

RANDALSTOWN TO TOOME DUAL CARRIAGEWAY



An Agency within the Department for

**Regional
Development**

www.drdni.gov.uk



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Introduction

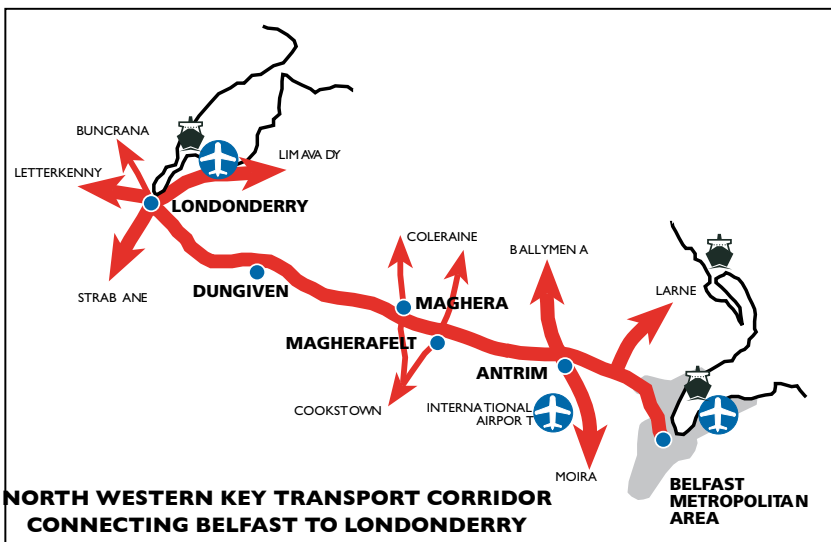
The Department for Regional Development has developed a Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 (RSTN TP) for the maintenance, management and development of Northern Ireland's transport network. The plan includes a programme of Strategic Road Improvements (SRIs) to remove bottlenecks on the key road network where lack of capacity is causing serious congestion, and to improve the environment by providing bypasses to some towns. The Randalstown to Toome dual carriageway is part of a proposal for a dual carriageway from the end of the M22 Motorway at Randalstown, via Toome Bypass, to the Castledawson Roundabout.

What is an Environmental Statement

This leaflet describes the scheme proposals and summarises the results of the Environmental Statement (ES) for the project. The ES is a detailed report of the findings of the environmental assessment carried out on the scheme. In particular, it predicts the environmental effects the scheme will have and details the measures proposed to reduce or eliminate those effects. The ES is issued in accordance with EC Directive 85/337 EEC, as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC and Articles 67 and 67A of The Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 (as substituted by the Roads (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999).

Why the Scheme is Needed

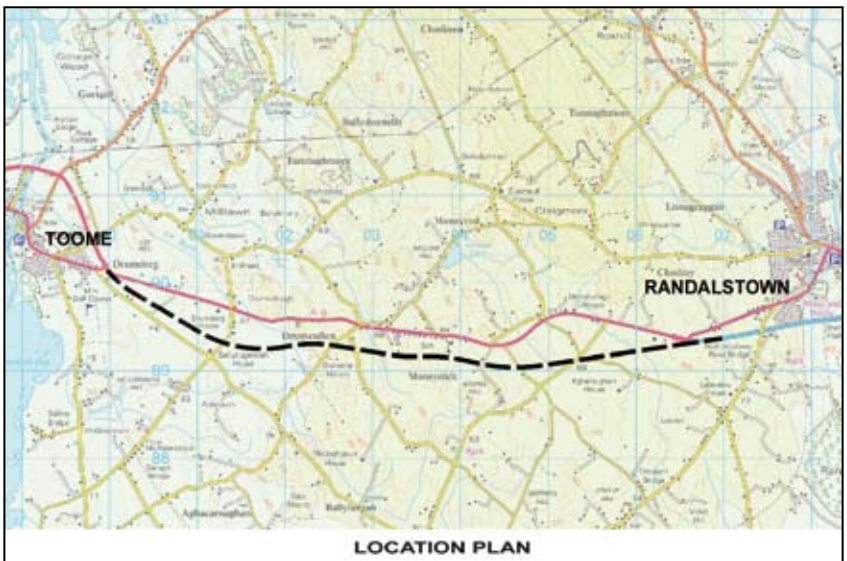
The A6 is an important part of the North Western Key Transport Corridor, connecting Belfast and Londonderry, via Toome, Maghera and Dungiven. The corridor is of strategic and economic importance within Northern Ireland, providing an essential road link between the Belfast Metropolitan Area and the North-West. Increasing traffic will add to congestion on the existing road between Randalstown and Toome, and road safety will deteriorate. The proposed new dual carriageway will deliver improved road safety and consistent journey times



for strategic and local road users, and will facilitate further expansion of local industry in the area.

Existing Conditions

The existing Moneynick Road, joining Randalstown to Toome, lies within a wide belt of flat land, close to the northern shores of Lough Neagh. The flat open land rises from Lough Neagh into a gentle sloping hinterland and has a diverse, irregular pattern of land cover, including marshy areas, backed by extensive flat pasturelands with large open fields, broken hedges and drainage ditches. Rural properties and settlements are dispersed through the landscape. Farming is the predominant activity. The soils of the area are clay based and often poorly drained.



The A6 between Randalstown and Toome is single carriageway, with scattered commercial, residential and community development fronting onto the road. There is a cluster of residential properties and a primary school at Moneynick, and Derryhollagh cottages are further east towards Randalstown. Several rural roads connect to the A6.

The Proposed Scheme

The proposed road is a high standard dual carriageway. It has no private accesses, no central reserve crossovers and with the minimum of junctions. This standard of dual carriageway has considerable safety benefits for the road user.

The scheme would lead traffic onto a 7.3 kilometre long dual carriageway, constructed between Randalstown and Toome. The existing single carriageway Moneynick Road would be retained to provide local access to Moneynick and the surrounding area. The proposed scheme would :

- Begin at the western end of the M22 motorway at Randalstown;

- Continue offline to the south of the existing Moneynick Road in a combination of cutting and embankment, through a drumlin landscape;
- Join the Toome Bypass, east of Toome at the Drumderg Roundabout.

A new compact grade-separated junction at the end of the M22 Motorway would connect to the Moneynick Road at Randalstown, facilitating local access east to Randalstown, and west towards Toome.

The existing Moneynick Road would become a local road, providing easy access to the many properties and farms along the road. Some alterations are required to the local road network.

- At Derrygowan Road, a bridge would carry this local road over the new dual carriageway, maintaining local access to the surrounding area.
- The Aghaloughan Road would form a new staggered junction arrangement with the Derrygowan Road.
- The Greenan Road would be stopped-up either side of the new dual carriageway and no longer be a through road. Greenan Road traffic would use the nearby Derrygowan Road to cross over the new dual carriageway.
- The Ranaghan Road, south of the new carriageway, would be partially realigned to connect to the Ballynafey Road.
- At Ballynafey Road, a bridge would carry this local road over the new dual carriageway, maintaining local access to the surrounding area.
- The Gallagher Road would be stopped-up either side of the new dual carriageway, and no longer be a through road. The northern section would become a cul-de-sac, accessed from the Moneynick Road. The southern section of Gallagher Road, from its junction with the Staffordstown Road to the mainline, would be abandoned.
- An enlarged roundabout at Drumderg, east of Toome, would connect to the Moneynick Road, providing local access west to Toome, and east towards Randalstown.
- The Moneynick Road would be partially realigned near Toome to tie-in with the enlarged Drumderg Roundabout layout.

Alternative private means of access from the local road network are included to ensure continued access to property and farms.

Mitigation Measures

The proposed dual carriageway has been designed to reduce, as far as possible, damage to the environment whilst taking account of other factors, such as road safety, engineering design and cost. The route avoids, as far as possible, areas most sensitive to changes in the environment. Measures proposed to limit the adverse environmental effects of the scheme include:-

- Extensive planting of native trees and shrubs at key locations to help re-assimilate the scheme into the existing landscape setting;
- Re-use of topsoil on new verges to ensure conservation of residual seedbanks of locally occurring plant species;



- Provision of pollution control measures as part of the highway drainage system which would include the creation of detention basins and swales which would provide additional wetland areas for wildlife;
- The route would be lit at junctions only to limit light pollution. The lighting units would be designed to minimise the spread of light to nearby properties;
- Use of low-noise surfacing which would reduce the level of traffic noise when compared to traditional forms of road surface;
- Slopes would be in keeping with the local landform and be either grassed or planted with a woodland mix.

Environmental Effects

The scheme and associated mitigation measures have been designed to minimise adverse environmental effects. Nonetheless, some impacts would arise from the proposals, the most significant of which are summarised below.

Air Quality

There would be no significant effect on either local or regional air quality as a result of the proposed scheme. Local air quality pollutant concentrations would remain well within the Relevant Air Quality Standards and are forecasted to marginally decrease from existing levels at the majority of locations. With strategic traffic moving to the new dual carriageway, there would be a net benefit with improved air quality for the majority of properties between Randalstown and Toome. In terms of regional air quality, generally there would be an overall reduction in concentrations from existing levels.

Cultural Heritage

There would be no direct effects on any Scheduled sites or Listed buildings. Whilst direct impact on known archaeological features is considered small, it is almost certain that some archaeology would be encountered on such a large linear construction site. Topsoil stripping would be monitored by a qualified archaeologist and any uncovered remains would be excavated and recorded.

Ecology & Nature Conservation

The proposed scheme would not affect any designated ecological sites. The closest designated site is Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Special Protection Area (SPA), to the south of Toome. Mitigation measures, such as roadside planting and the creation of sustainable drainage features, would help reduce the residual impact on local habitats and their associated wildlife. A protected mammal and bird



survey will be undertaken in the appropriate field season preceding construction.

Landscape & Visual Effects

No Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty would be affected by the scheme. The scheme would however introduce a new road into a tranquil rural landscape between Randalstown and Toome. Sensitive design and landscaping would gradually integrate the road into the surrounding landscape. Views from dwellings near the proposed dual carriageway would change. Mitigation of these impacts has been considered through the alignment of the road, the design of structures and planting to address residual impacts. The construction of grade-separated junctions with associated lighting, and large bridge structures would be the most visually significant features of the scheme.

Land Use

There will be the demolition of only one residential property. A significant number of agricultural landowners however would be affected by the scheme, resulting in loss of land and farm severance. Accommodation crossings and alternative private means of access would, as far as possible, allow continued farming activity on retained lands.

Traffic Noise & Vibration

There would be fewer properties near the proposed dual carriageway than along the existing A6. Hence, there would be a net benefit with reduced noise levels for the majority of properties between Randalstown and Toome. However, traffic noise from the new road would impact properties that are not currently subject to transportation noise, due to their existing rural location and low existing ambient noise levels.

Pedestrian, Cyclist, Equestrian & Community Effects

Local vehicle movements will be significantly improved on the local road network, due to the removal of strategic traffic from the existing Moneynick Road between Randalstown and Toome. There will be improved and safer access across the strategic route, through the provision of several overbridges. Reduced traffic on the Moneynick Road, and on the existing local road network, would also result in a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

Vehicle Travellers

The new road would ensure more reliable and consistent journey times for strategic traffic. Local traffic would benefit greatly from reduced traffic levels on the Moneynick Road and the remainder of the local road network. New and interesting views would be opened up to the travelling public over the surrounding rural landscape to the south of Moneynick.

Water Quality & Drainage

The proposed scheme would drain into a segregated system of drainage basins and swales. These would control the rate of outfall into local watercourses, reducing possible flooding of surrounding lands. This drainage system would also be the basis for creating wet and marginal habitats and would help reduce pollutant levels in the highway runoff.

Construction Effects

Construction would take about 24 months. During construction, the Moneynick Road would remain open to traffic. Side roads, where they cross the new dual carriageway, would experience sporadic disruption, however the aim would be to minimise disruption to local residents and road users.

The detail construction sequence would be a matter for the Contractor, but certain principles would be stipulated. Such measures would include limiting disruption to existing patterns of movement and limiting the routes for construction traffic use. The Contract would include provisions to minimise the effects of construction noise, temporary diversions, works access and working hours.

Construction methods would be closely monitored by both the supervisory staff and the Health & Safety Executive, to ensure compliance with current legislation. Routes to the construction site would be discussed and agreed with the Roads Service, although the existing A6 would be the main means of access. An archaeological watching brief would be maintained throughout construction, with excavation and recording of any finds.

Alternative Schemes

Several dual carriageway alternatives were studied, lying to the north and to the south of the existing A6. Three schemes were presented to the public and interested organisations during February 2005. One scheme was part offline and lying south of the A6 between Randalstown and Drumaslough Hill, where it then continued as online dualling to Toome. The other two schemes were entirely offline to the south of the A6. Following on from the exhibition, additional options were considered and four schemes — the original three and one additional scheme — were presented to the public in June 2005. The additional scheme was offline lying south of the existing A6 from Randalstown to west of Derryhollagh Cottages, where it crossed over the A6 and then continued north of the A6 to Toome. The preferred offline scheme, lying entirely to the south of the existing A6, was selected as providing the best balance of limited environmental impacts and good value for money.

Viewing the Environmental Statement

The Environmental Statement can be viewed free of charge during normal working hours at the Roads Service Offices below:

Roads Service — Northern Division,
County Hall
Castlerock Road
COLERAINE
BT51 3HS.

And at the following addresses from 21st March 2007

Roads Service Offices

- Roads Service — Headquarters, Room 201, Clarence Court, 10-18 Adelaide Street, **BELFAST**, BT2 8GB.
- Roads Service — Northern Division, County Hall, 182 Galgorm Road, **BALLYMENA**, BT42 1QG.
- Roads Service — Northern Division, Antrim Section Office, Crown Buildings, 20 Castle Street, **ANTRIM**, BT41 4JE.
- Roads Service — Western Division, County Hall, Drumragh Avenue, **OMAGH**, BT79 7AF.
- Roads Service — Western Division, Magherafelt Section Office, 30 Station Road, **MAGHERAFELT**, BT45 5DN.

Council Offices

- Antrim Borough Council, Antrim Civic Centre, 50 Stiles Way, **ANTRIM**, BT41 2UB.
- Magherafelt District Council, 50 Ballyronan Road, **MAGHERAFELT**, BT45 6EN.

Purchasing the Environmental Statement

If you would like to purchase a copy of the Environmental Statement, please contact:

Roads Service—Northern Division
County Hall
Castlerock Road
Coleraine
BT51 3HS

Phone: 028 7034 1240
Fax: 028 7035 9926

Purchase price of the full Environmental Statement is £150.
Purchase price of a CD copy of the Environmental Statement is £15.

Exhibition of the Scheme Proposals

An exhibition of the proposals will be held in the O’Neill Arms Hotel, Toome on:

- Thursday 29th March 2007 10.00 am to 9.00 pm.
- Friday 30th March 2007 10.00 am to 9.00 pm.

Representatives of the Roads Service and their consulting engineers will be available to explain the proposals and answer questions.

Commenting on the Scheme Proposals

If you would like to comment on the proposals, please write to:

The Divisional Roads Manager
Roads Service – Northern Division
County Hall
Castlerock Road
Coleraine
BT51 3HS

- The closing date for comments is Monday 30th April 2007

What Happens Next?

Your views will be considered before a decision on the way forward. Depending on the weight and content of opinions, Roads Service may convene a Public Inquiry, chaired by an independent Inspector to examine the proposal.

Further information

For further information on the A6 Randalstown to Castledawson Dualling Scheme you can either:

Visit the Roads Service web site at:
www.roadsni.gov.uk/randalstown-castledawson

Or

E-mail to:
roads.northern@drdni.gov.uk

Further copies of this leaflet are available from Roads Service
Phone: 028 7034 1240

Should you like this leaflet in an accessible format e.g. Braille, audiocassette, minority ethnic language etc, please contact Roads Service above or at the address overleaf

Think Road Safety when driving through roadworks

If you have to drive through roadworks, please take extra care:

- Keep to the speed limit — it is there for your safety
- Get in the correct lane in good time — don't keep switching
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not the roadworks
- Keep a safe distance — there could be a queue in front
- Observe all signs — they are there to help you

Remember that tiredness can kill. Take regular breaks from driving.



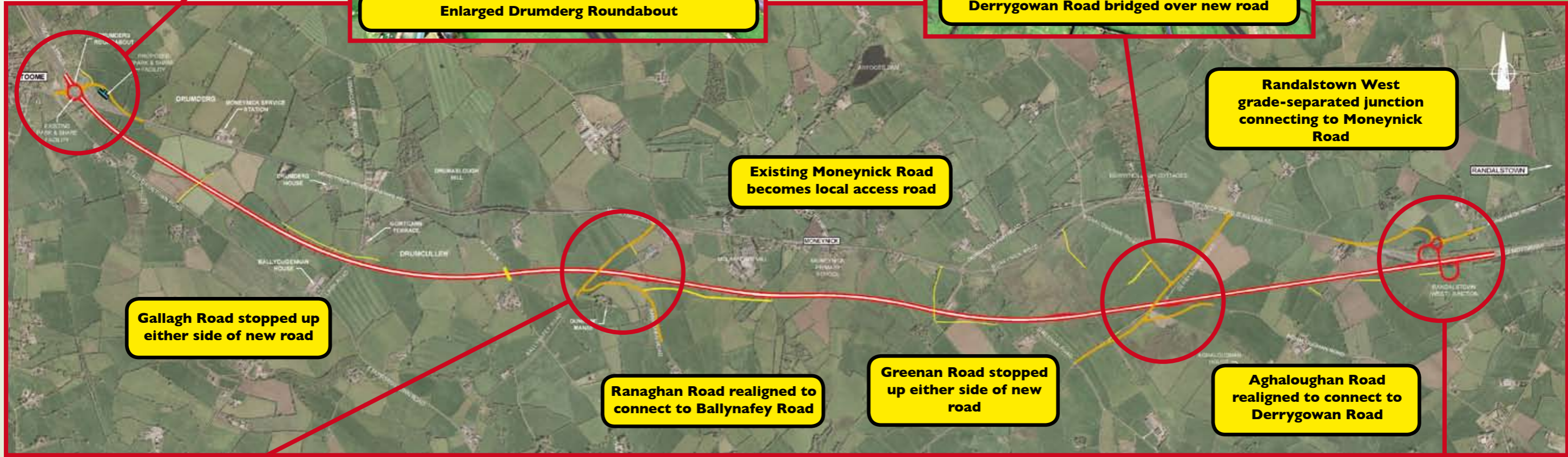
Map Reproduced from Land-line 1:1250 scale by permission of Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Copyright. All Rights Reserved. License Number NIMA ES&LA214



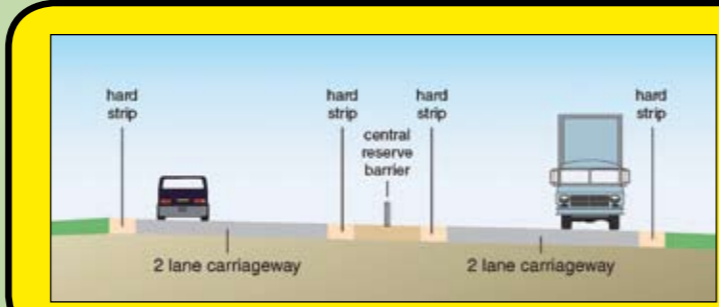
Enlarged Drumderg Roundabout



Derrygowan Road bridged over new road



Ballynafey Road bridged over new road



The proposed road is a high standard dual carriageway. It has no private accesses, no central reserve crossovers and with the minimum of junctions. This standard of dual carriageway has considerable safety benefits for the road user



Randalstown West grade-separated junction