



Limerick Northern Distributor Road

Summary of Scheme Development

23rd July 2015

1. Scheme Objectives

The proposed scheme will serve to:

- Promote balanced development in County Limerick and Limerick City, in County Clare and in the surrounding region
- Improve connectivity of the regional road network
- Improve access to and from the Shannon and Ennis regions
- Improve access to areas of employment (current and future) including the National Technological Park and educational opportunity
- Improve access to areas of educational opportunity (UL, LIT)
- Support proposals for regeneration adopted within the Caherdavin Local Area Plan and Limerick Regeneration Programme -reduce social exclusion of the Moyross area by improving access, attracting investment and improving local connectivity
- Reduce travel times for all communities in the north of Limerick city
- Improve development of pedestrian and cycle facilities, to reduce travel time for this sector

Scheme is supported by:

- Limerick County Development Plan 2010 - 2016
- Limerick City Development Plan 2010 – 2016
- Clare County Development Plan 2011 – 2017
- South Clare Local Area Plan 2012 – 2018
- National Spatial Strategy 2002 – 2020
- Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022
- Mid-West Area Strategic Plan (MWASP)

2. Scheme History

October 2010:

Roughan & O'Donovan /MRG appointed as consulting engineers by Clare County Council following public procurement process. Section 85 Agreement completed with Limerick County Council. Steering committee established comprising representatives of Clare County Council, Limerick County Council and Limerick City Council.

November 2010:

Constraints Study phase launched; presentation to elected representatives from all three councils. Submissions invited from members of the public and interested parties. Process advertised in local media (**Limerick Leader, Clare Champion, Live 95FM, Clare FM**) and on **websites** of Limerick County Council, Limerick City Council and Clare County Council.

July 2011:

Route Options presented for consultation; presentation to elected representatives June 2011 . Route options shown in **Figure RCSR – 501 (attached)**.

July –December 2011:

Route Selection Process progressed. Necessary surveys, including ecological surveys, carried out. Analysis of all submissions received, including those from private individuals, interest groups and statutory consultees.

January 2012:

Publication of **Emerging Preferred Route Corridor**; presentation to elected representatives. Consultation event at Radisson Hotel, Ennis Road, 18th January 2012. Additional presentation to elected representatives in February 2012. Supplementary Public Consultation Event 27th March 2012 (Radisson Hotel). Final date for receipt of public comments 11th May 2012. Draft Constraints Report published 10th April 2012.

September 2012:

Publication of **Route Corridor Selection Report**

March 2015:

Briefing of Elected Members of Limerick City and County Council on forthcoming variation process in relation to Limerick Northern Distributor Road scheme. Briefing note circulated at meeting which was held on 31st March 2015.

April 2015:

Publication of **Variation No. 4 to Limerick County Development Plan** to create infrastructural safeguard for the LNDP.

3. Route Selection Process

Wide range of options were identified in order to facilitate a route selection process appropriate to the scale of the project and the complexity of the Study Area - refer [Figure RCSR – 501](#) (attached).

Key features of the Study Area included:

- Large settlement areas, both urban and rural
- Agricultural activity
- Ardnacrusha hydroelectric scheme including headrace and tailrace
- Areas of environmental sensitivity – Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Flood risk areas
- University of Limerick (UL)
- National Technological Park and other employment centres
- Retail areas
- Schools
- Hotels

For the section of the Scheme between Parteen and the R445 Dublin Road, route options were eliminated as follows:

Arising from discussions with ESB, the following options were discounted in order to avoid unacceptable effects on the hydrogeological regime in the vicinity of the Headrace channel

- Options D2,
- Link D2 to D1
- Northern section of Option E1

Following assessment of the ecological regime along the Lower River Shannon SAC, the following additional options were discounted because of the requirement to avoid significant adverse impact on qualifying interests (flora and fauna)

- C1
- D1 (* See note below)
- Link E1 to D1

* Note: Shannon Development had also previously expressed serious concern regarding this route, in terms of impact on the master planning of the National Technological Park (NTP), and traffic impact on the local road network and the viability of NTP's current activities.

Short Listed Options are shown in [Figure RCSR-602](#).

Option **E1** subsequently amended to **E 1.1** on environmental grounds (concerns about the hooper swan habitat) .

Final selection

For the remaining options (B1 and D1/E1.1) the selection of the Preferred Route Corridor was assessed under appropriate headings in accordance with relevant guidelines. The decision process is summarised in the table below and in the following text.

	B1	D1/E1.1
	Nodes X – J – B	Nodes X – J – L – M – N – O – E
Environment	Preferred	Less Preferred
Economy	Equal Preference	Equal Preference
Safety	Less Preferred	Preferred
Accessibility and Social Inclusion	Less Preferred	Preferred
Integration	Less Preferred	Preferred
Overall	Less Preferred	Preferred

Environment:

Assessment under a series of subheadings resulted in the following outcomes:

The options were equally ranked under the headings of Ecology, Water Quality and Geology/Hydrogeology. Option D1/E1.1 was preferred under the headings of Air Quality/ Climate and Noise/Vibration.

Option B1 was preferred under the headings of Landscape/Visual, Material Assets, Agriculture, Architectural Heritage and Archaeology/Cultural Heritage.

In overall terms Option B1 was slightly preferred under the Environmental heading.

Economy:

The two options were equally ranked under all headings considered, namely Traffic Efficiency and Effectiveness, Wider Economic Impacts, Funding Impacts and Relative Traffic Disbenefits.

Safety:

Option D1/E1.1 was preferred under the two headings considered, namely Accident Reduction and Security. Option B1 would have severe impacts on the existing R445 Dublin Road, on the section between the Groody Roundabout and the Cappamore Road junction, because of the large number of direct accesses and number of minor road junctions which would have to be dealt with if that option were selected.

Accessibility and Social Inclusion:

The two options were equally ranked under the heading of Impact on Vulnerable Groups.

Option D1/E1.1 was preferred under the headings of Impact on Deprived Geographic Areas and Social Inclusion.

Integration:

Option D1/E1.1 was preferred under the headings of Land Use Integration and Adherence to Government Policy.

The two options were equally ranked under the headings of Transport Integration and Geographical Integration.

The detailed assessment matrix for the process is included in Appendix A .

4. Flood Risk Assessment

As part of the Variation process a strategic flood risk assessment has been carried out in accordance with the "Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (with Technical Appendices) published in November 2009 (OPW/DoEHLG)". This gives an overview of the three-stage Flood Risk Assessment process to identify whether and the degree to which flood risk is an issue. The Guidelines highlight the need for a Sequential Approach to managing flood risk. The flood risk assessment was published on 24th April 2015 at the formal commencement of the Variation process and was circulated to the Office of Public Works as part of the required formal consultation exercise.

The following comments received from the OPW are noted:

- The OPW welcomes the detailed Flood Risk Assessment for proposed Variation carried out by Hydro Environmental Ltd, commissioned by Roughan O'Donovan Ltd.
- The OPW welcomes the considered comments made throughout the FRA in particular to Section 3.2 outlining the process for assessment of flood risk in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (November 2009) and in the application of the Justification Test in Section 7.
- The OPW agree with the conclusions set out in Section 7.3 that the proposal to progress the Limerick Northern Distributor Road project passes the justification test set out in the Flood Risk Management Planning Guidelines (Nov 2009), *"given the clear strategic nature of the proposed road transport development, the sequential approach involved in the route corridor selection process and the findings from the flood risk assessment that flood risk to the proposed road development can be adequately managed and mitigated for and that the construction and operation of the road can be engineered not to cause unacceptable adverse flood impacts elsewhere."*
- The OPW are impressed with the amount of work gone into this FRA and adherence to the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines.

Appendix A
Selection Matrix

Assessment Matrix - Route B1 versus Route D1/E1.1

	B1		D1/E1.1	
	X – J – B		X – J – L – M – N – O – E	
ENVIRONMENT				
Ecology	Major Negative	1	Major Negative	1
Water Quality	Moderate Negative	2	Moderate Negative	2
Geology & Hydrogeology	Major Negative	1	Major Negative	1
Air Quality & Climate	Major Negative	1	Minor Negative	3
Noise & Vibration	Major Negative	1	Minor Negative	3
Landscape & Visual	Moderate Negative	2	Major Negative	1
Material Assets (Non - Agricultural Properties)	Moderate Negative	2	Major Negative	1
Agriculture	Minor Negative	3	Major Negative	1
Architectural Heritage	Minor Negative	3	Moderate Negative	2
Archaeology & Cultural Heritage	Minor Negative	3	Moderate Negative	2
Sub-Total	19		17	
ECONOMY				
Traffic Efficiency and Effectiveness	Highly Positive	7	Highly Positive	7
Wider Economic Impacts	Moderately Positive	6	Moderately Positive	6
Funding Impacts	Neutral	4	Neutral	4
Relative Traffic Dis-benefits (Millions)	Neutral	4	Neutral	4
Sub-Total	21		21	
SAFETY				
Accident Reduction	Moderately Positive	6	Highly Positive	7
Security	Moderately Positive	6	Highly Positive	7
Sub-Total	12		14	
ACCESSIBILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION				
Impact on Vulnerable Groups	Highly Positive	7	Highly Positive	7
Impact on deprived geographic areas	Moderately Positive	6	Highly Positive	7
Social Inclusion	Moderately Positive	6	Highly Positive	7
Sub-Total	19		21	
INTEGRATION				
Transport Integration	Moderately Positive	6	Moderately Positive	6
Land Use Integration	Slightly Positive	5	Moderately Positive	6
Geographical Integration	Moderately Positive	6	Moderately Positive	6
Government Policy	Slightly Positive	5	Highly Positive	7
Total	22		25	