

**DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
THE ROADS (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1993**

**STATEMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT
ON
THE REPORT ON THE LOCAL PUBLIC INQUIRIES
INTO
THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT, DIRECTION ORDER AND
VESTING ORDER
FOR THE PROPOSED
A2 SHORE ROAD GREENISLAND**

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1. CONTENT OF DECISION

- 1.1 The Department for Regional Development has decided to proceed with the proposal to upgrade part of the A2 Shore Road between Belfast and Carrickfergus in the vicinity of Greenisland from a two lane single carriageway to a two lane dual carriageway. The scheme is as described in the Environmental Statement, Direction Order and Vesting Order published by the Department in March 2007.
- 1.2 This scheme will provide a direct connection between the four lane carriageway at the junction of Jordanstown Road and the dual carriageway at Seapark.
- 1.3 The scheme will be procured by way of a Consultant/Contractor Design and Build contract. The scheme requirements will be as shown on the contract drawings, specification and associated documents.
- 1.4 Sections 2, 3 and 4 of this document set out the considerations on which the decision to proceed with the scheme is based. Section 5 describes the measures that will be incorporated to mitigate the adverse effects of the scheme and the most significant impacts arising from the scheme. Section 6 details the Department's decision.

2. **BASIS FOR DECISION**

2.1 **Need for upgrading**

- 2.1.1 The A2 Shore Road is the main route between the urban centres of Belfast and Carrickfergus. It is also classed as a trunk road (Route T21), therefore forming part of the Regional Strategic Transport Network.
- 2.1.2 The A2 presently carries some 26000 vehicles per day north of Greenisland, rising to 35000 vehicles per day south of Greenisland.
- 2.1.3 The standards and characteristics of the A2 between Belfast and Carrickfergus vary considerably. While most of the road has two lanes in each direction, either as a motorway (M5), dual carriageway or single carriageway, there is a 2.5 km section of the A2 Shore Road in the vicinity of Greenisland that is a 2 lane single carriageway. This has been identified in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015 (paragraph 6.29) as a bottleneck on the Belfast Metropolitan Area's strategic network. It is a source of congestion and delays at peak times, not least to bus services.
- 2.1.4 There are traffic signal junctions at Station Road and Seapark. Other junctions along the route are major/minor priority junctions.
- 2.1.5 The carriageway width varies between 7 and 9 metres wide. Footway widths are variable. In many places they are between 1 and 1.5 metres wide, but in some places do not exist. Other than at the traffic signal junctions there are no pedestrian crossing facilities. There are no cycling facilities along this section of the A2.
- 2.1.6 The A2 Shore Road at Greenisland is fronted on both sides by residential properties. It is adjacent to Belfast Lough though separated from it by residential properties. On the landward side lie residential properties and residential developments, the University of Ulster Campus and Belfast High School. Beyond the immediate housing there are some areas of agricultural land that are regarded in the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015 as 'green wedges'. The only alternative route is the B90, which runs roughly parallel around 2 km inland.

2.2 **Policy Context**

- 2.2.1 Since the 1970's there have been plans to improve this section of the A2 and there have been a number of previous exercises to progress the

scheme through the statutory procedures. The most recent occasion was in the early 1990's when an Environment Statement and Vesting Order were prepared and published, but never fully completed.

- 2.2.2 The Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS), published in 2002, confirms the need to address bottlenecks on the strategic highway as one of its priorities (RTS paragraph 5.2.27 and figure 5.5). The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP), published in November 2004 identifies the Greenisland section of the A2 as a bottleneck on the Belfast Metropolitan Area's strategic network (BMTP paragraph 6.29), which causes significant congestion and long delays on the corridor at peak times. A route for online widening is protected within the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015, Plan Amendment No 1 published in November 2004 (BMAP proposal GD06 and Clarification Map No 39).
- 2.2.3 The A2 Shore Road, Greenisland scheme is now included in the Roads Service Major Works Preparation Pool, which is the group of the highest priority schemes that are to be developed and taken through the statutory procedures, with the expectation of progressing to construction within the next five years. This would however depend on the satisfactory completion of an economic appraisal and statutory process, and the necessary funding being available at the time.
- 2.2.4 The process of scheme development has followed extensive public consultation and consideration of a range of options. The preferred option was selected following assessment of each option against the five government appraisal criteria of safety, environment, economy, accessibility and integration. It is based on a combination of on-line widening and a partial off-line by-pass.

2.3 **Scheme Benefits and Objectives**

- 2.3.1 As stated earlier, the A2 is the main route between Belfast and Carrickfergus and carries up to 35,000 vehicles per day. It is a trunk road (Route T21) and is therefore part of the Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN) (RTS paragraph 5.2.5). It is a source of congestion and delays at peak times, not least to bus services, and has been identified in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015 (paragraph 6.29) as a bottleneck on the Belfast Metropolitan Area's strategic network.
- 2.3.2 The road network is the 'artery' for the Region's economy with almost all goods being transported by road. Upgrading trunk road links will provide a strategic framework for infrastructure investment, improvement of public transport, future urban development and

economic development, especially for large scale sites to accommodate industry and commerce and assisting tourist travel around the region.

- 2.3.3 The principal objective of the scheme is to remove the congestion that causes delays, particularly during peak periods and to improve journey times along the route. Other objectives are to improve access from minor roads and improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. These objectives are in line with the Department's policy as set out in the 'Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002 – 2012' (paragraph 5.2.8).
- 2.3.4 The upgrading from two lanes to four lanes for traffic will accommodate the current and future volume of traffic using the route, reducing congestion and delays. This improvement will deliver significant economic and environmental benefits as identified in the 'Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015' (paragraph 6.30).
- 2.3.5 The provision of new traffic signal controlled junctions will help to accommodate traffic joining from minor roads.
- 2.3.6 Improved footways will accommodate pedestrian and cyclist facilities.
- 2.3.7 Roads Service considers that the current level of congestion and delay justifies improvement of this section of the route. A 'Do Nothing' option is not considered to be a realistic long term option.

2.4 **Scheme History**

- 2.4.1 On 18 March 2005 the Department commissioned consultant, Scott Wilson/Ferguson McIlveen to study alternative options for the A2 Shore Road, Greenisland and subsequently to develop and progress a preferred scheme through the statutory procedures.
- 2.4.2 Roads Service recognised from the start that any plans to improve the Shore Road, Greenisland section of the A2 would generate considerable public interest, particularly among those whose properties may be directly affected. For that reason public consultation has been undertaken on two occasions during the scheme development process.
- 2.4.3 A preliminary public consultation was held on Tuesday 24 and Wednesday 25 May 2005. The purpose was to inform elected representatives and members of the public of the process and programme for developing and implementing the scheme, and to enable views and information to be collected from them. A report of this was published, 'A2 Shore Road, Greenisland – Preliminary Public Consultation', (document reference DRD A2/10).

2.4.4 The development of a major works scheme is carried out in 3 stages:

- Stage 1: Preliminary Assessment;
- Stage 2: Route Option Assessment
- Stage 3: Scheme Assessment

2.4.5 The Stage 1 Scheme Assessment (Report ref: DRD A2/13) examined 8 improvement strategies covering public transport improvements, different new road corridors, an online improvement and localised improvements identifying the environmental, engineering, economic and traffic advantages, disadvantages and constraints of each. This concluded that 2 strategies namely S5, New Inland Corridor for a new inland road, and S7, Existing Road Corridor for an online widening of the existing road, should be taken forward for more detailed assessment.

2.4.6 Fourteen options and variations of S5 and S7 and also a combination of S5 and S7 (S5S7) were developed and assessed. The assessment considered in detail the key risk area of severance, land and compensation costs, impact on private property, services, buildability and traffic management during construction. The Stage 2 Scheme Assessment (Report ref: DRD A2/15) focussed on identifying the most deliverable option in each of the three strategies. These were:

- Inland Option, based on S5-2-V4;
- On-line Option, based on S7-4;
- Combined Option, based on S5S7

2.4.7 These formed the basis of a second public consultation which was held on 22 and 23 March 2006. After further consideration It was concluded that the preferred option should be based on the Combination Option of on-line widening with a partial by-pass. An announcement of the preferred route was made on 14 June 2006.

2.4.8 The Stage 3 Assessment (Report ref: DRD A2/19) comprehensively examined the preferred route. This included in-depth environmental, archaeological, engineering, geotechnical, economic and traffic assessment of the scheme. There will be a requirement to demolish 12 residential properties and 1 commercial unit for widening the online section of dual carriageway. There will also be loss of agricultural land for the offline by-pass. All landowners likely to lose land and/or property were consulted during the Stage 3 Assessment.

2.5 **Statutory Procedures**

The Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 sets out the statutory requirements for the Environmental Impact Assessment, Direction Order and Vesting Order. The Roads (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 made provision for the three procedures to be taken concurrently.

2.6 **Environmental Assessment**

2.6.1 The Roads (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 set out the statutory requirements for assessment of environmental impacts of road schemes. The Regulations require the Department to determine using Annex III of EC Directive 85/337/EEC, as amended by EC Directive 97/11/EC, whether or not a relevant project should be made subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, and to publish this determination. The Department determined that the A2 Shore Road, Greenisland scheme fell within Annex II of the Directive and that an Environmental Statement should be prepared.

2.6.2 The Environmental Impact Assessment was carried out and an Environmental Statement prepared in accordance with Article 67 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993.

2.6.3 The Environmental Statement was published on 14 March 2007 (Report ref: DRD A2/23) with the statutory consultation period extending to 23 April 2007. Notice of the publication was placed in the Belfast Gazette on 16 March 2007 and in the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News, News Letter, Newtownabbey Times and Carrick Times during the weeks ending 16 March and 23 March 2007.

2.6.4 Copies of the Environmental Statement were available at the following locations for inspection during the statutory consultation period:

Roads Service – Eastern Division, Hydebank, 4 Hospital Road, Belfast

Roads Service Headquarters, Clarence Court, 10-18 Adelaide Street, Belfast

Newtownabbey Borough Council, Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey and

Carrickfergus Borough Council, Carrickfergus Museum and Civic Centre, 11 Antrim Street, Carrickfergus

The Environmental Statement is also available in electronic form on the Department for Regional Development's, Roads Service website.

- 2.6.5 Copies of the Statement were circulated to 36 statutory bodies requesting their comments on the proposals. 12 written comments were received from the statutory bodies. These are included in the document 'A2 Shore Road, Greenisland – Responses to the publication of the Project Statutory Orders' (document reference DRD A2/24).

2.7 **Direction Order**

As the A2 is a trunk route, a Direction Order is required in accordance with the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993, for new sections of the route that will become part of the trunk road and for the stopping-up of certain lengths of road to road traffic. For this purpose, a draft Order was prepared and published. This is referred to as "The Trunk Road T21 (Belfast to Carrickfergus) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007". (Document reference DRD A2/21).

- 2.7.1 The draft Direction Order sets out, in detail, the designation of the new offline inland route as a trunk route forming part of the Belfast to Carrickfergus Trunk Road T21, and the stopping-up of any sections of the A2 to road traffic.

- 2.7.2 In accordance with Schedule 8 to the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 the Statutory Notice announcing the publication of the draft Direction Order for the scheme was advertised concurrently in the newspapers listed for the Environmental Statement, during the weeks ending 16 March and 23 March 2007. The date of closure of the statutory consultation period specified in the Statutory Notice was 23 April 2007.

- 2.7.3 Copies of the draft Order and associated map were also placed for inspection in the same locations as the Environmental Statement during the statutory consultation period

- 2.7.4 Furthermore, the Statutory Notice was served on Newtownabbey Borough Council, Carrickfergus Borough Council and public utilities with an interest.

2.8 **Vesting Order**

- 2.8.1 In order to acquire the land for the project, the Department published in March 2007, a 'Notice of Intention to Make a Vesting Order' under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 and The Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993.

- 2.8.2 The notice of Intention to Make a Vesting Order includes provision for acquisition of those lands and interests considered by the Department to be necessary for construction of the new road and alterations to side roads and allow for space to construct associated alterations for accesses to properties, including an accommodation bridge.
- 2.8.3 The Statutory Notice for the scheme was advertised concurrently in the newspapers listed for the Environmental Statement, during the weeks ending 16 March and 23 March 2007. The date for closure of the statutory objection period specified in the Statutory Notice was 23 April 2007.
- 2.8.4 The Notice, related schedule and maps setting out the land were made available for inspection at the same locations as the Environmental Statement during the statutory consultation period.
- 2.9 **Consultation Period and Public Inquiry**
- 2.9.1 The consultation period extended from the date of first publication on 14 March 2007 until 23 April 2007.
- 2.9.2 Although not required to do so by the legislation, the Department arranged for an 'Exhibition' to be staged on 21 March 2007 from 3.30 pm until 9.00 pm and 22 March 2007 from 10.00 am until 9.00 pm in the Clarion Hotel, Carrickfergus. Roads Service personnel and technical advisors from its Consultants were in attendance to describe and explain the scheme
- 2.9.3 With regard to the published Environmental Statement, Direction Order and Vesting Order, 69 letters of representation were received within the period allocated, of which 48 expressed concern or objection to the proposals.
- 2.9.4 Having regard to the number and nature of the opinions expressed and the strategic importance of the scheme, the Department considered putting these representations forward to a Public Inquiry. The Minister for DRD, Mr Conor Murphy announced on 19 June 2007 his decision that a public inquiry should be held.
- 2.9.5 The Department appointed Mr Brian Sleith as the Inspector to the inquiry with Mr John Mageean appointed as an Additional Inspector.
- 2.9.6 Formal notice of the intention to hold a public inquiry was published in the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News, News Letter, Newtownabbey Times, Carrick Times and Belfast Gazette during the week ending 17 August

2007.

2.9.7 The Public Inquiry was held in the Clarion Hotel, Carrickfergus between 8 and 16 October 2007

3. **MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INSPECTORS' REPORT**

3.1 The Inspectors made 3 recommendations set out in paragraph 8 of their report. These are summarised below:

3.2 The Inspectors recommended that the Department carry out an extension of the comparison between the inland option S5-2-V4 and the combined option (now the Scheme) taking into account the factors set out in Para 7 of their report namely:

3.2.1 **Quality Bus Corridors.**

Should such a corridor be provided on the Shore Road the Inspectors considered that it would effectively reduce the peak hour capacity to one lane. Also they concluded that there was no indication that this was a factor in the comparison of route options.

3.2.2 **Belfast High School.**

The Inspectors noted that the scheme design does not include for a lay-by on the shore side for dropping off children at the High School and considered that the impact of this factor ought to be measured in an inland/combined route comparison.

3.2.3 **Traffic Forecasts.**

The Inspectors commented that the Department stated in evidence that the future traffic flows in both Stage 2 and Stage 3 assessments were calculated using National Road Traffic Forecast growth factors with no account of potential housing or other development within BMAP. In support of this approach the Department asserted that it had the advantage of identifying whether the scheme could stand up economically without being supported by new land use developments. The Inspectors referred to the Government's News Release dated 30 November 2004 launching the publication of BMAP and BMTP which emphasised BMTP had been developed in conjunction with BMAP to ensure integration of transport and land use. To demonstrate compliance with this strategy of integration the Inspectors considered that estimates of likely traffic growth arising from BMAP should be included in a supplement to the Stage 2 traffic model to identify any impact on the results of the original comparison.

3.2.4 **Future Road Development.**

The Inspectors noted that Department's acceptance that on-line widening offers no opportunity for further road development to meet future needs. The Department stated: "In practice, the same can be said to be true of all the inland options considered unless additional

land and property acquisition was undertaken to further future developments". The inspectors did not consider this to be a valid counter argument.

3.2.5 In the context of an extended Stage 2 comparison the Inspectors considered that the foregoing should be taken account of:

- (1) The Department's acceptance (Document A2 46 para 11c) that an inland route would be of benefit in providing greater capacity through Greenisland and thus afford more options in emergencies;
- (2) The proposition that an inland option would provide the opportunity of segregating through traffic from local traffic.

3.2.6 The Inspectors also wished to highlight the following extract from the Stage 2 Assessment Report (para 6.28) as a backdrop to the examination set out above

"Thus in economic terms the most likely inland solution option would be Option S5-2-V4 inland by-pass parallel to the Shore Road via Belfast High School. It has the most affordable cost and, possibly, the potential to give value for money".

3.3 Subject to the above (3.1), the Inspectors recommended that the impact of the Scheme at Langley Hall be re-examined in the light of design development, at least to the extent of temporary use of the land in question for construction purposes with subsequent reinstatement.

3.4 The Inspectors recommended that the Department send a written reply to Mr & Mrs McCay's objection (document Oth 14).

4. **DEPARTMENTAL COMMENT ON THE INSPECTORS' REPORT**

The Department has considered the main conclusions and recommendations of the Inspectors' Report. Through its consultants Scott Wilson these recommendations have been examined and this is reported in full in the document "A2 Shore Road Greenisland – Response to Public Inquiry Inspectors' Report – April 2008", This has been summarised below:

4.1 **Recommendation 1 – Extended Stage 2 Comparison**

4.1.1 The issues in paragraph 7 of the Inspectors' Report that they feel might have had an influence on the choice between the inland option and the combined option have been re-considered.

4.1.2 **Quality bus corridors.**

It was found that the proposed scheme fully complies with the BMTP and the provision of a Quality Bus Corridor is not a factor in the comparison of route options in the A2 improvement scheme preparation.

4.1.3 The scheme nevertheless has committed to providing improved facilities for passengers and the improvement scheme will improve reliability of bus services.

4.1.4 **Dropping-off lay-by at Belfast High School**

Roads Service has no duty to provide a dropping-off lay-by on the southbound carriageway of the improved road. For reasons stated, and the balance of road safety as expressed by the Road Safety Audit Team, it is not intended to provide a dropping-off lay-by on the proposed scheme.

4.1.5 In economic terms, the delays caused by vehicles stopping temporarily to drop-off children would be negligible in comparison to the economic benefits of the scheme. Therefore, that would have had no bearing on the choice of the Preferred Option.

4.1.6 **Traffic forecasts**

The appropriate economic testing procedures have been carried out. The Combined Option was the correct choice of Preferred Option in economic terms, in that it was likely to be a lower cost and have significantly higher benefits than the Inland Option, with both central and high growth predictions.

- 4.1.7 **Future road development**
The objective of the scheme is to remove the bottleneck on the A2 Shore Road at Greenisland. The Regional Transport Strategy and the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan have no indication that further improvements of Shore Road are intended. It would have been inappropriate therefore to take aspirations for future improvements into account when choosing the Preferred Option.
- 4.1.8 **Extra road on Inland Option**
The bypassed sections of the road on any option would not become a significant part of the road network in terms of either additional capacity or emergency relief routes and the correct assessments were taken of the options at Stage 2 of the scheme preparation.
- 4.1.9 **Economic assessment of Option S5-2-V4**
It can be confirmed that Inland Option S5-2-V4 was considered to be the most feasible in economic terms of the inland options only. It compared unfavourably in terms of value for money with the Combined Option.
- 4.1.10 **Summary for Recommendation 1**
All of the issues that the Inspectors recommended should be re-examined have been subject to review and additional work undertaken as requested. It was found that in all cases the correct procedures had been followed and that further examinations confirmed that the Combined Option was the correct choice of Preferred Option.
- 4.2 **Recommendation 2 – Langley Hall**
- 4.2.1 The design has been reviewed and it has been demonstrated that the widened road can be aligned to avoid Langley Hall whilst satisfying other safety and access considerations in the immediate area and that this can be achieved within land identified in the vesting plans. There is little or no advantage in using Langley Hall grounds temporarily.
- 4.2.2 It is proposed that Shore Road should be widened in such a manner as to avoid Langley Hall entirely.
- 4.3 **Recommendation 3 – McCays' Correspondence**
- 4.3.1 A letter was sent to Mrs McCay on 26th November 2007, enclosing a response to the questions and comments in her objection (document OTH 14).

4.4 **Conclusions**

- 4.4.1 Each and every issue that was raised by the Inspectors has been considered, re-examined and additional work undertaken where requested.
- 4.4.2 Following this re-examination it is considered that the correct procedures were followed in the assessment of options and that the Combined Option was the correct choice to be taken forward as the Preferred Option.
- 4.4.3 The alignment of the proposed scheme should be amended to avoid the grounds of Langley Hall.
- 4.4.4 It is recommended that the scheme that was the subject of Orders and was the subject of the Public Inquiry should be implemented with the amendment at Langley Hall as stated and that the Orders should be made.

5. MEASURES TO MITIGATE ADVERSE EFFECTS

5.1 The Environmental Statement includes a number of measures to limit the adverse environmental effects of the scheme. These measures include

- Following an alignment that minimises land take whilst ensuring a safe highway design.
- Habitat loss will be minimised and landscape planting will incorporate species of local provenance.
- Replacement walls and planting will reinstate important elements of the urban area to minimise loss of local landscape character.
- The application of best practice techniques for the management of the surface water run off/groundwater collecting on the site (including the application of temporary discharge licences if required).
- Use of low-noise surfacing which would reduce the level of traffic noise when compared to traditional forms of road surface.
- Improvement of facilities for pedestrians and cyclists from the construction of a new cycleway and continuous pedestrian access.

5.2 No additional mitigation measures were identified arising from the local Public Inquiry and the subsequent Inspectors' Report.

5.3 The most significant impacts arising from the scheme are summarised below:

5.3.1 Traffic Noise and Vibration

The overriding benefit is that there will be fewer properties in proximity to the proposed dual carriageway than along the existing A2 Shore Road and hence, with strategic traffic reassigning to the proposed dual carriageway from part of the existing Shore Road, there will be a net benefit with reduced noise levels for the majority of properties between Station Road and Seapark. In eight locations where predicted noise levels would exceed the "Do-Minimum" level by more than 1dB, mitigation measures have been proposed. It is proposed to use a low noise road surface over the entire length of scheme between Jordanstown and Seapark.

5.3.2 **Air Quality**

The air quality assessment, carried out according to recognized methodologies, indicates that no significant impact on air quality will occur in the vicinity of the scheme.

5.3.3 **Disruption due to construction**

The realignment of the A2 Shore Road will result in a number of impacts as a result of construction activity.

The impacts will relate to the provision and operation of construction compounds during the entire construction period. There will also be disruption to traffic on the A2 Shore Road due to traffic management measures necessary to ensure the safety and operation of works on these roads. The construction of embankments will lead to noise intrusion and the risk of dust in the air and mud on the road will be present. There is a potential for construction operations to cause damage to localised soils and water, if appropriate mitigation measures are not adhered to.

However, measures will be put in place to limit the impacts and it is considered that with careful management the significance of impacts can be reduced. These will be reinforced by requirements in the contract for construction of the works.

5.3.4 **Ecology and Nature Conservation**

The scheme will involve the loss and severance of habitats, such as trees, scrub and grassland and potential adverse impacts upon watercourses, the Belfast Lough and species such as otters, bats and breeding birds. However, mitigation will be carried out and enhancement measures stipulated will be fully implemented, therefore no significant negative impacts upon ecological and nature conservation receptors are anticipated as a result of this scheme.

5.3.5 **Landscape and Visual Amenity**

The proposed scheme will result in significant landscape effects particularly on the Shore Road Area of Townscape Character and the Rural Landscape Wedge/Greenbelt areas. Mitigation measures in the form of high quality replacement walls and planting will replace some of the important elements within the Area of Townscape Character, but there will still be a significant loss of local landscape character. Mitigation for the offline section will include replacing hedges to restore

the changed landscape pattern although this will not resolve the reduced effectiveness of the Green Belt/Rural Landscape Wedge. However, the important large-scale elements of the landscape setting of Belfast, the Belfast Lough, the shore and Carrickfergus Escarpment will not be significantly adversely affected and no national/statutory designations will be compromised.

Both residential and travelling receptors will notice the changed appearance of Shore Road including the removal of mature trees, hedges and stone walls for the online section of the proposed route. Travelling receptors will enjoy some new views into the open countryside resulting from the new offline section.

In general, the landscape and visual effects of the Scheme will be very significant in the year following construction. However, with time, the maturing of new vegetation, ageing of newly constructed walls and other mitigation measures, the significance of the residual effects will be moderate adverse when the Scheme landscape will have become established.

5.3.6 Land Use

The Scheme requires the demolition of thirteen properties in total, comprising 12 residential properties and the retail property of the Spar Shop. Potentially 68 residential gardens would be directly affected by the Scheme in terms of permanent land take. Land take will also be required along Shore Road from Belfast High School and the University of Ulster road frontage. There would be a loss of 4.58 hectares of agricultural grazing land although this land is not classified as being Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land. Where there are adverse affects, suitable mitigation measures are prescribed, which will include the provision of compensation measures.

5.3.7 Pedestrians, Cyclists and Community Effects

Bus stopping facilities will be improved at various points between Jordanstown and Greenisland, with new bus stops/shelters provided.

In terms of local vehicle movements, there will be improved and safer access between Jordanstown and Greenisland. There will be provision of new / improved footways on both carriageways.

Cyclists and pedestrians will also experience a much safer route due to the improved footway and new cycleway provision and controlled crossing points at major junctions along the road.

The Spar shop on the Shore Road at Greenisland will be required for the new road alignment. No other community facilities will face a severe impact because of the Scheme.

5.3.8 Vehicle Travellers

The view from the road for vehicle travellers will change where the Scheme deviates inland from the existing alignment of the A2 Shore Road. The effect on driver stress is however, overwhelmingly beneficial and the issue of vehicle travellers did not require further assessment in the Environmental Statement.

5.3.9 Water Quality and Drainage

The potential effects on water resources as a result of the proposed development have been assessed. In the context of these proposals the significant water resources are the surface watercourses (streams and field drains) and the groundwater. With the implementation of primary mitigation measures such as those described below, it is predicted that there will be no significant impacts on the water resources.

The effects on the quality of the local groundwater from the construction and operational phases of the proposed road are predicted to be minimal, based on the use of best practice pollution prevention measures during construction.

The surface water run off from the proposed road will be discharged to a number of outfalls into watercourses along the length of the proposed scheme. Attenuation will be provided within the drainage system to ensure that the rate of discharge is appropriate to the watercourse being discharged into.

6 **DEPARTMENTAL DECISION**

6.1 Having considered the Public Inquiry Inspectors' Report and all other representations made, the Department has decided that it should proceed with the proposed A2 Shore Road, Greenisland scheme.

6.2 **Environmental Statement**

The Department has decided to publish a Notice to Proceed with the scheme.

6.3 **Direction Order**

The Department has decided to make the Direction Order without modification

6.4 **Vesting Order**

Due to budgetary constraints, the Department has decided to delay the making of the Vesting Order for the scheme until 2009/10. Minor modifications from the Order presented at the Inquiries will be made to avoid the vesting of land at Langley Hall.