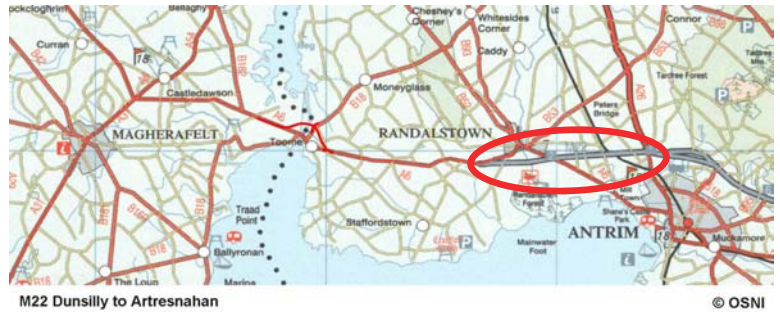


During the latter part of World War II considerable thought was given in Northern Ireland, as was in the rest of the United Kingdom, to “post war planning”. A commission was set up in 1942 “to prepare planning proposals and to make recommendations as to any legislative or administrative action necessary in connection therewith”. The commission produced an interim report ‘Planning Proposals for the Belfast Area’ in September 1944 (published in 1945). In addition to proposals for ring roads and bridges across the Lagan it advocated three new radial routes with motorway characteristics to relieve the existing roads: Antrim Road, Lisburn Road and Bangor Road. Another interim report was produced in 1946 — ‘Road Communications in Northern Ireland’. It dealt comprehensively with engineering and administrative aspects of the Northern Ireland road system. One of the recommendations was “the provision of a motorway between Belfast and Portadown to be undertaken at the earliest date”. In 1946, the Government accepted the Planning Commission’s recommendations that approach roads to Belfast should be constructed.

A line was selected in the mid 1940s for what was to become the first section of the M2 motorway from the Shore Road, Belfast to Sandyknowes on the road to

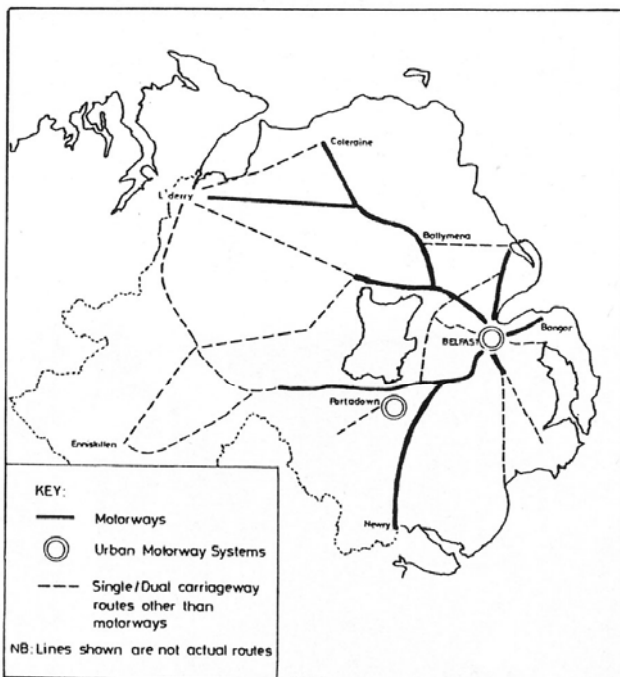
Antrim, with a spur over the hill to Corr’s Corner on the road to Larne. The original line for the outwards extension of the M2 motorway ran from Corr’s Corner, past Doagh to finish on the A36 Larne Road south east of Ballymena. The concept included a possible extension round the east side of Ballymena to connect to the A26 road north of Ballymena. In 1963 it was decided that the M2 alignment should be



changed to run towards Antrim from Sandyknowes rather than towards Ballymena from Corr’s Corner. An announcement was made in the House of Commons in 1964 that a motorway would be constructed to Antrim and then fork and give motorways to Castledawson and to beyond Ballymena. Later, the motorway to Ballymena would be extended to Coleraine and on to Londonderry.

The first 2.8 miles section of the M22 between Dunsilly and Ballygrooby (East of Randalstown) was opened to traffic on 16th August 1971: it was constructed by Farrans and cost £1.9M to build.

The remaining 1.4 miles of the M22 between Ballygrooby and Artresnaham (the Randalstown Bypass) was opened to traffic on 30th January 1973 it was constructed by Graham and cost £1.2M to build. The attractive Shane’ Viaduct bridge over the River Main is seldom seen.



Motorway plan for Northern Ireland.
(13 Feb 1964)



Shane's Viaduct