

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This Environmental Statement (ES) for the A2 Shore Road Greenisland Scheme has been prepared in support of the Draft Orders that have been prepared by the Department for Regional Development (DRD), Roads Service. This document has been prepared by Scott Wilson and Ferguson McIlveen on behalf of the DRD, Roads Service.

1.2 Background to the Scheme

1.2.1 The A2 is part of the strategic road network and provides a link between the two urban centres of Belfast and Carrickfergus, before continuing northwards to Larne. The 2.5km length of the A2 Shore Road at Greenisland is a 2-lane carriageway within a route that otherwise has at least 4 lanes and is a source of delays, particularly at peak times, not least to bus services. It is regarded as a bottleneck in the strategic road network and current advice would indicate that at least 4 lanes are required to cope with existing and future traffic flows. The proposed route alignment and the surrounding study area are shown in Figure 1.1 – Location Plan.

1.2.2 The A2 at Greenisland is fronted on both sides by residential properties. The carriageway is up to 9m wide and footways are variable and not existing in places. It is adjacent to Belfast Lough though is separated from the lough by detached residential properties. Adjacent housing, housing estates, the University of Ulster Campus and Belfast High School lie to the landward side though there are some areas of agricultural land beyond the immediate housing that are regarded as 'green wedges' in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015. The only alternative parallel route is the B90, which lies around 2km inland.

1.2.3 Roads Service appointed a Design Team from consultants Scott Wilson and Ferguson McIlveen to assist the Eastern Division's Strategic Route Improvement Team to deliver the 'A2 Shore Road Greenisland' Scheme. Their brief is to support them in developing a proposal and taking it through the statutory process.

1.2.4 The Preliminary Scheme Design ('the Scheme'), that is the subject of the ES, has been developed through a 3-stage scheme assessment process in accordance with Standard *TD 37/93 Scheme Assessment Reporting*, of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). This process is described within the ES.

1.3 Environmental Impact Assessment

1.3.1 European legislation (Council Directive No. 85/337/EEC as amended by Council Directive No. 97/11/EC) provides the framework for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). In Northern Ireland, this is transposed into domestic law by the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999, and by the Roads (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999, which will apply to the ES for the Scheme. The findings of the EIA for this study are summarised in this ES.

1.4 The Environmental Statement

1.4.1 The DRD will shortly be publishing a 'Notice of Determination' stating that an EIA is necessary, and consequently this ES has been prepared to ensure that the Scheme will comply with the Roads (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999.

1.4.2 The purpose of the ES is to provide supporting information for the publication of the Draft Direction Order and Vesting Order, and to comply with the determination that the Scheme should be the subject of an EIA. Throughout the ES, the A2 Shore Road Greenisland proposals are referred to as the Scheme. It should be noted that the road layout shown in this ES is a 'Specimen Design' and would be subject to detailed design once the orders have been confirmed by the Secretary of State. The main aims of the EIA process are:

- To ensure that there will be a full consideration of the likely environmental effects of the Scheme in a way that enables both the importance of the environmental effects and the scope for mitigating these to be properly evaluated; and
- To allow the public, statutory agencies and other bodies to comment on the proposals, taking account of their environmental concerns.

1.5 The Assessment Team

1.5.1 Scott Wilson and Ferguson McIlveen consultants have prepared this ES. Specialist input has been provided by the following consultants:

- Archaeology Associates Ireland (Cultural Heritage)
- F R Mark & Associates (Noise and Vibration)

1.6 Report Structure

1.6.1 The ES is divided into three parts: (i) Introduction, Project Description and Assessment of Alternatives (ii) Environmental Impact Assessment and (iii) Summary Tables.

Introduction

1.6.2 Part 1 Introduction, Project Description and Assessment of Alternatives, addresses the need for the Scheme, the Scheme objectives, alternatives considered and a description of the proposed Scheme.

Environmental Impact Assessment

1.6.3 Part 2 Environmental Impact Assessment, explains the overall approach to the EIA, and presents the results of the scoping exercise including consultations undertaken, providing justifications as to why any environmental topic areas have been scoped out. The assessment of the potential environmental issues identified in the scoping exercise is reported, including detailed approach and methods, a description of the baseline, and identification of potential impacts. Mitigation is proposed where appropriate and the residual impacts determined.

1.6.4 The ES will address the following topic areas;

- Land Use;
- Geology and Soils
- Water Quality and Drainage
- Ecology and Nature Conservation
- Landscape Effects
- Cultural Heritage
- Air Quality
- Traffic Noise and Vibration
- Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community Effects
- Vehicle Travellers
- Disruption Due to Construction
- Policies and Plans

Summary Tables

1.6.5 Part 3 Summary Tables, reports the main environmental impacts identified through the EIA process. A schedule of Environmental Commitments is provided which identifies the mitigation measures and monitoring requirements to be implemented during the construction and operation of the Scheme.

1.7 Non-Technical Summary

1.7.1 A Non-Technical Summary has been prepared which highlights the key points in non-technical language. This is placed at the front of this ES but is also available as a separate document.

1.8 Review and Comments

1.8.1 A Draft ES has been reviewed by Roads Service and a number of comments were received, these have been incorporated into the Final ES as appropriate.

1.9 References

- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 11, Environmental Assessment. Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland et al (August 1994, as amended up to August 2006).
- Council Directive 85/337/EEC as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the Environment. <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/full-legal-text/9711.htm>

- Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015. Department for Regional Development (2004). <http://www.drjni.gov.uk/Bmtp/>
- The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999.
- The Roads (Environment Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999.