been included as Appendix C4.01 in Volume C: Technical Appendices. Chapter 21 of this EIAR, the Schedule of Environmental Commitments, is to be included in the EOP to be updated by the appointed Contractor prior to construction. The Contractor/ Contractors appointed to deliver the Proposed Development, or section of the project, will be required to update and finalise the EOP. The measures to be set out within the EOP shall include at a minimum the mitigation measures provided within the EIAR and the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) which are pertinent for the construction phase of the Proposed Development and / or required by a condition of planning consent and/ or other

⁵² Mitigation measures remain unchanged in the event that the N14/N15 to A5 Link is not implemented.

consents issued for the Proposed Development. In addition, the EOP shall detail general best practice measures for construction management in line with up-to-date guidance documents. Details of any required construction phase monitoring shall be included as required by this EIAR and adopted best practices, including programmes for the carrying out of monitoring activities (e.g. noise, monthly dust monitoring, vibration).

The EOP shall provide information relating to the construction methodology for the proposed works, including sequencing and working hours for the Proposed Development and the management of compounds, welfare facilities, construction phase traffic management and car parking, construction waste management and other temporary works, which is of relevance to the implementation of mitigation and management measures, and monitoring programmes. A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) (see below and Appendix C4.02 in Volume C: Technical Appendices) and a Construction & Demolition Waste Management Plan (CDWMP) (see Appendix C16.03 in Volume C: Technical Appendices) have been prepared as part of this EIAR and will be updated and finalised by the appointed Contractor. The EOP shall assign roles and responsibilities to ensure all specified measures are complied with.

Mitigation and monitoring measures are set out within Chapters 12: Air Quality (sections 12.7.1 and 12.7.3.2) and Chapter 14: Noise & Vibration (section 14.8.1) to minimise the effects of emissions. These include the use of nationally and internationally accepted construction good practice methods, for example, with respect to air quality, the preparation of a Dust Minimisation Plan. Dust monitoring is required to be carried out during the construction phase at a minimum of three locations surrounding each construction compound in each of Section 1, 2 and 3.

Regarding noise at construction phase, mitigation measures include, *inter alia*, controls over the timing of construction works (with specific time limits set out for blasting activities) and the requirement to seek consent when works need to be carried out outside of those hours; the phasing of works to minimise the duration of works in each area; and employing Best Practicable Means to minimise noise and vibration levels in line with the pertinent Codes of Practice. There will be a limited number of residential and commercial properties that are close to works that will experience unavoidable significant adverse impacts for a temporary period, with the magnitude of impact reducing then for other properties based on distance and the nature of the particular activity. A breakdown of the main noise-generating activities and the type and severity of effect arising is provided within Section 14.6 of Chapter 14: Noise & Vibration. These impacts, while they affect the general amenity of residential receptors, and to a lesser extent commercial properties (which tend to be less sensitive to noise), are identified and considered within Chapter 14: Noise & Vibration. Mitigation is identified which will reduce the magnitude of the impact and the severity of the effect to the extent practicable (including noise barriers). Measures around the timing of the construction of noise barriers are provided to maximise acoustic screening for the construction phase, with specific measures around the provision of temporary noise barriers at the site compounds to be provided at Bonagee and Pluck Roundabout, and also at specified locations where predicted noise levels are above the construction noise threshold.

With respect to vibration, structural surveys of buildings close to works are to be carried out prior to development so as to ensure monitoring of any changes can arise should vibration effects occur. Condition surveys (pre-construction and post-construction) of specific properties are required by the measures set out in section 14.8.1, with vibration monitoring also required at a number of properties set out in section 14.13.1.

Landscape mitigation for the construction phase has been provided for in section 18.7.1 of Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual. Along with replacement planting, this includes *inter alia*, locating site compounds to minimise landscape and visual impacts experienced and avoiding the excessive removal of existing vegetation. Mitigation around the reduction of potential impacts from site lighting at night time is also provided for. It is noted that the route and land take requirements have been carefully selected to ensure the minimum land take is required to construct the Proposed Development. Much of the temporary works are contained within the permanent works area. Where temporary works are carried out, land will be reinstated post construction on a like for like basis unless otherwise agreed between the landowner and Donegal County Council. Landscaping to be monitored where reinstatement has occurred and replacement seeding and planting carried out within current or next planting season. This should be repeated until seeding and planting is successfully established.

Prior to the commencement of Works in any location the Contractor's Representative shall liaise with Donegal County Council's Representative and impacted landowners to ensure the Works are planned and phased so as to minimise disturbance.

A Stakeholder Communication Plan will be prepared by the appointed Contractor and included in the EOP in advance of the construction works for the Proposed Development commencing to ensure details of the proposed construction phasing in each area and the proposed temporary arrangements (confirming where these will become permanent) are communicated to affected stakeholders. The Stakeholder Communication Plan shall be prepared with due cognisance of and reference to the Proposed Development, relevant legislation and protocols (including General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements) and best practice communications principles. It shall set out the communications objectives for the construction phase of the Proposed Development, noting key project milestones and risks. The Stakeholder Communication Plan shall identify the roles within the communications / liaison team and assign responsibilities to each role. The relevant stakeholders will be identified and categorised and an approach to stakeholder engagement will be set out for each category. Information on the communications tools and channels to be utilised shall be provided (e.g. information sheets, project telephone lines / email account, social media, web pages, letters, press releases, formal notifications, information packs, etc.).

7.5.1.2 Development land & Businesses (including Socio-economics)

The sequencing of works shall make provision for construction employee parking and access to the works site so that these do not cause undue inconvenience to local road users including those connected to economic activity / employment providers in the area. The Stakeholder Communication Plan and the CTMP shall consider, following liaison with local businesses, provision of temporary access to and temporary signage where necessary, for any affected commercial facilities, and the need to provide information on proposed works programmes to the business community respectively.

Chapter 8: Human Health, section 8.11.1.4 includes for mitigation around the topic of socio-economic conditions and employment needs whereby as far as reasonably practicable (e.g. subject to standards and security checks), preferential access to construction apprenticeships and training schemes for young people in the local (Donegal) area who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) would be provided.

7.5.1.3 Community Lands & Assets (including Tourism)

7.5.1.3.1 Community Lands & Assets

Access to all community lands and facilities will be retained throughout the construction period. Where necessary, in agreement with DCC, temporary signage shall be erected on roads within the development area to advise on how to access those amenities and facilities. Chapter 8: Human Health provides for mitigation in section 8.11.1.3 to ensure that early and ongoing information is shared with road users, and emergency and healthcare services with regard to any temporary road closures, diversions or lane closures. Specifically, appropriate access mitigation for the Letterkenny Ballyraine Park Health Centre is specified.

Chapter 17: Cultural Heritage provides for an exclusion zone during construction as mitigation with respect to the archaeological resource at Holy Well Woods. This will safeguard the well feature.

At St. Patrick's National School in Section 2, works directly adjacent and at the school will only commence once the new offline road is in place and existing access will remain up until such time as this road is open. Works at the school and will be carried out in agreement with the school's management team and where possible will be carried out during school holidays or outside of the school's operating hours.

Mitigation relating to effects on community facilities with respect to aspects of the construction process relating to noise and air quality, including dust, are addressed within the appropriate chapters of this EIAR as discussed in Section 7.5.1.1.

7.5.1.3.2 Tourism

Temporary signage for the Wild Atlantic Way will be provided during the construction works in agreement with DCC and with Fáilte Ireland.

Temporary signage for other such facilities including sports grounds and facilities such as Lurgybrack Open Farm and hotels / other accommodation providers within the areas affected will be provided where access and wayfinding is impacted by the Proposed Development, including where TTM measures are to be implemented, in agreement with DCC.

Where feasible night-time works are to be avoided near accommodation providers however where night-time works are required to avoid obstruction (i.e. adjacent to the Clanree Hotel) or to accommodate non-standard works, maximum night-time noise limits are to be adhered to.

Mitigation with respect to aspects of the construction process generating traffic, noise and air quality are addressed within the appropriate chapters of this EIAR (Chapters 12: Air Quality and Chapter 14: Noise & Vibration) and are of benefit to tourism, recreation and amenity receptors. Landscaping mitigation has been provided for in Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual. Chapter 17: Cultural Heritage (section 17.4.1) sets out mitigation measures for Dunwiley ring fort which include an exclusion zone during works.

7.5.1.4 Non-Motorised Users

To prevent and reduce actual or perceived instances of temporary community severance, in advance of, and during the construction phase, Community Liaison Officers (to be appointed by DCC or by the Contractor subject to agreement) will inform residents, landowners and other relevant stakeholders of pending closures of road and facilities for NMUs and proposed alternative arrangements in accordance with an agreed Stakeholder Communication Plan which will be prepared by the appointed contractor on behalf of DCC. The Stakeholder Communication Plan shall, *inter alia*, contain measures to ensure the timely dissemination of information relating to TTM measures, including measures for NMUs, to affected communities. Proposed temporary access routes where severance is generated by works shall be in place from the outset of the relevant works, shall be clearly signed and shall be designed in accordance with relevant safety standards. These temporary routes shall specifically consider the needs of pedestrians (including the mobility impaired) and cyclists along with users of private motorised vehicles and bus routes.

Where the construction works intersect the Northwest Trail and other cycle routes, suitable and safe arrangements for the continued use of these routes shall be put in place. Liaison with Fáilte Ireland and the relevant local authority department shall occur in advance of the commencement of development shall be undertaken to inform the nature of same, and also the nature, number and location of any necessary temporary signage.

7.5.2 Operational Phase

7.5.2.1 General Amenity

Access is to be maintained to existing retained properties as part of the project.

Mitigation for receptors with respect to protection of amenity is provided within Chapter 14: Noise & Vibration and Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual.

Specifically, section 14.8.2 of Chapter 14: Noise & Vibration provides for mitigation measures to reduce road traffic noise as despite modelling all newly constructed roads on all sections of the Proposed Development as low noise road surfaces, a requirement for further mitigation was identified at 36 specified noise sensitive locations. While 6 no. additional properties met TII criteria for noise mitigation, mitigation has not recommended in all cases. Some of these properties will be acquired as part of the CPO for the Proposed Development and in some cases the provision of a noise barrier for example, is not considered sustainable as it may result only in an imperceptible reduction in the modelled noise level. Where practicable, mitigation has been recommended in the form of noise barriers, walls, low noise road surfaces, lower speed limits / traffic calming. Post-completion noise surveys will be carried out in accordance with the relevant TII standards in place at the time of the surveys.

No additional mitigation is recommended for noise.

Section 18.7.2 of Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual provides operational phase mitigation measures which, as well as seeking to minimise broader landscape and visual amenity effects, aim to provide screening to avoid, reduce or remedy visual intrusion at residential properties. Section 18.7.3 provides specific landscape

measures for each section of the Proposed Development. Measures are provided *inter alia*, around the planting of trees, shrubs and hedges, and the use of lighting, generally across the Proposed Development; and also, specific landscape measures at 68 no. defined locations which involve screening woodland mix planting with specimen trees.

Section 12.7.2 of Chapter 12: Air Quality does not recommend project specific operational phase mitigation for air quality; road traffic emissions are predicted to reduce over time due to improvements in fuel and engine technology and emission criteria. Further, the free flow of traffic on the Proposed Development is predicted to result in lower concentrations of traffic related pollutants due to more steady speed driving.

Annual dust monitoring (one month per year) is recommended at residential properties within 50m of the Proposed Development to ensure no operational phase effects on air quality from future traffic emissions result in impacts not currently predicted (Section 12.7.3.2).

Permanent land-take is required for the implementation of the Proposed Development. Where necessary, mitigation measures with respect to implications for individual land uses are provided within Chapter 15: Material Assets: Agricultural and Chapter 16: Material Assets: Non-Agricultural. In the case of the latter, the design of the Proposed Development has sought to minimise effects through embedded mitigation⁵³.

7.5.2.2 Private Property & Housing

No additional mitigation is recommended above that provided for above under Section 7.5.2.1.

7.5.2.3 Development Land & Businesses (including Socio-economics)

No additional mitigation is recommended.

7.5.2.4 Community Lands & Assets (including Tourism)

Mitigation relating to effects on community lands and facilities with respect to aspects of the operational phase of the road relating to noise are addressed within the appropriate chapters of this EIAR.

Chapter 17: Cultural Heritage provides mitigation for Holy Well woods to protect the archaeological feature.

Mitigation is however required in the area south of Ballyraine Industrial Estate where educational (ETB) and health service training facilities (HSE) are identified close to a section of the proposed new road (See Section 14.8.2.3 and particularly Figure 14-6 of Chapter 14: Noise and Vibration. This will be in the form of a noise barrier.

No project specific operational stage mitigation has been identified as necessary for these receptors for impacts on air quality (Chapter 12: Air Quality).

7.5.2.4.1 Tourism

Section 17.4.2 of Chapter 17: Cultural Heritage provides operational stage mitigation for Dunwiley Ring Fort including strategic landscaping/planting and enhanced visitor interpretation.

7.5.2.5 Non-Motorised Users

Where necessary, new wayfinding signage shall be provided for the North West Trail and the Donegal Cycle Route in agreement with DCC, particularly where there is potential linkage from the new active travel routes to be provided as part of the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development will provide connectivity options as part of the active travel network with potential future greenways / cycleways where feasible.

⁵³ Financial compensation will also be available under the CPO process.

7.6 Residual Predicted Effects⁵⁴

7.6.1 Construction Phase

7.6.1.1 General (Private Property & Housing, Businesses and other land uses)

With mitigation measures in place, there will be slight temporary to short-term adverse effects to the residential, working and visiting communities while construction works are taking place due to access arrangements, construction traffic, noise and general amenity / inconvenience impacts. With respect to air quality there will be slight short-term adverse impacts at specified locations notwithstanding mitigation which will reduce the severity of the effect.

7.6.1.2 Development Land & Businesses (including Socio-economics)

The Proposed Development will have a very significant positive short-term indirect effect due to increased direct and indirect employment generation within the area because of the construction phase. Any slight adverse effect on existing employment will be exceeded by job generation during this phase.

Adverse slight temporary to short-term effects due to disruption associated with or perceived access difficulties may remain for a relatively small number businesses and associated employment with mitigation in place. These most likely to be affected are Long's Haulage; Joe Kelly and Sons (beverage distribution facility), Stranorlar; Patton's Quarry; McDaid's VRT testing centre; Tinney Oils; Supermix (Parking / storage area); Donegal Farm Machinery; Green Vehicle Recycling; and Key's & Sons Garage and filling station (Ardosent Ltd.).

7.6.1.3 Community Land & Assets (including Tourism)

7.6.1.3.1 Community Lands and Facilities

With mitigation measures in place, effects are on balance, slight temporary to short-term adverse during the construction phase as some adverse effects are unavoidable.

7.6.1.3.2 Tourism

With mitigation in place, there will be a slight adverse temporary to short-term effects on tourism due to the inconvenience and general amenity impact of the Proposed Development to several accommodation providers and to users of the Wild Atlantic Way.

Residual effects on Dunwiley Ring Fort are discussed under operational stage effects (section 7.6.2.4.3 below).

7.6.1.4 Non-Motorised Users

Effects on waymarked routes and other NMU facilities, including potential for community severance on routes used by NMUs, are predicted to be slight, temporary to short-term with the implementation of mitigation measures considered.

7.6.2 Operational Phase

7.6.2.1 Private Property & Housing and Development Land & Businesses (Common Impacts)

The improvements arising from increased safety, accessibility, journey time and amenity will result in a long-term, positive, profound effect on the resident and working population of the scheme area and beyond.

⁵⁴ Residual predicted effects remain the same in the event that the N14/N15 to A5 Link is not implemented.

7.6.2.2 Private Property & Housing

Permanent, very significant-profound, adverse effects will arise due to the demolition of a relatively small number of dwelling houses.

Permanent, slight, positive effects will arise due to the improvement in accessibility of zoned land for housing development.

With respect to general amenity, unavoidable, adverse long-term effects ranging from slight to significant will arise on a small proportion of properties based on the conclusions of relevant assessments as set out below. There will be however, improvements to the general amenity of other properties, predominantly with respect to traffic reduction and associated noise reduction, and with respect to improvements in air quality, resulting in slight to significant positive long-term effects.

Chapter 14: Noise & Vibration, having assessed over 4,500 properties, finds just three noise sensitive residential receptors outside of the CPO boundary whereby residual effects will be significant or worse, at Ballynabreen west of Murlog, and at two properties south of the proposed tie in with the L1154 Raymoghly Road near the Park and Share facility adjacent the Pluck Roundabout. Overall, Chapter 14: Noise & Vibration concludes that the Proposed Development will result in a positive aggregate residual effect under the Environmental Noise Directive Noise Mapping and the Assessment of Change. This will result in beneficial environmental and health effects on the general population in the scheme area.

Chapter 12: Air Quality predicts residual adverse effects to air quality at properties that are located along the proposed alignment, which range in scale from a 'long term neutral to moderate adverse' with one property to experience a long-term substantial adverse effect (including houses on the R252, at Dromboe, Teevickmoy, Rosbracken, Dromany and Mondooy Lower). Positive residual effects are predicted for properties located within 100m of the existing alignment, ranging in scale from a 'long term neutral to substantial beneficial' (including houses at Goland, Meenavoy, Tyrcallen, and near the N14 / R236 intersection).

Section 18.6.4 of Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual identifies 66 no. such sensitive receptors across the Proposed Development whereby moderate to significant residual effects remain post-mitigation. No very significant to profound residual visual effect on residential properties are identified. Effects will be higher generally at opening year but will reduce over time as the Proposed Development becomes established as a feature within the view of receptors and as landscaping has established.

7.6.2.3 Development Land & Businesses (including Socio-economics)

With respect to population growth and retention, significant to very significant long-term positive effects are expected due to increased connectivity arising from the improvements to the road and active travel networks.

The improved connectivity and benefits from enhancements in town centre amenity where strategic traffic is removed from certain settlements will help to stimulate economic development within the scheme area and in County Donegal. The Proposed Development will have moderate positive indirect long-term residual effects.

Once operational, increases in employment directly associated with the project will be limited to maintenance works which is expected to result in an imperceptible to slight, positive effect in the long-term.

A small number of commercial properties will be demolished across the full extent of the Proposed Development (4 no. landowners are affected) and others that benefit from passing trade may experience a loss in revenue, which is considered to result in an unavoidable slight short-term adverse effect on the whole with respect to employment and economic output of the area but which will be countered by long-term moderate positive effects. Effects on individual businesses whereby unavoidable profound residual effects arise are addressed within Appendix C16.01 of Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural).

The opening up of access to a zoned opportunity site in Ballybofey and provision for the project within commercially zoned lands in Letterkenny is a moderate positive long-term effect with respect to improved access.

An indirect, slight, long-term positive effect will arise regarding the nearby Donegal Gaeltacht.

7.6.2.4 Community Land & Assets (including Tourism)

7.6.2.4.1 Community Lands

The provision of active travel connections to Holy Well and Dromboe Woods (Section 1) will result in Slight-moderate, permanent, positive effects.

Although Section 17.4.3.1 of Chapter 17: Cultural Heritage predicts a significant residual effect on the archaeological feature at the Holy Well woods, this effect is considered to be Slight at worst from the community lands perspective.

7.6.2.4.2 Community Facilities

The removal of strategic traffic from the road network access to a number of community facilities in the scheme area is considered a positive effect. There will be a **profound positive** effect on access to Letterkenny University Hospital enhanced connectivity to the Atlantic Technological University, Donegal campus and **moderate positive** effects on St. Patrick's National School south of Letterkenny.

There will be slight to moderate beneficial effects arising from improvements to air quality at a number of community facilities such as St. Patrick's National School, Ballyraine National School and Letterkenny Christian Fellowship (See Chapter 12: Air Quality).

Residual effects on the HSE Ballyraine Training Services Centre at Ballyraine Industrial Estate are considered Moderate adverse within Section 14.9.2.2 of Chapter 14: Noise and Vibration, however, given the training usage of the building as opposed to patient care and there is a potential reduction significance for that reason.

There will also be a positive effect on future provision of community facilities on a zoned opportunity site in Ballybofey but **slight adverse** long-term effects on lands zoned for open space and recreation.

7.6.2.4.3 Tourism

The Proposed Development will have moderate-significant positive long-term effects on the scheme area and wider area with respect to accessibility and consequent impacts on tourism.

Improved access and air quality and reduced noise along existing busy routes will result in moderate, long-term positive effects for visitor accommodation providers.

Effects to the Wild Atlantic Way are anticipated to be not significant / imperceptible, neutral in the long-term.

Proposed access and information provision at Dunwiley Ring Fort will result in a slight-moderate, permanent, positive effect from a visitor perspective. From a cultural heritage perspective, a predicted significant / moderate residual effect on the cultural heritage amenity value of the site is identified in section 17.4.3.1 of Chapter 17: Cultural Heritage.

7.6.2.5 Non-Motorised Users

Once operational, the Proposed Development will result in a very significant positive long-term residual effect in terms of improved active travel facilities for NMUs, providing new routes, enhancing connectivity and improving safety and amenity existing journeys. Access to key facilities within the affected settlements will improve for NMUs. Effects to existing way-marked walking and cycling routes and other NMU facilities are anticipated to be positive, profound and long-term.

With respect to severance, residual effects are slight at worst for localised communities north of Ballybofey-Stranorlar when design mitigation is taken into consideration. These may be considered positive or adverse depending on the perception of the receptor; however, it should be noted that safety improvements will result for NMUs.

Some moderate to significant adverse effects are unavoidable at the Dromore area where a group of neighbouring residential properties will have an increased journey link notwithstanding active travel link

provision. Elsewhere, effects will be moderate, positive for NMUs at Trimragh where vehicles are removed from an existing route.

With respect to the housing development Beechwood, and access to Lifford for its residents, a residual slight adverse long-term effect is anticipated at worst.

7.7 Monitoring

The scheme shall be measured pre- and post-construction against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that include journey time, safety, and queueing. Pre-construction measurements shall be taken a minimum of one month prior to construction commencement. Post construction measurements shall be taken a minimum of six months and a maximum of five years following scheme opening to ensure traffic flows have adjusted and the sampling timeline is appropriate. Safety is best measured over an extended period.

Landscaping to be monitored where reinstatement has occurred and replacement seeding and planting carried out within current or next planting season. This should be repeated until seeding and planting is successfully established.

No additional monitoring measures are recommended above measures identified within Chapters 12: Air Quality and Chapter 14: Noise & Vibrations with respect to Air Quality and Noise & Vibration respectively.

7.8 Project Wide Effects

This assessment has considered the effects that results from the entirety of the Proposed Development that comprises three sections of the TEN-T network in County Donegal, i.e. Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the TEN-T PRIPD.

There are extant permissions within the vicinity of the Proposed Development for a number of dwellings and / or dwelling extensions and minor developments. None of the individual potential additional / enlarged dwellings or minor developments themselves will result in likely significant impacts on the receiving communities and have no potential to give rise to any significant cumulative impacts with respect to population aspects of the receiving environment.

With respect to developments and Proposed Developments that have been identified as having the potential for likely significant cumulative effects, please refer to Chapter 19: Interactions & Cumulative Effects for further details.

7.9 Transboundary Effects

The Proposed Development is adjacent to the border with Northern Ireland at Lifford / Strabane. The Proposed Development includes the N14/N15 to A5 Link at the eastern end of Section 3. This comprises a connection from the N14/N15 Lifford Junction, south of Lifford, across the River Finn to the border with Northern Ireland. This will then connect to a proposed Trunk Road T3 which in turn connects to the proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5 WTC) to be pursued by the Department for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland.

The proposed N14/N15 to A5 Link including the proposed bridge over the River Finn (i.e. the link between the N14/N15 Lifford Junction and a proposed Trunk Road T3) will not be constructed until such time as a proposed Trunk Road T3 / Section 1 of the A5 WTC has been constructed or is under construction.

If Section 1 of the proposed A5 WTC and Trunk Road T3 (both Northern Ireland) are constructed and the N14/N15 to A5 Link (Republic of Ireland) is also constructed, transboundary effects on population may arise through improved cross border accessibility. The Proposed Development will reduce travel time between parts of County Donegal and parts of Northern Ireland, particularly from Letterkenny to Derry, both of which are part of the North-West City Region. Increased connectivity has the potential to contribute to the reduction of population decline in the area of Northern Ireland adjoining and close to the Proposed Development (the Sperrin EA) but other factors influence population trends and on its own the Proposed Development is not likely to result in a significant effect on population levels across the border; there is already a connection by road across the River Finn between Lifford and Strabane.

Given the proximity of Strabane to the Proposed Development, there is potential for the proposed active travel network to be used by residents of Strabane and the wider area (the Lifford section of the Lifford-Strabane Greenway has been recently completed which will form part of connecting infrastructure for NMUs), however, this would likely be limited to an area close to the border and while positive would not be expected to result in a significant transboundary impact.

If Section 1 of the A5 WTC and Trunk Road T3 are constructed and the N14/N15 to A5 Link is also constructed, there is potential for significant positive effect on the border settlement of Strabane and its hinterland, particularly economically and with respect to access to community assets, as cross-border connectivity will be improved.

Chapter 12: Air Quality identifies potential short-term substantial transboundary impacts in Strabane from cumulative unmitigated works on Section 3 and on the N14/15 to A5 link occur at the same time in a local area, however with mitigation the residual effect is considered a short-term slight adverse effect (Section 12.7.3.1).

It is not considered that any additional significant adverse transboundary effects on population receptors will arise with the Proposed Development in place on its own. This is the case with or without the N14/N15 to A5 Link, Trunk Road T3 and Section 1 of the A5 WTC in place.

No other significant transboundary effects are identified.

7.10 Summary

Table 7-31: Summary of Potential Environment Effects, Mitigation and Monitoring

Description of Impact	Measures Adopted as Part of Project	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity of Receptor	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect	Proposed Monitoring
Construction Phase							
Residential and Commercial Receptors (Common Effects): construction phase amenity impacts and disruption (delays, emissions etc.) for residents, workers and customers from construction activities and construction traffic. See Chapter 12: Air Quality; Chapter 14: Noise & Vibration, Chapter 18: Landscape & Visual, Chapter 6 Traffic & Transportation.	<p>Avoidance of as many sensitive receptors as possible. Works will be appropriately planned and phased.</p> <p>Good practice construction standards and methods (working hours restrictions, noise minimisation measures, road sweeping etc). TTM including Traffic Management Plan. Alternative access arrangements. Phased construction. Reinstatement of lands following works.</p>	Medium	Medium	Temporary and Short-term, Moderate, Adverse, with some unavoidable Significant (or substantial) effects relating to noise, vibration and air quality at properties close to specified works, or arising from dust due to proximity to works, and locally Significant visual impact.	<p>EOP to set out construction methodology (incl. sequencing and working hours; compound, welfare facility, construction phase traffic management and parking, construction waste and temporary works management) of relevance to implementation of mitigation and management measures for the construction period, and to monitoring programmes. CTMP and CDWMP to be updated also as specified in Section 7.5.1.1 of this chapter.</p> <p>EOP to assign roles and responsibilities to ensure all specified measures are complied with.</p> <p>Stakeholder Communication Plan (SCP) to be prepared by appointed contractor in accordance with parameters specified by Section 7.5.1.1 of this chapter, and included in EOP in advance of construction works to ensure details of proposed construction phasing in each area and temporary arrangements (confirming where these will become</p>	Temporary and Short-term, Slight, Adverse, including short-term slight adverse effects arising to air quality.	<p>Relevant monitoring measures as recommended by emissions specialists to be included in the EOP.</p> <p>E.g. dust, water quality, vibration, road conditions.</p> <p>Landscaping to be monitored where reinstatement has occurred to ensure seeding, plants establish. Replacement seeding and planting carried out within current or next planting season. This should be repeated until seeding and planting is successfully established.</p>

Description of Impact	Measures Adopted as Part of Project	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity of Receptor	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect	Proposed Monitoring
					<p>permanent) are communicated to affected stakeholders.</p> <p>Contractor’s Representative to liaise with DCC and landowners / other stakeholders to ensure appropriate planning and phasing.</p> <p>Measures also provided in other relevant chapters (landscape, air, noise and vibration, human health) including Dust Minimisation Plan, temporary noise barriers, seeding etc.</p>		
Employment / economic activity: construction employment and increased demands for goods and services / spending during works	n/a	High	Medium	Temporary-Short-term, Very Significant, Positive	n/a	Short-term, Very Significant, Positive	n/a
Employment / economic activity: Effects on existing employment related to access changes and disruption (including reduction in trade or job losses)	Temporary access provision. TTM including Traffic Management Plan.	Low	Medium	Temporary-Short-term, Slight, Adverse	<p>Construction employee parking to be provided. SCP and CTMP to provide for required access to and where necessary, temporary signage to affected businesses and provide information on proposed work programme to the general business community.</p> <p>Measures provided in Human Health chapter.</p>	Temporary-Short-term, Slight, Adverse	n/a

Description of Impact	Measures Adopted as Part of Project	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity of Receptor	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect	Proposed Monitoring
Community Lands & Assets: impacts on accessibility and amenity of community lands and community assets	TTM and access	Negligible	Medium-High	Temporary, Imperceptible-Slight, Adverse	<p>Access to all community lands to be retained throughout the construction period. Where necessary, temporary signage shall be erected.</p> <p>Measures in Human Health chapter re information sharing with road users including emergency and healthcare services and appropriate mitigation for Ballyraine Park Health Centre.</p> <p>Measures in Cultural Heritage chapter regarding exclusion zone for the archaeological resource at Holy Well wood and measures for water supply to the well as set out in land, soils and hydrogeology assessment.</p>	Temporary, Slight, Adverse	n/a
Community facilities: disturbance from works near St. Joseph's Hospital (S1)	n/a	Low	High	Temporary-Short-term, Slight, Adverse	Measures provided in other chapters where necessary (e.g. noise and vibration, air, traffic).	Temporary-Short-term, Slight, Adverse	n/a
Community facilities: disturbance from works near St. Patrick's NS, Archview Lodge Nursing Home, Bonagee Hall and Indian Community Centre (S2)	TTM	Medium	High	Temporary-Short-term, Moderate Adverse	<p>Measures around timing of works at St. Patrick's NS (S2).</p> <p>Measures provided in other chapters where necessary (e.g. noise and vibration, air quality).</p>	Temporary-Short-term, Slight, Adverse	n/a

Description of Impact	Measures Adopted as Part of Project	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity of Receptor	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect	Proposed Monitoring
Community facilities: disruption to 'lifeline route' to key community facilities in Letterkenny during construction works at the junction between the N56 and the N13 at Dry-Arch roundabout and surrounding roads	TTM measures will be put in place throughout construction to ensure that the 'lifeline' route remains open and accessible until the proposed new Swilly bridge crossing is constructed	Low	High	Temporary-Short-term, Slight-Moderate, Adverse	n/a	Temporary-Short-term, Slight-Moderate, Adverse	n/a
Community facilities: disturbance from works to facilities at Murlog and Drumoghill and to Ray NS (S3)	TTM	Low	High	Short-term, Slight, Adverse	Measures provided in other chapters where necessary (e.g. noise and vibration, air, traffic).	Short-term, Slight, Adverse	n/a
Tourism: Impacts on access to visitor facilities and accommodation during construction	Access provision to facilities during works	Medium	Medium to High	Temporary-Short-term, Moderate, Adverse	Where access and wayfinding are impacted, temporary signage provision, following liaison with Fáilte Ireland, in agreement with DCC. Where feasible nighttime works are to be avoided near accommodation providers however where night-time works are required to avoid obstruction (i.e. adjacent to the Clanree Hotel) or to accommodate non-standard works, maximum night-time noise limits are to be adhered to. Measures provided in other chapters where necessary (e.g.	Temporary-Short-term, Slight, Adverse	n/a

Description of Impact	Measures Adopted as Part of Project	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity of Receptor	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect	Proposed Monitoring
					noise and vibration, air, traffic, landscape and visual,).		
Tourism: Works near Dunwiley Ring Fort (visual amenity and appreciation)	Avoidance of the ring fort	Medium	Low	Temporary / Short-term, Slight, Adverse	Measures set out in cultural heritage chapter including an exclusion zone during works.	See operational stage for residual effects from a tourism perspective	n/a
Tourism: Impacts on Wild Atlantic Way during construction	Temporary signage and TTM	Negligible	High	Short-term, Slight, Adverse	Temporary signage provision, in agreement with DCC and Fáilte Ireland.	Short-term, Slight, Adverse	n/a
NMUs: construction phase impacts to North West Trail, Donegal Cycle Route, Lifford-Strabane Greenway, Lifford-Castlefin Greenway, proposed Barnesmore Gap route, disused rail lines, and existing footpaths and other NMU facilities; and severance effects from some residential areas during construction.	TTM and temporary diversions including pedestrian and cycle routes. Ensuring safe and secure access remains to local facilities. Phasing of works to facilitate continued access.	Low-Medium	High (Disused rail lines assigned Medium sensitivity and former Ballyraine track as negligible)	Temporary-Short-term, Moderate, Adverse	Community Liaison Officers to inform stakeholders of impending closures and alternative arrangements via SCP. Temporary access works to be in place from outset of relevant works. Temporary routes to consider needs of pedestrians (including mobility-impaired), cyclists, private and public vehicle users. Arrangements for continued use to be put in place where construction works intersect cycle routes, including temporary signage provision, following liaison with Fáilte Ireland.	Temporary-Short-term, Slight, Adverse	n/a

Description of Impact	Measures Adopted as Part of Project	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity of Receptor	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect	Proposed Monitoring
Operational Phase							
Private Property & Housing + Development Land & Businesses: Improved safety, accessibility and journey times for resident and working population	n/a	High	High (S2 increases rating)	Profound, Long-term, Positive	n/a	Profound, Long-term, Positive	The scheme shall be measured pre- and post-construction against KPIs that include journey time, safety, and queueing. Pre-construction measurements shall be taken min. 1 month prior to commencement. Post construction measurements shall be taken a min. 6 months and max. 5 years following scheme opening.
Private Property & Housing: Demolition of existing housing	Avoided where possible. Compensation to be provided via CPO process.	High	High	Very significant-profound, Adverse, Permanent	n/a	Very significant-profound, Adverse, Permanent	n/a
Private Property & Housing: Improved accessibility to zoned sites	n/a	Low	Low-Medium	Slight, Permanent, Positive	n/a	Slight, Positive, Permanent	n/a
Private Property & Housing: General amenity	Accommodation works where land take arises (see chapter 16).	Negligible-Medium	Medium-High	Slight to Significant - Long-term, Positive and Adverse depending on receptor	Provided in noise, air, landscape and visual, and material assets chapters.	Slight to Significant, Positive and Adverse, Long-term depending on receptor	Air Quality chapter requires residential properties within 50m of the Proposed Development to be monitored for one month per year. Landscaping establishment to be monitored and

Description of Impact	Measures Adopted as Part of Project	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity of Receptor	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect	Proposed Monitoring
							replaced if necessary.
Development land & Businesses (including Socio-economics): Population growth / retention	n/a	Medium	High	Significant-Very Significant, Long-term, Positive	n/a	Significant-Very Significant, Long-term, Positive	n/a
Development Land & Businesses (including Socio-economics): direct employment effects from maintenance	n/a	Negligible to Low	Low	Imperceptible to Slight, Long-term, Positive	n/a	Imperceptible to Slight, Long-term, Positive	n/a
Development Land & Businesses (including Socio-economics): overall economic impact due to improved accessibility, connectivity, promotion of town centre amenity and increased economic activity	n/a	Medium	Medium	Moderate-Significant, Long-term, Positive	n/a	Moderate-Significant, Long-term, Positive	n/a
Development Land & Businesses (including Socio-economics): direct employment effects through demolition, changes to access and loss of passing trade (collective)	Monetary compensation will be available through the CPO for properties affected by land take. New or modified access to properties will be provided. Most roads will remain operational and local traffic will remain.	Low	High	Slight, Short-term, Adverse (Outweighed by long-term positive effects resulting in Moderate positive effect)	n/a	Slight, Long-term, Adverse (Outweighed by long-term positive effects resulting in Moderate positive effect)	n/a

Description of Impact	Measures Adopted as Part of Project	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity of Receptor	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect	Proposed Monitoring
	<p>Accessibility and amenity likely to be enhanced by reduction of traffic volume.</p> <p>Settlements to be bypassed as key destinations will be provided with directional signage in line with TII policy.</p>						
Development Land & Businesses (including Socio-economics): Provision of link road function for zoned opportunity site at Ballybofey and provision for the development within commercially zoned lands at Letterkenny	n/a	High	Low-Medium	Moderate, Long-term, Positive	n/a	Moderate, Long-term, Positive	n/a
Socio-economics: Irish Language	n/a	Low	Medium	Slight, Long-term, Positive	n/a	Indirect, Slight, Long-term, Positive	n/a
Community lands: accessibility and amenity (S1)	Active travel links to Holy Well and Dromboe Woods	Low-Medium	Medium-High	Slight-Moderate, Permanent, Positive	Measures for Dunwiley Ring Fort in cultural heritage chapter	Slight-Moderate, Permanent, Positive (Slight at worst for Dunwiley)	n/a
Community Assets: Improved access to existing recreational facilities	Strategic traffic will divert to new network. Active travel link to Cappry Rovers (S1) and existing facilities in Dry Arch area (S2).	Medium	Medium-High	Moderate, Positive, Long-term	n/a	Moderate, Positive, Permanent	n/a

Description of Impact	Measures Adopted as Part of Project	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity of Receptor	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect	Proposed Monitoring
	Any official / authorised signage removed will be replaced or updated as appropriate in agreement with DCC under separate contract as necessary.						
Community Assets: Improved accessibility to hospitals, educational and community service facilities	Diversion of traffic volumes from important routes. Second Swilly crossing (S2).	High	High	Profound, Long-term, Positive	n/a	Profound, Long-term, Positive	n/a
Community Assets: improved arrangements at St. Patrick's NS (S2)	Improved safety from design proposals. Active travel measures.	Medium	High	Moderate, Long-term, Positive	n/a	Moderate, Long-term, Positive	n/a
Community Assets: improved air quality	-	Medium	High	Neutral to moderate, long-term, positive	n/a	Neutral to moderate, long-term, positive	n/a
Community Assets: Lands zoned for open space and recreation	n/a	Medium	Low	Slight, Long-term, Adverse	n/a	Slight, Long-term, Adverse	n/a
Community Assets: Training facilities at Ballyraine	n/a	Medium	High	Moderate, Long-term, Adverse	Noise barrier in noise and vibration chapter	Slight, Long-term, Adverse (Population perspective)	n/a
Community Assets: Access to Opportunity Site in Ballybofey with provision for community facilities to support new residential development (S1)	Western link road in S1 will open up the development site.	Medium	Medium	Moderate, Long-term, Positive	n/a	Moderate, Long-term, Positive	n/a

Description of Impact	Measures Adopted as Part of Project	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity of Receptor	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect	Proposed Monitoring
Tourism: Improved accessibility with potential for sustained and enhanced tourist numbers and revenue and increased cycle tourism in particular	Substantial new active travel provision.	Medium	High	Moderate-Significant, Long-term, Positive	n/a	Moderate-Significant, Long-term, Positive	n/a
Tourism: Improved access, reduction of congestion and associated air quality and noise improvements for accommodation providers along existing routes from which strategic traffic will be diverted	New access arrangements.	Medium	Medium-High	Moderate, Long-term, Positive	n/a	Moderate, Long-term, Positive	n/a
Tourism: Impacts for way finding for users of the Wild Atlantic Way and other facilities	Directional signage will be provided (including to key visitor attractions) along the route in accordance with the TII policy and in agreement with DCC. Where existing official or authorised signage requires removal / update it will be replaced appropriately by a separate contractor in agreement with DCC in accordance with standard	Negligible	High	Not Significant, Long-term, Neutral	n/a	Not significant / imperceptible in long-term	n/a

Description of Impact	Measures Adopted as Part of Project	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity of Receptor	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect	Proposed Monitoring
	practice following main construction works.						
Tourism: Access to Dunwiley Ring Fort	Active travel link, visitor information and landscaping	High	Negligible-Low	Slight-Moderate, Permanent, Positive	n/a	Slight-Moderate, Permanent, Positive (cultural heritage assessment separately addressed)	n/a
NMUs: new active travel facilities, improved efficiency / travel time and general connectivity for NMUs, improved safety and amenity for NMUs	Significant active travel provision. Reduction of town centre traffic and enabling of regeneration projects. Options were considered to avoid and minimise severance potential in multiple locations. Maintenance of existing roads or provision of new junctions, underbridges, overbridges etc. Provision of connections to existing routes.	Medium	High (Medium sensitivity applied to disused rail lines)	Very Significant, Long-term, Positive	Where necessary, new wayfinding signage shall be provided for the North West Trail and the Donegal Cycle Route in agreement with DCC, particularly where there is potential linkage from the new active travel routes to be provided as part of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development will provide connectivity options as part of the active travel network with potential future greenways / cycleways where feasible.	Very Significant, Long-term, Positive	n/a
NMUs: Community Severance at Dromore (S2)	Longer distance however, active travel route to be provided to connect into existing cycle route.	Medium-High	Medium	Moderate-Significant, Permanent, Adverse	n/a	Unavoidable, Moderate-Significant, Permanent, Adverse	n/a
NMUs: Community Severance at Trimragh (S2)	Existing underpass to be retained for walkers and cyclists	Medium	Medium	Moderate, Permanent, Positive	n/a	Moderate, Permanent, Positive	n/a

Description of Impact	Measures Adopted as Part of Project	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity of Receptor	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Measures	Residual Effect	Proposed Monitoring
	with vehicles diverted to new overbridge.						
NMUs: Community Severance at Beechwood (S3)	Overpass for Beechwood. Access routes from existing national road to remain in place to Ballindrait, Ray, Drumoghill and Murlog. Active travel link to church and school at Murlog.	Low	Medium	Slight, Long-term, Adverse	n/a	Slight, Long-term, Adverse	n/a
NMUs: Community Severance (S1)	Downgrading of existing roads, provision of active travel facilities etc.	Low	Medium	Slight, Long-term, Adverse / Positive	n/a	Slight, Long-term, Adverse / Positive	n/a

7.11 Conclusion

No significant adverse residual effects have been identified for the construction stage of the Proposed Development.

The employment generated (both directly and indirectly) by the construction phase of the project is considered likely to result in a very significant short-term positive effect.

Significant positive residual effects identified for the operational stage of the Proposed Development are:

- Improved safety, accessibility and journey times for the resident and working population is considered a likely profound long-term effect.
- Population growth / retention is a likely outcome which will result in a significant to very significant long-term effect.
- Improved accessibility and connectivity for the region, enhanced town centre amenity and increased economic activity is a likely moderate to significant long-term effect.
- Improved accessibility to hospitals, educational and community service facilities will be a long-term profound effect and some community facilities will experience long-term slight and moderate beneficial effects to air quality.
- Improved accessibility with potential for sustained and enhanced tourist numbers and revenue and increased cycle tourism in particular which is likely to result in a moderate to significant long-term effect.
- Improved efficiency / travel time and general connectivity for NMUs, along with improved safety and amenity for NMUs across the scheme area which is considered a very significant long-term effect.
- There will be substantial improvements in air quality for receptors along existing main roads from which traffic will be diverted.

Significant adverse residual effects identified for the operational stage of the Proposed Development are:

- Unavoidable community severance at Dromore which will result in a moderate to significant permanent effect.
- Demolition of some existing housing will result in a very significant to profound permanent effect for those residents; with profound effects on individual receptors identified within Chapter 16: Material Assets (Non-Agricultural).
- There will be a substantial adverse effect on air quality for one receptor from a reduction in air quality due to its location close to the new road (long-term).

7.12 References

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