



DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

TEN-T PRIORITY ROUTE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, DONEGAL

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING DETERMINATION

Donegal County Council ("DCC") intends to apply to An Coimisiún Pleanála for approval under Section 51 of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) for the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (the "Proposed Scheme").

The Proposed Scheme comprises three sections in Donegal namely:

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

The Section 1 mainline is approximately 9.7 km long and runs from south to north and to the west of Ballybofey/ Stranorlar. Additionally, there are two link roads located to the south and the north of the towns providing connections from the Proposed Scheme, respectively: the Ballybofey Link Road connecting the Mainline to the existing N15 and R252 at Cappry, and the N15 Primary Road Connector connecting the Mainline to the existing N13 at Tircallan and the existing N15 at Treanamullin. The Proposed Scheme interfaces with the existing roads include:

- Tie-in to N15 south of Dooish.
- Tie-in to R252 Glenties Road at Cappry from Ballybofey Link Road North.
- Tie-in to N15 Ballybofey/ Cappry (Graham) from Ballybofey Link Road South.
- Tie-in to N13 north of Meenavoy.
- Tie-in to N13 at Tircallan.
- Tie-in to N15 at Treanamullin.

The mainline consists of 0.5 km of Type 1 Single Carriageway between the existing N15 at Meencarragh to the proposed Dooish Junction, 8.6 km of Type 2 Divided Road between Dooish Junction and Meenavoy Junction and 0.6 km of Type 1 Single Carriageway between the Meenavoy Junction and the existing N13, as well as new and realigned side roads and links roads. The Ballybofey Link Road North/ South is 2.1 km Type 2 Single Carriageway. The N15 Primary Road Connector is 3.1 km of Type 3 Divided Road. Section 1 has three grade-separated junctions, one each at Cappry, Teevickmoy and Tircallan/ Dunwiley. It also has three at-grade junctions, one each at Dooish, Meenavoy and Treanamullin. There is one 360 m long, seven span bridge over the River Finn, two river/ stream bridges, seven overbridges, five underbridges, three underpasses, culverts, gantries, retaining walls, environmental barriers, and a comprehensive active travel network for non-motorised users. Section 1 includes other works including access roads, accommodation works, drainage, attenuation ponds, flood compensation areas, utilities diversions, landscape planting, signage, lighting, safety barrier, and other works ancillary to the construction and operation of the Proposed Scheme.

The Section 2 mainline is approximately 9.0 km long and runs from south to north and to the east of Letterkenny. It includes new sections of divided road north from Listellian, a proposed crossing of the River Swilly east of Ballyraine, and improvements to the existing dual carriageway between Dry Arch Roundabout and N13/N14 Pluck Roundabout. The interfaces with the existing roads include:

- Tie-in to existing N13 at Listellian (proposed online junction).
- Tie-in to existing N13/N56 at Bonagee (existing Dry Arch roundabout to be improved).
- Tie-in to existing N56/R245 at Ballyraine (existing roundabout to be improved).

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- Tie-in to the existing N13 dual carriageway at Dromore (proposed online junction).
- Tie-in to the existing N13/N14 near Pluck roundabout at Raymoghly (Section 3 interface).

The mainline consists of 0.3 km of Type 1 Single Carriageway between the existing N13 at Listellian to the proposed Listellian Junction, 4.1 km of Type 2 Divided Road between Listellian Junction and Ballyraine Junction (N56/R245 Creamery Roundabout), 0.4 km of Type 2 Divided Road for the Bonagee Link, improvements and upgrades to 4.1 km of the existing Type 1 Dual Carriageway between the existing Dry Arch Roundabout and the Section 3 interface just west of the existing Pluck Roundabout, as well as new and realigned side roads and links roads. Section 2 has one grade-separated junction at Trimragh. It also has five at-grade junctions, one each at Listellian, Dromore, Bonagee, with improvements to the Dry Arch Roundabout, and Ballyraine (N56/R245 Creamery Roundabout). There is one 235 m long, three span bridge over the River Swilly, three overbridges, three underbridges, one active travel overbridge, one active travel river bridge, two active travel underpasses, culverts, gantries, retaining walls, environmental barriers, and a comprehensive active travel network for non-motorised users. Section 2 includes other works including access roads, accommodation works, drainage, attenuation ponds, utilities diversions, landscape planting, signage, lighting, safety barrier, and other works ancillary to the construction and operation of the Proposed Scheme.

The Section 3 mainline is approximately 18.1 km long and from approximately 0.3 km west of the proposed N13/N14 Pluck Roundabout (interface with Section 2) to the border with Northern Ireland on the River Finn to the south of Lifford, including the N14/N15 to A5 Link and new bridge over the River Finn south of Lifford. The interfaces with the existing roads include:

- N13 at Manorcunningham (interface with Section 2) (N13/N14 Pluck Roundabout).
- "Left-in Left-out" northbound connection to existing N14 Local Road at Drumoghill (Drumoghill Junction).
- "Left-in Left-out" southbound connection to existing N14 at Doorable (Drumoghill Junction).
- R236 / existing N14 east of Raphoe (R236 Ballinalecky Junction).
- Existing L2444 local road, to be upgraded to the R264 at Ballindrait and existing N14 at Rossgeir (Ballindrait Junction).
- Tie-in to N15 south of Lifford.
- N14/N15 to A5 Link.

The mainline consists of 0.3 km of Type 1 Dual Carriageway between the interface with Section 2 and the proposed N13/N14 Pluck Roundabout, 17.5 km of Type 2 Divided Road extending from the proposed N13/N14 Pluck Roundabout to the proposed N14/N15 Lifford Junction, 0.3 km of Type 2 Divided Road extending from the proposed N14/N15 Lifford Junction to the border with Northern Ireland (the N14/N15 to A5 Link), as well as new and realigned side roads and links roads. Section 3 has two grade-separated junctions, one each at the R236 Ballinalecky and Ballindrait. It also has three at-grade junctions, one each at the proposed N13/N14 Pluck Roundabout, Drumoghill, and N14/N15 Lifford Junction. There is one 260 m long bridge over the River Finn, two other river bridges, seven overbridges, eight underbridges, four underpasses, two active travel underpasses, one active travel overbridge, culverts, gantries, environmental barriers, and a comprehensive active travel network for non-motorised users. Section 3 includes other works including access roads, accommodation works, drainage, attenuation ponds, utilities diversions, landscape planting, bat house, signage, lighting, safety barrier, and other works ancillary to the construction and operation of the Proposed Scheme.

The Proposed Scheme is located fully within County Donegal, passing through or contiguous with the electoral districts of: Section 1: Convoy, Dooish, Goland, Killygordon, Lettermore, and Stranorlar; Section 2: Letterkenny Rural, Magheraboy, and Manorcunningham; Section 3: Clonleigh North, Clonleigh South, Feddyglass, Kinraigy, Magheraboy, Manorcunningham, Treantaghmucklagh.

This screening determination has considered the relevant legislative context, including but not limited to Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (as amended), Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (as amended), and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) (as amended).

## **Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report**

DCC appointed RPS and Barry Transportation (an Egis company) to prepare an Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report for the Proposed Scheme entitled "*Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment, TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal*" dated December 2025 to consider, analyse and assess whether in view of best scientific knowledge and objective information and the conservation objectives of the European site(s) (which are discussed further below), if the Proposed Scheme individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site(s).

The Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment report concluded that:

- The Proposed Scheme is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site.
- Applying the precautionary principle, alone, the Proposed Scheme is likely to result in Likely Significant Effects on a number of European sites.
- It is also not possible to rule out Likely Significant Effects in combination with other plans and projects.
- There is potential for direct and indirect effects on Lough Swilly SAC, Lough Swilly SPA, and River Finn SAC in Ireland. There is also the potential for direct and indirect effects on River Foyle and Tributaries SAC (Northern Ireland) which site for completeness and out of an abundance of caution is being treated in this screening as still being part of the EU Natura 2000 network. There is also potential for ex-situ foraging effects to the Lough Foyle SPA in Ireland and the Lough Foyle SPA in Northern Ireland which site for completeness and out of an abundance of caution is being treated in this screening as still being part of the EU Natura 2000 network.
- Therefore, it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Scheme being the Trans-European Network – Transportation Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (TEN-T PRIPD) individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a likely significant effect on a European Site.

DCC has received and read the Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment report and has considered its content and its conclusions and recommendation set out therein. Having done this, DCC agrees with the conclusions and recommendation set out in the Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment report.

## **Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination**

Having regard to the foregoing, DCC has determined that an Appropriate Assessment of the Proposed Scheme is required as it cannot exclude, in view of best scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective scientific information, following the screening that DCC has carried out, that the Proposed Scheme, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, in the absence of mitigation, will have a likely significant effect on the following four European Site(s) (two SPAs and two SACs) and two sites in Northern Ireland (one SPA and one SAC) which as mentioned above such sites for completeness and out of an abundance of caution are being treated in this screening as still being part of the EU Natura 2000 network in view of the conservation objectives of those said site(s):-

1. River Finn SAC
2. Lough Swilly SAC
3. Lough Swilly SPA
4. Lough Foyle SPA
5. River Foyle and Tributaries SAC (Northern Ireland)
6. Lough Foyle SPA (Northern Ireland)

DCC has made this determination on the basis of the following reasons:

### **River Finn SAC (Site Code: 002301)**

The River Finn flows through the Proposed Scheme development area. The River Finn is designated an SAC for much of its length, including where the Proposed Scheme crosses the River Finn just north of Ballybofey/ Stranorlar. Therefore, the footprint of the construction and operational activities could result in the source of impacts and effects upon the River Finn SAC.

All QI habitats of the SAC lie upstream of the Proposed Scheme.

Presence of both QI species (otter and salmon) known for the river within the Proposed Scheme boundary and downstream of the Proposed Scheme boundary.

There is the potential for the following likely significant effects:

#### **Construction**

- Habitat deterioration due to unintended incursion by construction personnel, equipment or materials associated with the construction phase.
- Surface water deterioration: release of sediments during the construction phase.
- Surface water deterioration: release of cement/ concrete and/or hydrocarbons during the construction phase.
- Impacts and effects on groundwater.
- Air pollution: generation of dust by construction processes.
- Air pollution: emissions from construction traffic.
- Dispersal of invasive species.

#### **Operational**

- Changes in water quality from discharges from surface water drainage of the road.
- Changes in water quality due to accidental hazardous spillages.
- Air pollution caused by operational phase traffic.
- Habitat fragmentation for QI and SCI species.

### **Lough Swilly SAC (Site Code: 002287)**

The River Swilly flows through the Proposed Scheme development area. The Lough Swilly SAC includes a portion of the River Swilly including where the Proposed Scheme crosses the River Swilly just east of Ballyraine, Letterkenny. Therefore, the footprint of the construction and operational activities could result in a source of impacts and effects upon the Lough Swilly SAC.

The following QI habitats lie within and downstream of the Proposed Scheme boundary and the construction works lie within the catchment of the river:

- Estuaries [1130]
- Coastal lagoons [1550]
- Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima*) [1330]
- Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles [91A0] and *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*) [6410] lie outside of the Proposed Scheme boundary and is not hydrologically connected to the Proposed Scheme.
- Otter, a QI species of the SAC, is known to be active within the Proposed Scheme boundary for Section 2.
- Harbour Porpoise a new QI for the Lough Swilly SAC are not known from within the Proposed Scheme boundary but are downstream of the Proposed Scheme.

There is the potential for the following likely significant effects:

#### **Construction**

- Habitat Fragmentation.
- Unintended incursion by construction personnel, equipment or materials associated with the construction phase.
- Surface water deterioration: release of sediments during the construction phase.
- Surface water deterioration: release of cement/ concrete and/or hydrocarbons during the construction phase.

- Impacts and effects on groundwater.
- Air pollution: generation of dust by construction processes.
- Air pollution: emissions from construction traffic.
- Dispersal of invasive species.

#### Operational

- Changes in water quality due surface water drainage of the road.
- Air pollution caused by operational phase traffic.
- Dispersal of invasive species.
- Habitat fragmentation for QI and SCI species.

### Lough Swilly SPA (Site Code: 004075)

The Proposed Scheme boundary overlaps with an area of the Lough Swilly SPA, but the SPA is outside of the proposed footprint of the construction and operational activities. However, given the close proximity and that the SPA is downstream, the construction activities could result in a source of impacts and effects upon the habitats of the SPA upon which the Special Conservation Interests (SCI) are dependent. The construction activities may also cause occasional disturbance of SCI populations within parts of the SPA within 500 m of the Proposed Scheme boundary and potential SCI populations which occasionally use ex-situ habitats within 500 m of the Proposed Scheme boundary.

There is the potential for the following likely significant effects:

#### Construction

- Habitat Fragmentation.
- Disturbance from construction activities (noise and vibration).
- Unintended incursion by construction personnel, equipment or materials associated with the construction phase.
- Surface water deterioration: release of sediments during the construction phase.
- Surface water deterioration: release of cement/ concrete and/or hydrocarbons during the construction phase.
- Impacts and effects on groundwater.
- Air pollution: generation of dust by construction processes.
- Air pollution: emissions from construction traffic.
- Dispersal of invasive species.

#### Operational

- Disturbance due to operational activities (noise).
- Changes in water quality due to surface water drainage of the road.
- Air pollution caused by operational phase traffic.
- Dispersal of invasive species.
- Habitat fragmentation for SCI species.

### Lough Foyle SPA (Site Code: 004087)

The disturbance of ex-situ SCI bird populations which, based on survey, use land within and adjacent to the Proposed Scheme for foraging and roosting which could move between this land and Lough Foyle (and Lough Swilly) as part of their lifecycle. Their displacement from this land due to disturbance during construction and operation could result in a Likely Significant Effect on the SCI populations of Lough Foyle SPA.

There is the potential for the following likely significant effects:

#### Construction

- Habitat Fragmentation.
- Disturbance from construction activities (noise and vibration).
- Unintended incursion by construction personnel, equipment or materials associated with the construction phase.

#### Operational

- Disturbance due to operational activities (noise).

## **River Foyle and Tributaries SAC (Northern Ireland) (UK0030320)**

The River Finn flows through the Proposed Scheme development area. The River Finn forms part of the River Foyle and Tributaries SAC (Northern Ireland), including where the Proposed Scheme crosses the River Finn just south of Lifford/ Strabane. Therefore, the footprint of the construction and operational activities could result in the source of impacts and effects upon the River Foyle and Tributaries SAC.

QI habitat of the SAC lies upstream of the Proposed Scheme.

Presence of both QI species (otter and salmon) known for the river within the Proposed Scheme boundary and downstream of the Proposed Scheme boundary.

There is the potential for the following likely significant effects:

### **Construction**

- Habitat deterioration due to unintended incursion by construction personnel, equipment or materials associated with the construction phase.
- Surface water deterioration: release of sediments during the construction phase.
- Surface water deterioration: release of cement/ concrete and/or hydrocarbons during the construction phase.
- Impacts and effects on groundwater.
- Air pollution: generation of dust by construction processes.
- Air pollution: emissions from construction traffic.
- Dispersal of invasive species.

### **Operational**

- Changes in water quality due surface water drainage of the road.
- Changes in water quality due to accidental hazardous spillages.
- Air pollution caused by operational phase traffic.
- Habitat fragmentation for QI and SCI species.

## **Lough Foyle SPA (UK9020031)**

The disturbance of ex-situ SCI bird populations which, based on survey, use land within and adjacent to the Proposed Scheme for foraging and roosting which could move between this land and Lough Foyle (and Lough Swilly) as part of their lifecycle. Their displacement from this land due to disturbance during construction and operation could result in a Likely Significant Effects on the SCI populations of Lough Foyle SPA.

There is the potential for the following likely significant effects:

### **Construction**

- Habitat fragmentation.
- Disturbance from construction activities (noise and vibration).
- Unintended incursion by construction personnel, equipment or materials associated with the construction phase.

### **Operational**

- Disturbance due to operational activities (noise).
- Habitat fragmentation for SCI species.

DCC has therefore requested that RPS and Barry Transportation (an Egis company) finalise a Natura Impact Statement which will be submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála with the application for approval under Section 51 of the Roads Act, 1993 (as amended) for the Proposed Scheme.

This AA Screening Determination has been made by Eamonn Brown, and in doing so DCC has implemented an appropriate functional separation in the carrying out of Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

This determination is available for inspection at DCC's Offices listed below between the hours of 9.00am – 4.30pm, and on its website at [www.donegal-ten-t.ie](http://www.donegal-ten-t.ie).

- The Offices of Donegal County Council, County House, Lifford.
- The offices of Donegal County Council, Public Services Centre, Letterkenny
- The offices of Donegal County Council, Public Services Centre, Donegal Town
- The offices of Donegal County Council, Public Services Centre, An Clochán Liath
- The offices of Donegal County Council, Public Services Centre, Carndonagh

Signed: 

**A/Director of Planning, Communities & Culture**

Dated:- 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026

