

Re: Draft Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027

Dear Louth County Council,

I believe that the New County Development Plan should amend the wording of this paragraph in Chapter 7 Movement (Mov40) -

“To support the progression of the long term upgrade of the N2; and in particular to protect the selected route of the upgrade road scheme between Ardee and Castleblayney, and prohibit development that could prejudice its future delivery; and to continue to work closely with Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Monaghan County Council, property owners, and residents affected, and other stakeholders in the delivery of this project.”

Amendment should be **“To support the progression of the long term upgrade of the existing N2 and in particular to protect the selected route (Route A/Yellow Route) of the upgrade road scheme between Ardee and Castleblayney.”**

1. Emerging Preferred Route Corridor

Jacobs Engineering published, on the 24th August 2020, that the preferred route would be Option A or Yellow Option from the Public Consultation document (an online upgrade to the Existing N2). We have been assured this will not change.

2. Funding not at Risk if CDP wording is changed

As funding is already promised by TII to fund an online upgrade of the existing N2, there will be no loss of funding if the wording in the New County Development Plan 2021-2027 changes -

“an online upgrade of the N2 extending from north of Ardee to south of the Castleblayney bypass” as shown below from MCC CDP 2019-2025 –

“The N2 is part of the Trans-European transport Network (TEN-T). This is a network which comprises roads, railway lines, inland waterways, inland and maritime ports, airports and rail-road terminals throughout the 28 EU Member States. This characteristic is a key factor for the network's efficient, safe and secure operation, using seamless transport chains for passengers and freight.

The N2 is categorised as being part of the “comprehensive network”: a multi-modal network of relatively high density which provides all European regions (including peripheral regions) with an accessibility that supports their further economic, social and territorial development as well as the mobility of their citizens. The TII have committed to providing additional

funding for an online upgrade of the N2 extending from north of Ardee to south of the Castleblayney bypass and this project is at preliminary stages. This will be a joint project between Monaghan County Council and Louth County Council.” Pg 146 Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-25

3. Alignment with Government Policy

This is the view of the majority of the affected electorate, we believe the Louth County Development Plan should represent our viewpoint and also mirror current Government Development plans, including the National Planning Framework.

Current Government Plans are worded as follows-

The screenshot shows a presentation slide with the following content:

- National Strategic Outcome 2**
- Enhanced Regional Accessibility** (with a circular icon containing two arrows pointing outwards)
 - Building on a more compact approach to urban development requirements, enhancing connectivity between centres of population of scale will support the objectives of National Planning Framework. This will focus initially between Cork and Limerick. Better accessibility between the four cities and to the Northern and Western region will enable unrealised potential to be activated as well as better preparing for potential impacts from Brexit.
- Inter-Urban Roads**
 - Maintaining the strategic capacity and safety of the national roads network including planning for future capacity enhancements;
 - Improving average journey times targeting an average inter-urban speed of 90kph;
 - Enabling more effective traffic management within and around cities and re-allocation of inner city road-space in favour of bus-based public transport services and walking/cycling facilities;
 - Advancing orbital traffic management solutions, including the Galway Ring Road and M8/N25/N40 Dunkettle Junction upgrade (approved) in Cork;
- Accessibility to the North-West**
 - Upgrading access to the North-West border area, utilising existing routes (N2/N14/A5);
 - Upgrading northern sections of the N4 and N5 routes and sections of the N3/M3 national primary route;
 - Progressive development of the Atlantic Economic Corridor from Galway northwards by upgrading sections of the N17 northwards, where required and upgrading the N15/N13 link.
- Public Transport**
 - To strengthen public transport connectivity between cities and large growth towns in Ireland and Northern Ireland with improved services and reliable journey times.

National Planning Framework – Sister Document to Project Ireland 2040

“Upgrading access to the North-West border area, utilising existing routes (N2/N14/A5); Ref: **National Planning Framework pg 140**

Monaghan County Development Plan (MCDP)

Quotes

*“T150 1 To achieve a sustainable, efficient and integrated transport system and ease of movement throughout County Monaghan by **enhancing the existing transport** infrastructure in terms of the road, cycling and pedestrian facilities and by promoting more compact urban forms **close to existing***

***facilities to encourage more sustainable movement patterns”. Ref:
Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-25***

The National Planning Framework emphasizes the Atlantic Economic Corridor connecting Letterkenny to Galway as a priority as opposed to Lettkenny to Dublin. Therefore, the upgrade of the existing N2 route as opposed to a new motorway is supported by the NPF in the backdrop of developing a north and western economy as opposed to a north-to-Dublin economy. Louth, Monaghan and Cavan are aligned to the Dublin Belfast corridor in the NPF so development of the N2 to motorway standard does not deliver on the overall strategic objectives of the NPF.

4. Covid-19 Has changed the way people work and learn

The need for a bigger, faster road, is less important to people than good quality Broadband, as more companies with office based employees (including local authorities) have been encouraged to work from home for the foreseeable future. Universities and Colleges are introducing “hybrid learning” and “remote learning” as a large part of their response to the Covid-19 pandemic, but also as a possible permanent learning delivery system.

Current Traffic Stats From TII

Figures from TII.ie on 10 th August 2020 states the activity on the N2 Ardee to Castleblayney Road						
	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	
AADT	7736	10428	10513	10198	9902	
% HGV	13.9%	10.9%	11%	10.9%	10.8%	
Coverage	60.5%	94.6%	99.7%	99.7%	99.7%	
AADT = mean daily traffic volume. % HGV = % of heavy goods vehicles. Coverage = % period in the given year that was collected.						

5. Road Safety Concerns

The road from Ardee to Castlebalyney - Analysis of accidents over the period 2013-2016 identifies the collision rate along this section of the **N2 as being below the national average in terms of accidents** per veh.km of travel. See table below

	Fatal Accidents	Serious
2016	2	1
2015	0	1
2014	3	4
2013	3	2
RSA.ie 2016 Data on Fatal and Serious Vehicle Accidents on the N2 between Ardee and Castleblayney		

A closer look at those stats on the RSA Map of Collisions (<https://rsa.ie/RSA/Road-Safety/RSA-Statistics/Collision-Statistics/Ireland-Road-Collisions/>) also show that the majority of collisions were caused by driver error and not road layout.

6. The N2 route was chosen before

The Existing N2 is of good quality and a good candidate for Upgrade, without the need for a new greenfield site., according to Eamonn McMahon former LCC engineer, backed up by LCC choice of the current N2 route in 2004/5. Eamonn McMahon's report was previously submitted.

Signed

Emma Payne

22nd December 2020