



# **N63 LISS TO ABBEY REALIGNMENT SCHEME**

## **Part 1.3 - BRIEF OF EVIDENCE - Planning**

### **AN BORD PLEANÁLA APPLICATION AND CPO HEARING**

**Prepared by:**

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**GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL**

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## **Statement of Evidence by Valerie Loughnane – Moran for the N63 Liss to Abbey Realignment Scheme and CPO Hearing**

I commenced working with Galway County Council in August 1999 as an Assistant Planner and was appointed Executive Planner in 2002 and Senior Executive Planner in September 2005. I currently hold the position of Senior Planner.

I hold a B.A. (Hons) Degree from University of Galway in Mathematics and Geography. I was conferred with a Masters Degree in Regional and Urban Planning from University College Dublin and also hold a Higher Diploma in Education from the University of Galway.

### **1. Location**

The Proposed Road Development is located in the townlands of Culliagh North, Culliagh South, Liss, Abbey, Chapelfield, Clashard, Moyne and Newtown and runs in a south-west to north-east direction across the Abbert River. The proposed road project starts on the eastern edge of Abbeyknockmoy and runs north-east to the proposed tie-in with the existing N63 at the L6234 junction. The Proposed Road Development will comprise a rural all-purpose Type 2 Single Carriageway road, including a new crossing over the Abbert River. Provision of both pedestrian and cycle facilities have been included predominantly along the route of the existing N63 to connect the residential area of Abbeyknockmoy village to the existing community facilities located both on and off the current N63.

### **2. Development Description**

The road improvement scheme and associated works on the N63 consists of the following works:

- Approximately 2.3 km of new Type 2 Single Carriageway road (predominantly offline);
- One new roundabout at the western end of the Proposed Road Development to provide connection with the existing N63;
- Two new priority junctions to provide connection to the existing L6159 and L6234, including some minor local road realignments;
- One new clear span steel girder bridge crossing of the Abbert River;
- A number of new piped culverts and two new box culverts over existing field ditches;
- Three new flood alleviation culverts (box culverts);
- New pedestrian and cycle facilities, predominantly located along the existing N63;

- Associated earthworks including excavation of unacceptable material, excavation and processing of rock and other material, and recovery of unacceptable material for re-use in the works;
- Accommodation works, including the provision of access roads and accesses;
- Drainage works, including the construction of attenuation ponds in accordance with sustainable drainage design principles and guidance;
- Treatment of surface water run-off prior to outfall discharge, spill containment measures and attenuation treatment facilities;
- Utilities and services diversion works including medium voltage (10 kV/20 kV) overhead lines and EIR overhead lines;
- Safety barriers, public lighting, fencing;
- A viewing area for Knockmoy Abbey with parking;
- Landscaping planting works, signage, lighting and other works ancillary to the construction and operation of the Proposed Road Development;
- Construction of farm access tracks with accommodation works ancillary to the Proposed Road Development; and
- Environmental measures and other ancillary works.

### **3. Policy Context**

#### **Strategic Context**

The proposed road scheme supports the objectives of the TEN-T in broad terms by improving the connection to Junction 19 on the M17 TEN-T network.

It seeks to enhance regional and local accessibility, by providing improved accessibility and social inclusion to community facilities. It maintains the strategic capacity and safety of the national roads network including planning for future capacity enhancements.

The overall strategic context is set and complies with the following documents:

National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040

National Development Plan 2021 - 2030

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032

Climate Action Plan 2021

Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future - A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 - 2020

## **County Policy**

### **Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028**

The County Galway Development Plan 2022-2028 which came into effect on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022 supports the realignment of the N63 Road project.

Chapter 6 of the County Galway Development Plan 2022-2028 outlines the priorities for the county in terms of Transport and Movement.

The following Policy Objectives support the proposed road project

#### **GCTPS 1 Galway County Transport & Planning Study and Galway Transportation Strategy**

It is a policy objective of Galway County Council to support and facilitate the implementation of the Galway County Transport & Planning Study and Galway Transportation Strategy across all modes of transport.

#### **GCTPS 7 Improvements to Road Network**

The County will manage and maintain the efficient and safe operation of the road network under its control, and will work with TII and NTA to identify locations on the national network where targeted improvements may be required to address specific issues.

#### **GCTPS 8 Enhancement of National Networks**

The County will co-operate with TII and the NTA with regard to the maintenance and enhancement of national networks for longer-distance and cross-country travel and movement of through-traffic including freight.

The project also includes new pedestrian and cycling provisions which is supported by the following policy objectives in the chapter

#### **ILUTP 1 Sustainable Transportation**

Encourage transition towards sustainable and low carbon transport modes, through the promotion of alternative modes of transport, and ‘walkable communities’ and Active Travel, together with promotion of compact urban forms close to public transport corridors to encourage more sustainable patterns of movement.

#### **WC 1 Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure**

To require the design of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to be in accordance with the principles, approaches and standards set out in the National Cycle Manual and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, TII Publications, ‘The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads’, and the NTA document Permeability: Best Practice Guide

Additionally, **Section 6.5.3** of the CDP sets out priority projects on national roads and states the following

*Whilst the plan supports the promotion of sustainable transport and a low carbon county the Council recognises that due to the significant number of rural communities within the county and the importance of maintaining movement of goods that roads infrastructure will retain an integral part of the overall transportation network for the county.*

*Galway County Council will continue to support extensions and improvements to existing roads infrastructure within the County with the priority projects listed. This includes:*

- N63 Annagh Cross to Ballygar.

The proposed road scheme lies along this stretch of prioritised roadway

#### **4. The Application**

The application is supported by the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report and a Natura Impact Statement. The application along with the planning consent request also contains the CPO for the scheme. The documentation supporting the application also includes CPO schedules, Deposit Maps and Server Maps. A design report completes the documentation submitted as part of the application. Additionally, an EIAR and NIS Addendum and an EIAR and NIS errata have been added to the application for consideration.

#### **5. Conclusion**

It is considered that the N63 realignment project as proposed including the CPO is compliant with planning policies at a European, National, Regional and Local level, is in accordance with the policies and objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 and complies with the relevant National and Regional documents and policies as expressed in the National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040 and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032.

On this basis, it is considered that the proposed road development is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.