



INTRODUCTION

The proposed Limerick Southern Ring Road Phase II extends west from the end of the Limerick Southern Ring Road Phase I (currently under construction) at Rossbrien, to the existing N18 near Cratloe Castle. Once completed, the Limerick Southern Ring Road Phase II will form the final part of a southern bypass network around Limerick City, linking all national routes converging on the city.

SCHEME OBJECTIVES

The proposed Scheme is in accordance with European, National and Regional roads objectives and forms part of the development strategy for National Primary Roads as outlined in the National Development Plan (2000-2006).

The Limerick Southern Ring Road Phase II will remove a very significant volume of traffic, from Limerick City, which will have the effect of reducing City Centre congestion. The provision of the Scheme will complete the linking of all national routes around the City thus allowing national traffic to avoid the City Centre. It will benefit commuter traffic and improve access to Shannon Airport and County Clare. The Scheme will also allow City Centre planning strategies to be implemented such as the pedestrianisation of certain streets and the introduction of bus corridors.



SCHEME DESCRIPTION – Route

It is envisaged that the Limerick Southern Ring Road Phase II, which will incorporate a fourth crossing of the River Shannon, will involve the construction of approximately 10km of new dual carriageway, along with associated link roads and side roads. The Scheme will link the Limerick Southern Ring Road Phase I and the N20 Cork/Tralee Road in the area of Rossbrien with the N18 Ennis Road near Cratloe Castle. As noted, the PPP Project is also expected to include for a fourth crossing of the River Shannon which would

involve an immersed tube tunnel crossing, approximately 900m in length, linking the townland of Coonagh, on the northern bank, with the townland of Bunlicky on the southern bank of the Shannon.

It is envisaged that the route will commence in the townland of Rossbrien, immediately west of the Limerick Southern Ring Road Phase I and approximately at the location of the existing Rossbrien Roundabout and will proceed westwards, through the townlands of Rathbane North, Ballinacurra (Weston), Ballinacurra (Hart), Ballykeefe, Bunlicky, Castlemungret, Coonagh West, Clonmacken, Coonagh East, Meelick and Cratloemoyle to join with the existing N18 close to Cratloe Castle (see map across).

The scheme is also expected to include four grade separated interchanges; at Rossbrien joining the Limerick Southern Ring Road Phases I and II to the N20 Cork/Tralee road; at the Dock Road (N69); at Coonagh West; and at the N18 Ennis Road tie-in. It is envisaged that there will be two toll plazas and associated utilities located north of the river Shannon and six river crossings, including the tunnel crossing of the River Shannon.

SCHEME DESCRIPTION – DBFO and Tolling

It is proposed to procure the construction and operation of the Limerick Southern Ring Road Phase II together with ancillary roads through a Design/Build/Finance/Operate arrangement. This will encompass a long-term concession period, during which the Concessionaire will recoup some or all of the up-front construction costs and on-going operation/maintenance costs through the collection of tolls.

Two toll plazas are proposed for the scheme. It is proposed to locate the mainline toll plaza on the dual carriageway section between the grade separated junction on the Proposed National Road at Coonagh West and the grade separated junction at the tie-in with the existing N18 at Cratloe Castle.

In addition, a secondary toll plaza is proposed on the single carriageway section between the grade separated junction at Coonagh West and the tie-in to the existing Clonmacken roundabout. Due to the arrangement of the Coonagh West grade separated interchange, there is no link between the Clonmacken link road and the new dual carriageway north of the interchange.



Thus a road user cannot pass through both toll facilities in undertaking one journey on the scheme. For information, these charges are exactly the same as those adopted by the Authority for the N8 Fermoy, N25 Waterford and M1 Drogheda Toll Schemes.

The NRA's Statutory Draft Toll Scheme is available on its website, www.nra.ie.

SCHEME DESCRIPTION – Structures

Structure	Location
Overbridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R526 (St Nessans Road) • Ballykeefe Boreen • Coonagh West Interchange
Underbridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rossbrien Interchange • Greenfields (road and rail) • Ballinacurra Creek East • Ballinacurra Creek West • N69 Dock Road • Meelick Creek • Cratloemoyle • N18 Interchange
Tunnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Shannon

There are also a number of accommodation underpasses and roads.

GROUND CONDITIONS

The area through which the road will pass lies on the alluvial plain of the River Shannon and as such the local topography is generally very low lying and without significant topographical features. The elevation is typically between 1m OD and 4m OD (Malin Head). There are two significant local elevations along the scheme:

- In the vicinity of Ballykeeffe, where a hill rises to a height of 12.73m OD; and
- At Rossbrien, where a hill rises to a height of 12.34m OD.

The section in the townland of Ballykeefe and the approach ramps to the tunnel and the tunnel itself will be the only areas of cutting along the entire route.

In regard to subsoil conditions, typically firm brown and grey mottled clay was encountered overlaying soft and very soft grey alluvial clay, which was often found to be organic. Soft brown and fibrous peat was found as bands / lenses within the alluvial clay. Underlying the alluvial deposits, firm and stiff brown sandy gravely boulder clay with cobbles was

encountered. Glacial gravel beds were sometimes encountered beneath the boulder clay, generally comprising dense clayey fine to coarse angular gravel of limestone with some cobbles and boulders of same.

It was found that the thickness of alluvial deposits increased closer to the River Shannon and its associated flood plain. In general the depth to bedrock was typically found to be between 7m and 15m.

UTILITIES

The proposed scheme will intersect with several service providers. A number of diversions will be required including the following, although this is not an exhaustive list:

- Electricity Supply – Electricity Supply Board;
- Gas Distribution – Bord Gais;
- Water & Wastewater – Limerick County Council, Clare County Council, Limerick City Council;
- Telecommunications – Eircom, Esat BT, Broadband; and
- Cable TV – Chorus.

KEY INTERFACES

- Implementation of an ecological/agricultural Management Plan, in consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency, for the recovery area north of the River Shannon in Coonagh.
- A consultant ecologist will have to be retained in order to liaise closely with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government regional staff during periods where construction is within designated areas (p)NHAs, SPAs or (c)SACs and in matters relating to the protected plant species *Schoenoplectus triquetar*.
- Both the Shannon Regional Fisheries Board and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will be consulted in regard to the compilation of strategies and method statements for the crossing of rivers and lakes.
- In regard to drainage matters, the Office of Public Works will be consulted on an ongoing basis during the detailed design and construction phases of the Scheme.
- Liaison with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government will be required to ensure that requirements in relation to archaeology are adhered to.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project was published in 2003. Copies of the EIS may be obtained from the National Roads Design Office, Limerick County Council, Mungret College, Mungret, Co. Limerick, phone (061) 227382, fax (061) 226529, email srr2@midwestroads.ie.

