

Record Of Meeting

An Bord Pleanála



Case Reference/ Description	17.HC0003 Slane Bypass, County Meath.		
Case Type:	Pre-app consultation		
Meeting:	2 nd		
Date:	7 th December, 2018	11 a.m.	
Location:	Parnell Room		
Chairperson:	Philip Green		

Attendees:

Representing An Bord Pleanála

Philip Green – Assistant Director of Planning

Mairead Kenny – Senior Planning Inspector

Kieran Somers – Executive Officer

Representing Prospective Applicant

Peter Walsh, Director of Capital Programmes, TII

Geraldine Fitzpatrick, Head of Roads Capital Programme, TII

Mary Deevy, Senior Archaeologist, TII

Stasia Zielska, Assistant Engineering Inspector, TII

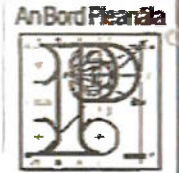
Nicholas Whyatt, Senior Engineer, Meath County Council

Wendy Bagnall, Senior Executive Planner, Meath County Council

Michael Noonan, Project Manager, RPS Consulting Engineers

Deirdre Reilly, Senior Executive Engineer, Westmeath National Roads Office

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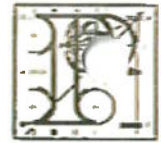
The meeting commenced at 11 a.m.

The Board referred to its previous meeting with the prospective applicant dated the 21st September, 2015 and noted the time which has elapsed since this meeting. The Board said that it expected this would constitute an update meeting given the time which has passed. Referring to its letter to the prospective applicant dated the 13th April, 2016, the Board reiterated that it would not be in a position to provide further clarification on the Board's decision regarding case reference number HA0026 (previous N2 Slane Bypass Road Scheme). Responding to this, the prospective applicant said that this piece of correspondence has proven to be useful from its perspective and that it has gone back to a starting point vis-à-vis the proposed development. The prospective applicant added that the project as a whole is now at a crucial stage and that it hoped the instant meeting would provide the Board with a sense of where it is at.

The prospective applicant set out the context for the proposed road development and, in particular, the existing problems which are pertinent to Slane Village. The prospective applicant noted for the record that the N2 in Slane fails to adequately perform the function of a National Primary Road and also referred to the history of road safety issues and the high risk of accidents on the N2 which potentially remains albeit that traffic management measures and other improvements had reduced these risks somewhat.

With respect to the proposed road development, the prospective applicant said that it wished to illustrate to the Board the different circumstances which are now relevant with regard to policy, the consideration of alternatives, the approach to the World Heritage Site, the ecological risk assessment at option selection stage and the nature and level of engagement with key stakeholders.

In a policy context, the prospective applicant said that the proposed road development is strongly supported by documents/plans such as the National Development Plan 2018-2027, the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016 – 2035 and the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019. With regard to the National Planning Framework, the prospective applicant emphasised the public value policy therein which requires improvement in the liveability or quality of life of urban places. In the context of Slane, the proposed development will seek to achieve this by improving the quality of the built environment, addressing traffic and parking issues, improving access to amenities and public transport and creating a sense of personal safety and well-being.



The prospective applicant referred to the preparation of a **Wide Area Traffic Model** which is intended to assess the effects of the proposed development. Within this study area, constraints have been identified such as the **Bru na Boinne World Heritage Site** and various ecological constraints.

The preliminary route options for the proposed road development were referred to by the prospective applicant. These are located on the western and eastern side of **Slane Village**.

A total of 15 **Traffic Management Options** have been generated with respect to the project and these are as follows:

- 3 **HGV ban options**
- 2 **new tolls options**
- 3 **removal of existing tolls options**
- 2 **N2 demand management options**
- 2 **improvements to other existing alternative routes options**
- 3 **other modes of transport options**

The prospective applicant set out the different approach which has been adapted in relation to the **World Heritage Site**. It noted for the record that a **World Heritage Expert** had been appointed and that a **Statement of Significance** regarding the **Outstanding Universal Value** was prepared in early 2018. The prospective applicant provided the Board with a copy of this statement and noted that the **National Monument Service** has welcomed this as a foundational document. The prospective applicant also said that **ICOMOS** has responded positively to the document and included some comments in relation to same; it added that such views have been taken on board. The prospective applicant noted that independent assessments in relation to the **World Heritage Site**, archaeological and cultural heritage and architectural heritage are taking place at the route option selection stage. Responding to the Board's query on the matter, the prospective applicant said that there is a new **Management Plan** in place with regard to the **World Heritage Site**; it added that this was forwarded to **UNESCO** in 2017.

The Board's representatives referred to a matter which had been of significance in arguments presented to the previous oral hearing and which should be addressed in any forthcoming application. Those matters relate to the impacts of any further development which might take place on lands close to the roundabout and to the suitability of the extent of the buffer zone for the **World Heritage Site**.

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The prospective applicant said that its archaeological consultants have examined the further aerial and infra-red photography of the area which was carried out during the summer (drought conditions) of 2018. The prospective applicant reported that it had not uncovered any new features or archaeological constraints. The prospective applicant also noted that seasonal surveys have been carried out in respect of route options regarding ecology in areas such as along the River Boyne. Consultations are also on-going with representatives from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI).

With respect to public consultations, the prospective applicant reported that an initial public consultation meeting took place in July 2017; a further such event took place in November 2017. Consultations are on-going with various statutory bodies and stakeholders. Noting this, the Board enquired if consultations with the NPWS are progressing. The prospective applicant replied that such is the case and that it appears that the NPWS is satisfied with the comprehensive nature of the preparatory works that are being carried out. The prospective applicant also noted that consultations have taken place with the local rangers and representatives from Slane Castle. The Board's representatives also advised the prospective applicant to address the provisions of the Water Framework Directive.

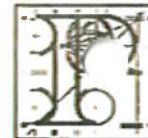
Noting how appropriate assessment has evolved from the time of the previous planning application (particularly in respect of direct and secondary effects), the prospective applicant said that a lot of local information has been relayed back to its conservation team.

In relation to the 15 options which have been identified, the prospective applicant said that it has conducted an initial assessment regarding best options on both the west side and east side of the village. It added that this had fed back into its second public consultation meeting which took place in November 2017. The Board enquired as to whether all of these options were viable from a cost-benefit perspective. The prospective applicant replied that they were and also noted that each option would have different effects on the environment and topography.

The prospective applicant recapped on the current status of the project as a whole; it noted that the option selection process (Stage 2) is nearing completion.

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In relation to Slane Village generally and particularly the east – west route, the Board asked if an urban renewal scheme might form part of any planning application. The prospective applicant replied that it is considering whether to do this or to have such a scheme as a separate entity to the planning application. In a general context, it noted the objective to improve the amenities and the built environment of Slane Village.

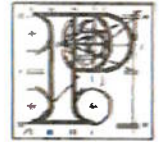
The Board's representatives said that it is very important that the status, purpose and need for the proposed development is clearly set out. The Board said there should be clarity on how the project fits into the broader picture for traffic management on a national, regional and local level and the environs of Slane Village itself and as to whether it is part of a larger strategic network or, more fundamentally, a bypass to alleviate traffic, safety and environmental issues in and around the village. The Board also enquired as to wider plans for both the N2 and M2 and as to whether existing traffic management measures will be retained as part of the proposed development. It was emphasised that clarity on such matters would facilitate the Board's greater understanding of any application before it. The Board's representatives said that if the prospective applicant has any opinions on the foregoing issues, these can be relayed back to the SID division of the Board.

With regard to traffic surveys, the Board enquired as to how the matter of tolling has been approached. The prospective applicant said that much analysis has been carried out since the time of its previous meeting with the Board regarding matters such as toll-dodging and avoidance. The prospective applicant said that the analysis which has been carried out has been able to separate out HGVs which are dodging tolls and those which are genuinely using the route in question. Noting the methodologies which are being employed, the Board advised that the prospective applicant should consider all available options including qualitative surveys. The prospective applicant replied that all options for surveying are being considered with respect to the proposed road development.

The Board's representatives asked the prospective applicant if there is anything it might wish to have highlighted to the SID division of the Board, or any matters on which it might require advice, in relation to the proposed road development. The prospective applicant said that it would wish to get a greater understanding of the degree of information the Board might require regarding the project scope; this would relate to the broader strategic context for the proposed road development and the related planning, traffic and environmental contexts for Slane Village. The prospective applicant said that it would be useful to get some direction from the

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Board on this and also in relation to heritage and cumulative impacts of the proposed road development. Noting the importance of heritage issues with regard to the case, the Board's representatives recommended consideration of the option of a landscape conservation area; they also advised the prospective applicant to remain cognisant of other planning issues which will require substantive assessment as well.

Conclusion:

The Board said that general application procedures (including those pertaining to EIA and the Department Portal) could be imparted at a future meeting. The prospective applicant signalled its preference for a further meeting circa March 2019. It will be a matter for the prospective applicant to revert to the Board with regard to potential dates for this. In the meantime, the Board's representatives intend to make a presentation to the SID division of the Board to provide an update on the consultations.

The meeting concluded at 12.45 p.m.



Philip Green
Assistant Director of Planning

12/12/18

