



INTRODUCTION

The N8 Rathcormac / Fermoy Bypass forms part of the strategically important national primary route connecting the cities of Cork and Dublin. The NRA has recognised the need to provide a high quality route between Cork and Dublin which would remove a significant volume of long distance traffic passing through towns and villages along the existing N8 route. It is therefore proposed to construct a new national primary route to motorway standards, separate from the existing N8, between Watergrasshill and Moorepark in County Cork. This part of the new route will be tolled and named the M8.

The main toll plaza will be located between the interchanges at Watergrasshill and Rathcormac South. Secondary tolling facilities will be provided at Corrin Interchange and will require toll booths on the northbound merge slip road and the southbound diverge slip road.

The route also includes 10 discrete side road realignments and various river crossings including the Flesk and Bride. The main feature of the route is the proposed Blackwater Crossing which comprises a 450m long viaduct spanning across the Blackwater Valley.

SCHEME OBJECTIVES

The existing N8 road geometry is generally substandard with a significant number of frontage accesses. The N8 alignment through Fermoy is particularly poor.

The aim of the scheme is to provide a dual two lane motorway which bypasses and serves the communities of Rathcormac and Fermoy. The provision of the scheme will result in a safer and more effective transportation route and enhance the local environment. As well as providing a significant improvement to the Cork to Dublin national primary, the bypassed communities will benefit from substantial relief from existing congestion.

PROGRAMME

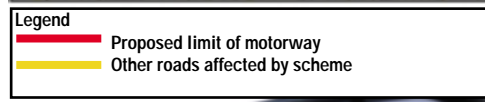
The statutory procedures commenced in July 2001. Tender documentation was issued in April 2002 with the aim of achieving financial close in mid 2003. Road opening is planned for 2006.

SCHEME DESCRIPTION

The N8 connects Cork to Portlaoise and forms part of the strategic link between Cork and Dublin. The M8 will provide a high quality dual carriageway between the townlands of Meenane, in the south at Watergrasshill, and Gortore, in the north at Moorepark, Fermoy.

The scheme will link to the Glanmire-Watergrasshill improvement to the south and is planned to link to the N8 Phase 2 works to the north which will provide a bypass to Mitchelstown and Kilbehenny.

The scheme comprises the construction of approximately 17.5km of dual two lane motorway together with associated interchanges and local road realignments. The route runs south to north between the proposed Glanmire - Watergrasshill Road and the interchange at Moorepark. The route contains four grade separated interchanges at Rathcormac South, Corrin, N72 Fermoy and Moorepark.



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There are 19 principal structures in the scheme.

TYPE	Location
Overbridges	<input type="checkbox"/> Skahanagh North Side Road
	<input type="checkbox"/> Scartbarry Side Road
	<input type="checkbox"/> Rathcormac South Interchange
	<input type="checkbox"/> R614 Maulane Side Road
	<input type="checkbox"/> Lisnagar Access Road
	<input type="checkbox"/> Garrynacole Side Road
	<input type="checkbox"/> Toberaneague Side Road
	<input type="checkbox"/> Mondaniel Side Road
	<input type="checkbox"/> Golf Club Side Road
<input type="checkbox"/> Moorepark Interchange	
Underbridges	<input type="checkbox"/> River Flesk Tributary
	<input type="checkbox"/> River Flesk
	<input type="checkbox"/> River Bride
	<input type="checkbox"/> River at Lisnagar
	<input type="checkbox"/> Shanowen River
	<input type="checkbox"/> Corrin Interchange
	<input type="checkbox"/> College Road Side Road
	<input type="checkbox"/> R666 Rath-healy Road Side Road
Viaduct	<input type="checkbox"/> Blackwater Crossing
Major Culvert	<input type="checkbox"/> Shanowennadrimina Stream
Toll Facilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Main plaza toll booths
	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary toll booths
	<input type="checkbox"/> Two toll facility support buildings

In addition to the principal highway structures the scheme will require the construction of culverts and accommodation works structures.

TOPOGRAPHY

The landscape between Watergrasshill and Moorepark is broadly of gently rolling open farmland interspersed with wooded river valleys and old red sandstone ridges.

GROUND CONDITIONS

The ground conditions of the route corridor are characterised by east / west trending valleys with the geology comprising Devonian sandstones and siltstones underlying Carboniferous shales and limestones.



Two faults, trending approximately east-west, have been identified at the northern and southern extents of the Waulsortian Limestone within the path of the route.

The superficial geology within the route generally comprises glacial deposits with some alluvial deposits in the river valleys. Some minor low-lying areas may contain peat.

The majority of material likely to be encountered at expected sub-grade level are bedrock or glacial deposits such as gravelly clays and clayey sands.

The Carboniferous bedrock may be subject to solution, resulting in widened joints and underground caverns (karst limestone). Remedial options for karst areas may include controlling ground water, both during construction and in the long term, replacing soft and collapsed material, grouting cavities and bridging cavities with materials such as geogrids.

UTILITIES

The proposed scheme will intersect with service providers apparatus and diversions will be required for the following: -

- Electricity - ESB
- Telecommunications - Eircom
- Gas - Bord Gáis
- Water and sewerage - Cork County Council

New services are proposed by some service providers and liaison will be required for gas (An Bord Gáis).

KEY INTERFACES

Liaison with various bodies will be necessary during the project to ensure that their requirements are met.

- Archaeology - Duchas
- Drainage - Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Public Works and Regional Fisheries Board
- Blackwater Crossing - Duchas