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# **Chapter 6**

# **Consultation**

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## 6 CONSULTATION

### 6.1 Introduction

Consultation is an essential part the decision making associated with Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This includes not only the statutory consultation associated with the application but at pre-planning stage the early involvement of the public and other stakeholders to ensure that the views of stakeholders are taken into consideration throughout the preparation of this Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). Stakeholder consultation has been a feature of the project development for the Proposed Scheme.

The overall aim of the consultation processes to date has been to:

- Fulfil TII requirements for consultation at key project milestones in line with the Project Management Guidelines (TII, 2017-2022);
- Engage stakeholders and the public as early as possible at each stage of the Proposed Scheme development and encourage feedback;
- Provide a process for members of the public to participate in the Proposed Scheme;
- Seek input from the public and from relevant stakeholders with respect to the N2 bypass route options proposed;
- Identify alternative solutions where feasible;
- Identify measures to reduce impacts during the construction phase;
- Provide opportunities for the public and stakeholders to provide information with respect to the potential impacts that could arise as a result of implementing the Proposed Scheme; and
- Keep the public informed of the Proposed Scheme as it progresses throughout the different stages.

Access to up-to-date, accurate and reliable information about the Proposed Scheme is considered essential to ensuring good consultation can occur. To aid the consultation process a stand-alone website was set up at: <https://n2slanebypass.ie/>

This website has enabled the public to access (at any time) up-to-date information on the consultation process, the Proposed Scheme and the overall project programme. It has maintained a facility allowing submissions to be made online as well as providing a postal address for anybody who wishes to submit a hard copy at any time.

The following key consultation activities are included in the chapter:

- Study Area and Constraints;
- Options selection for the N2 Slane Bypass;
- Emerging Preferred Route for the N2 Slane Bypass;
- EIA Scoping for the Proposed Scheme;
- Landowner liaison;
- Public Realm enhancement;
- Fourth public consultation; and
- Pre-application meetings with An Bord Pleanála (ABP).

A summary of the key changes to the Proposed Scheme which were influenced by the consultation process are also summarised at the end of the chapter.

## 6.2 Consultation on Study Area and Constraints

### 6.2.1 First Public Consultation

The first public consultation event for the N2 Slane Bypass was held on 27 July 2017 in the Conyngham Arms Hotel, Slane, Co. Meath between 2 pm and 9 pm. A total of 237 signatures were obtained on the attendance register during the event.<sup>1</sup>

The natural, physical and external constraints of the scheme were presented, along with an indicative study area for the proposed N2 Slane Bypass. The public consultation afforded the public the opportunity to obtain information on the scheme and to submit any feedback or queries they might have about the scheme, through feedback forms which were issued to each attendee on the day.

In total 38 feedback forms were received on the day at the first public consultation event. In summary the main issues raised in these submissions were:

- The need to consider an east/west route to address traffic congestion and traffic volumes.
- The appropriateness of the original route proposed to ABP.
- The potential to remove the toll on the M1, need for a proper study.
- The importance of protecting historical sites during route selection.
- Loss of dwellings/land as a result of a bypass.
- Opportunity for western bypass routes to tie-in at the Balrenny crossroads.
- Inclusion of cycleways and footpaths in the design to improve the amenities in the area.
- Safety concerns for the L-1600 at Beauparc station (located to the west of McGruder's Crossroads) with a western bypass.
- Need for upgrade to watermain in Slane linked to fixing congestion.
- Negative impact on the quality of life in the village as a result of congestion.

Following the event, seven further submissions were received. Additional issues raised in these submissions were:

- Economic and a public health and safety concerns resulting from traffic congestion on the N2.
- Need for route options that best complement the existing heritage and tourism assets of Slane.
- Impact of a western route option on a major dairy farm in Harlinstown.
- Underuse of existing bridges over the Boyne in Navan and Drogheda which are suitable for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).
- Bypass would have knock-on impact on Collon and/ or Ardee.

### 6.2.2 Other Stakeholder Consultations

As part of the process of defining the study area and identifying constraints, consultation was undertaken with a list of stakeholders in Q3 of 2017. The study area and constraints consultation ran from 9 June – 23 June 2017. The stakeholders contacted comprised those set out in **Table 6-1**. Each stakeholder group was provided with a map of the study area and were invited to make a submission/comment on constraints in the area. A number of responses were received and are summarised in **Table 6-2**.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Some people attended but did not sign the register.

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**Table 6-1: Consultees Contacted During the Constraints Stage**

<b>Consultees Contacted During Constraints Stage<sup>2</sup></b>	
Meath County Council (MCC)	Royal Irish Academy: Committee for Historical Studies
Louth County Council	The Discovery Programme
The Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly	University College Dublin
Development Applications Unit (DAU) – under the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– National Monuments Service</li> <li>– Archaeological Survey of Ireland</li> <li>– Built Heritage Unit</li> <li>– National Parks and Wildlife Service</li> </ul>	Trinity College Dublin
ICOMOS Ireland	Dundalk Institute of Technology
Office of Public Works	University College Galway
Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre	University College Cork
National Museum of Ireland	Inland Fisheries Ireland
The Heritage Council	BirdWatch Ireland
An Taisce – The National Trust for Ireland	Environmental Protection Agency
Fáilte Ireland	Geological Survey of Ireland
The Arts Council	

**Table 6-2: Summary of Consultation Responses Received at Constraints Stage**

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Summary of Response</b>
<b>National Museum of Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted that the National Museum of Ireland Archive is available for consultation.</li> <li>• Suggested that all sources are consulted regarding known monuments and artefact clusters.</li> </ul>
<b>Geological Survey of Ireland (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided a list of online geo-data viewers/download links.</li> <li>• Provided Geological Heritage reports for sites within and around the study area.</li> <li>• Provided list of guidelines in relation to geology and hydrogeology.</li> <li>• Requested that any bedrock cuttings be designed to remain visible to improve geological knowledge.</li> <li>• Requested a copy of any site investigation reports.</li> <li>• Requested reporting of any new karst features encountered.</li> </ul>
<b>Inland Fisheries Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted that part of the River Boyne within the study area is at Moderate Ecological Status and At Risk for the 2010-2015 Water Framework Directive (WFD) reporting cycle.</li> <li>• Noted the Boyne stocks Atlantic salmon, brown trout, eels and lamprey.</li> <li>• Requested Appropriate Assessment (AA)/ Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be carried out to ensure sufficient information on potential impacts to aquatic environment.</li> <li>• Concerned over the mechanism of construction works – relevant guidelines provided in relation to this.</li> <li>• Noted that Dunbia Meat Processing factory at Greenhills, Beauparc, may be constructing an effluent pipeline to the River Boyne via Dollardstown.</li> </ul>
<b>Development Applications Unit (Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requested that the qualified archaeologists be engaged on the project.</li> <li>• Noted study area has the potential to contain significant archaeological potential (including the River Boyne).</li> <li>• Requested that appropriate recognition be afforded the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Property.</li> <li>• Noted need to extend consideration to any visual impacts, amenity impacts and other intangible characteristics of Slane.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> \*Names in the list reflect the title of departments at the time of consultation in 2017.

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Stakeholder	Summary of Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided list of nature conservation constraints.</li> <li>• Noted the main nature constraints of the River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA).</li> <li>• Noted that Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed are present along the River Boyne.</li> <li>• Provided links to baseline dataset sources.</li> </ul>
<b>University College Dublin</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledged the history of accidents in Slane and urgent matter for the Slane community.</li> <li>• Recognised the considerable evidence base presented at the previous ABP Oral Hearing in 2011 including the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Property prepared at that time.</li> <li>• Noted the need to address issues in relation to the Board's decision on how traffic management will be addressed.</li> <li>• Noted the need to consider the background legal context (documents outlined).</li> <li>• Noted the need to consider the ICOMOS submissions from the last hearing.</li> <li>• Provided a list of methodologies for addressing heritage sites.</li> </ul>
<b>Dundalk Institute of Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted the need to consider all previous information in relation to the original Slane Bypass EIS.</li> <li>• Noted that online list of monuments was not exhaustive – noted geophysical surveys carried out for previous bypass.</li> <li>• Noted proximity to World Heritage Property (WHP) – likely that low-visibility/subsurface remains will be encountered. Most likely be mitigated as per TII guidance but reference to M3/ Lismullen National Monument noted.</li> <li>• Reference to the Meath LiDAR data gathered for the WHP in 2008 – noted that 100 sites of archaeological interest found but this data was not included in the previous application.</li> <li>• Noted public perception/ exaggerations/ misconceptions on the impact of the scheme for the WHP for previous bypass.</li> <li>• Noted the viewsheds particularly important for the WHP.</li> <li>• Noted the WHP expert for the previous application noted that a bypass was feasible as long as no associated development occurred along the new route i.e. already negative impact from the M1 and Platin Cement, retail park, incinerator etc.</li> <li>• Noted the clear challenge to demonstrate no other viable alternative.</li> </ul>
<b>The Discovery Programme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Openness to consult further on prospective options as assessment phase progresses.</li> </ul>

A meeting was also held with the National Monuments Service (NMS) and the Built Heritage Unit of the then-named Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural, and Gaeltacht Affairs to discuss the particular heritage constraints in Slane and wider area; this meeting took place at the Custom House in July 2017.

Representatives from MCC, Westmeath National Roads Design Office, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, RPS and Courtney Deery Heritage Consultants attended the meeting with the Department. The purpose of the meeting was to present an outline of the Proposed Scheme and clarify how heritage constraints were being addressed in the process, in particular heritage constraints of the Slane area.

## 6.3 Consultation on Route Selection

### 6.3.1 Second Public Consultation

To inform the second formal public consultation event, scheme options, including a traffic management option were presented. The event was held on the 29 November 2017 in the Conyngham Arms Hotel, Slane, Co. Meath, between 2 pm and 9 pm. A total of 195 people or groups signed the attendance register on the day.<sup>3</sup>

The consultation was intended to gather feedback from the public on the shortlisted scheme options that were being progressed for further assessment in Stage 2 Project Appraisal, to gather information on matters

<sup>3</sup> Note: some attended but opted not to sign the register.

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of particular concern and sensitivity to inform the public about the current status of the scheme, the changes to the scheme since it was previously on public display and the various steps involved as well as likely timescale going forward.

Drawings were put on display and members of MCC, Westmeath National Roads Design Office and RPS were available to explain the Scheme Options, and the Traffic Management Option and listen and take note of all queries and concerns raised by the public. In addition, the public were invited to submit written submissions and in total 104 feedback forms were received.

The key issues raised from the second public consultation included:

- **Need for the Scheme:** Broad acknowledgment that the scheme is necessary.
- **Traffic trends:** National perspective needed as HGVs use the Slane to Mullingar route to avoid tolls on the M1, M3, M50, M4 etc. Need to resolve the east to west traffic in addition to north-south traffic. Any bypass option will have negative impact on the communities of Collon and Ardee and will significantly increase the traffic on the N51 both east and west.
- **Traffic Management (TM) Options:** Support for implementation of TM in conjunction with a bypass. Calls from greater weight to be given to TM options in light of ABP previous refusal. Need to trial traffic management option in Slane village before a bypass is introduced. Some support for removing the M1 toll for HGVs and also calls for a one-year toll free period on the M1 as previous trial was only one-month long. TM option not sufficient to bring the N2 up to the TII standards for national roads. Upgrading existing routes has not been considered. TM option is best option to avoid disturbance to UNESCO site and other sites.
- **Western Options:** Potential to negatively impact Slane Distillery, Slane Castle, farmers and other enterprises west of Slane. Concerns for Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), SPA and important woodland on each side of the River Boyne. Severance of farms leading to negative impact on farm enterprises. The importance of the Slane Castle and Beauparc estates for heritage, environmental and economic value to the area.
- **Eastern Options:** Direct impact to family home at McGruder's Cross (Option E). Constraint on future housing development to the east of the village with Option E. Severance of farms leading to negative impact on farm enterprises.
- **New Routes:** Support for a combination of an eastern route and the north-western section of Options B, C and D.

All issues raised were considered as part of the design development and EIAR preparation. A full summary of the Second Consultation was provided in Appendix E to the published Options Selection Report (RPS, 2020) for the scheme which can be accessed on the project website at <https://n2slanebypass.ie/>.

### 6.3.2 Other Stakeholder Consultations

During the option selection stage, an expanded list of stakeholders to those contacted at constraints stage was contacted to seek feedback and observations on the proposed bypass and traffic management options. A letter including a description of each route option along with a map was circulated on 14 February 2018 to the stakeholders set out in **Table 6-3**, with comments invited for a period of four weeks until 2 March 2018. A number of submissions were received which are summarised in **Table 6-4**.

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**Table 6-3: Consultees for the Route Options**

<b>Consultees Contacted During Options Selection Stage<sup>4</sup></b>	
Meath County Council	Dundalk Institute of Technology
Louth County Council	University College Galway (Emeritus Professor)
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly	University College Cork (Retired Lecturer)
Development Applications Unit – under Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DCHG)	Inland Fisheries Ireland
- National Monuments Service	
- Archaeological Survey of Ireland	
- Built Heritage Unit	
- National Parks and Wildlife Service	
Office of Public Works	BirdWatch Ireland
Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre	Environmental Protection Agency
National Museum of Ireland	Geological Survey of Ireland – Heritage Programme
The Heritage Council	Bat Conservation Ireland
An Taisce	Irish Water
Faite Ireland	Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment
Arts Council of Ireland	Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government
The Discovery Programme	The Waters and Communities Office - Mid Region (East and West)
ICOMOS Ireland	The Waters and Communities Office - Navan Office
Royal Irish Academy	Health and Safety Authority
Irish Georgian Society	Health Service Executive
University College Dublin	HSE National Office - Health and Wellbeing
Trinity College Dublin (Emeritus Professor)	Industrial Heritage Association of Ireland

**Table 6-4: Summary of Consultation Responses Received at Route Selection Stage**

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Summary of Response</b>
<b>Development Applications Unit, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DCHG)</b>	<p><b>General Nature Conservation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the route will cross the River Boyne and Blackwater SAC, designated sites should be considered when considering constraints. Annexed habitats and species should be avoided if possible.</li> <li>Noted impacts on protected species should be considered when identifying constraints.</li> <li>Noted survey work may be needed to identify constraints if species and habitats data along route is unavailable.</li> <li>Himalayan balsam at various locations – any assessment should include a follow up management plan to check for Himalayan balsam and to control it if found.</li> <li>Noted the National Biodiversity Action Plan (DCHG 2017) sets out policy on nature conservation</li> <li>Hydrological modelling necessary for bridge to determine impacts.</li> <li>EU Green Infrastructure Strategy (EC 2013) noted.</li> </ul> <p><b>EIAR</b></p> <p><b>Ecological Survey Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecological survey should be carried out on the site of the Proposed Scheme.</li> <li>Ex-situ impacts – may need survey outside of development sites.</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> Names in the list reflect the title of departments at the time of consultation in 2018.



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Stakeholder	Summary of Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitably qualified persons should carry out surveys at appropriate time of year.</li> <li>• EIAR should include whole project.</li> <li>• Alternatives should be in EIAR.</li> <li>• Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) should be consulted regarding fish species.</li> <li>• Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) should be consulted for information on geological and geomorphological sites.</li> </ul> <p><b>Baseline Data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of baseline data from National Parks and Wildlife Service, National Biodiversity Data Centre, Inland Fisheries Ireland, BirdWatch Ireland and Bat Conservation Ireland and planning authority</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact Assessment Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on the flora, fauna and habitats should be assessed, including where relevant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Protected sites - Natura 2000 sites, Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), nature reserves and refuges for fauna and flora, designated under Wildlife Act.</li> <li>– Protected species under Wildlife Acts.</li> <li>– Other legislation to note - EC Regulations and Environmental Liability Directive</li> <li>– Features of landscape with ecological importance – Article 10 of Habitats Directive, Important bird areas from Birdlife International.</li> <li>– Habitats of ecological value in local context.</li> <li>– Red data book species.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reference the National Biodiversity Action Plan [NBAP] 2017-2021 (DCHG, 2017) and All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 (National Biodiversity Data Centre 2015).</li> <li>• Losses of biodiversity should be mitigated.</li> <li>• Hydrological/geological data should be obtained and cumulative impacts with other plans/projects assessed.</li> <li>• Prevent introduction and spread of invasive species during construction.</li> </ul> <p><b>Hedgerows and Protected Species</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain where possible, especially old hedgerows. Any removed need mitigation and cannot be removed during nesting season. EIAR should state length of hedgerow lost.</li> </ul> <p><b>Bats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note a licence required to destroy bat roosts under Wildlife Acts and a derogation under the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations. Any mitigations need to be proven to work.</li> </ul> <p><b>Rivers and Wetlands</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacted watercourses or wetlands should be surveyed for protected species and any listed in habitats directive.</li> <li>• Proposed Scheme should be at least 10 m away from waterway with otter habitat. Suitable riparian habitat should be left along watercourse.</li> <li>• Measures to prevent sediment/fuel runoff should be included in EIAR.</li> <li>• Flood plains should be identified and left undeveloped and EIAR should account for the Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DHLGH 2018).</li> <li>• When fish species are impacted, IFI should be consulted and consult publication 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' (IFI 2020).</li> </ul> <p><b>Water Quality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground and surface water quality should be protected during construction and operation.</li> <li>• Adequate sewage treatment facilities and water supplies where relevant should be in place.</li> </ul> <p><b>Construction Management Plans (CMP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete project details need to be provided.</li> <li>• Demonstrate that CMP and other plans are adequate with effective mitigation.</li> <li>• Positions, locations and construction compounds should be determined.</li> </ul> <p><b>Appropriate Assessment</b></p> <p><b>Guidance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The following guidance should be considered: Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009) and EU Commission guidance Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites</li> </ul>

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Stakeholder	Summary of Response
	<p>Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC 2001).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CJEU and Irish case law has clarified some issues and relevant cases should be considered.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conservation objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information for Natura 2000 sites should be included. Include version number and date of information (such as datasheets) accessed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cumulative and ex situ impacts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include all Natura 2000 sites within 15 km – sometimes will need to extend this, where bird flight paths are involved.</li> <li>• Local Authorities should be consulted about other projects/plans.</li> </ul> <p><b>Alien invasive species</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure no invasive species are introduced/spread as a result of works near Natura 2000 sites, which could negatively impact these sites.</li> </ul> <p><b>Construction Management Plans (CMP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete project details need to be provided. Positions, locations and sizes of construction compounds should be determined.</li> </ul> <p><b>Licences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licences may be required under the Wildlife Acts or derogations under the Habitats Regulations when protected species and their habitats, resting or breeding places are impacted.</li> <li>• Noted that the Regulations 1997 have since been revoked, Part 6 of EC Regulations 2011-2015 now deals with flora and fauna protection.</li> <li>• Vegetation should not be removed during nesting season.</li> <li>• Survey results must be submitted to NPWS to apply for licence in advance of planning.</li> <li>• Ecological survey of development site should take place immediately prior to construction if original survey work takes place well before construction. Significant changes may require new licence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Archaeology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware that further archaeological assessment and survey is currently on-going and will review once results are available.</li> <li>• Acknowledges that the services of a World Heritage Property expert, Dr Stephen Carter, have been retained as an integral part of the team assessing the proposed scheme.</li> </ul>
<b>Waterways Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comment in relation to the N2 Slane Bypass as it was stated the project was outside its jurisdiction.</li> </ul>
<b>Health Service Executive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided a list of documents to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Guidelines on the information to be contained in EIS (EPA 2002);</li> <li>– Advice Notes on Current Practice in the preparation of EIS (EPA 2003); and</li> <li>– Guidelines for Planning Authorities and ABP on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (DHLGH 2018).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommend that each route option is assessed individually and draw up assessment matrix for construction and operational phases.</li> <li>• Assessment matrix should include description of receiving environment, nature and scale of project, assessment of the significance of the impact, proposed mitigation measures and residual impacts.</li> <li>• Assessment of significant impacts on population and human health should be carried out for each specific route option, considering the wider determinants of health – can refer to <a href="http://www.publichealth.ie">www.publichealth.ie</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Dundalk Institute of Technology</b>	<p><b>Archaeology directly impacted by current route options</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No major archaeological sites currently known that will be impacted by any of the routes.</li> <li>• Any archaeology encountered would be low visibility or subsurface.</li> </ul> <p><b>Geophysics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programmes of geophysical survey carried out along the route of previous bypass.</li> <li>• Revealed a range of small-scale subsurface features.</li> </ul> <p><b>Surface Collection Survey</b></p>

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Stakeholder	Summary of Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive evidence of prehistoric activity identified in fields between surviving monuments and south of River Boyne.</li> <li>• Densities of materials were highest in the area around Newgrange.</li> <li>• Lowest densities of materials were recorded in fields that would be impacted by proposed eastern routes.</li> <li>• One site in Cullen townland is close to the eastern route options. Significant features were identified which appear likely to be a mix of prehistoric and early medieval in date.</li> <li>• Follow up on subsurface component along the length of the final route chosen.</li> <li>• Geophysical and geochemical techniques can detect enhancement of soils due to anthropogenic activity.</li> <li>• All sites/potential sites identified during the INSTAR Boyne Valley Landscapes project have been notified to the NMS and recorded.</li> <li>• Consider review of LiDAR dataset where necessary.</li> </ul> <p><b>Route Options</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option A has little or no impact on archaeology.</li> <li>• Western routes would impact the Slane Castle Architectural Conservation Area.</li> <li>• Likely that the number of recorded archaeological sites along the western routes is underrepresented and that subsurface archaeology is likely to exist in the west of Slane.</li> <li>• Proximity of Option B to tower house in Slanecastle Demesne townland and the motte in Thurstianstown is of some concern.</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact on archaeology Brú na Bóinne WHP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From the point of archaeology alone, no impact on the archaeology of the WHP as all options lie outside the boundary of the buffer zone.</li> <li>• Some impact on the viewsheds from points within in WHP.</li> </ul> <p><b>Viewshed impact on the WHP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep any assessment of visual impact as objective as possible.</li> <li>• Test the impact of various routes and bridge design options using both MCC and Ordnance Survey Ireland LiDAR data.</li> </ul> <p><b>Other Points of Note</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project website needs to be open and transparent.</li> <li>• Ploughzone investigation strategy should be carried out along the chosen route.</li> <li>• M3 project could be used as a guide for likely visual impacts.</li> </ul>
<b>Irish Georgian Society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The construction of a further new road and associated bridge will undermine the integrity of the powerful historic landscape resulting in potentially profound negative impacts on heritage assets of regional, national and international importance, including protected structures, monuments and national monuments, and the World Heritage Property.</li> <li>• Significant implications for the loss of heritage and economy.</li> <li>• Unclear why any option other than the option likely to result in least intervention is being considered at this time.</li> <li>• Traffic management options should be thoroughly exhausted before any consideration is given to the construction of new road infrastructure.</li> </ul>
<b>Inland Fisheries Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate Assessment and/or EIS (if relevant) to be carried out in order to ensure that there is sufficient information with regard to the potential effects of this project on the aquatic environment.</li> <li>• Preference would be for any route that would impact least on fisheries interests.</li> <li>• Mechanism of the construction of any works, especially when crossing watercourses is of concern.</li> </ul>
<b>International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed Scheme only acceptable where it has been demonstrated that there is no appropriate alternative available.</li> <li>• Proposed Scheme would have a detrimental impact on the rural character, landscape setting, cultural amenity and archaeological heritage of the Brú na Bóinne archaeological complex and would be contrary to the heritage protection provisions of the Development Plan.</li> <li>• Recommend that TII consider the landscape on a wider basis.</li> </ul>

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Stakeholder	Summary of Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New/upgraded road decisions require adequate information about the broader landscape and detailed information about the vulnerabilities, constraints or impacts of the different proposed options.</li> <li>• Concerns of an inappropriate piecemeal approach and incremental approach if there were proposals to implement a motorway scheme linking Ardee and Slane to the M1.</li> <li>• Suggest that to the north of Slane the link from Ardee to the M1 could take all the southward moving traffic.</li> <li>• Better recognition that traffic is a response to the cost of tolls.</li> <li>• ICOMOS may need to flag the potential threat to the OUV of the World Heritage Property.</li> <li>• Recommend showing the various protected and designated areas and sites on map with the Options, and to indicate the boundary of the buffer zone of the World Heritage Property.</li> <li>• Discussion of the merits/ problems of the route options should also clearly articulate whether the scheme is about a solution for a specific and important local problem or is focused on the wider issue of the N2 route as a long-distance corridor referred to in the Scheme Details.</li> <li>• Consideration of Scheme Options must take the significant potential heritage impact of that route into account, identify whether there are differences in this regard between the various route options and describe in full detail how the mitigation of heritage/environmental impact will be achieved.</li> <li>• Full consideration to be given to their potential heritage/environmental impact, which includes (as with the eastern options) a new bridge across the Boyne and the impact on a sensitive landscape area with significant designated sites/areas protecting natural and cultural heritage assets.</li> <li>• Consideration of Scheme Options has to take the significant potential heritage impact of that route into account, identify whether there are differences in this regard between the various route options and describe in full detail how the mitigation of heritage/environmental impact will be achieved.</li> </ul>

Outside of the formal consultation period a number of meetings took place with the following stakeholders as summarised in **Table 6-5** and the feedback received was also considered in the route option assessments.

**Table 6-5: Meetings with Stakeholders for Route Selection Stage – Summary of Issues Raised**

Stakeholder Correspondence Type and Date	Summary of Key Issues
<b>National Monuments Service and Architectural and Built Heritage Unit of the DCHG</b> Meeting (No. 2), Custom House, Dublin 1 27 February 2018	The project team requested a meeting with the heritage units to outline to the department, as the state party for the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Property how the team was approaching the assessment of effects of the proposed scheme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project team WHP expert presented the approach to assessment and the N2 Slane Bypass Statement of Significance for the Broader Setting of the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Property in the Vicinity of Slane, which was circulated to the department, and invited comments on the statement.</li> <li>• The department welcomed the draft Statement of Significance and agreed it covered all relevant areas and is valid as a standalone document.</li> <li>• Project team heritage specialists outlined the heritage survey work completed and being undertaken.</li> </ul>
<b>Slane Castle Estate</b> Meeting, Slane Castle, Slane, Co. Meath 1 May 2018	A meeting was held with the owners of Slane Castle in relation to the bypass route options proposed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of previous traffic studies and their perceived limitations, that certain traffic management alternatives should be considered, a traffic management model created, and discussed cost-benefits related to tolls, and previous toll-holiday. The estate noted traffic calming measures were effective but felt no longer operating properly.</li> <li>• Project team provided an outline of the route option appraisal process. Slane Castle estate raised concerns in relation to severe impacts of a bypass on the estate and flagged some areas of ecological interest.</li> </ul>
<b>National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the DCHG</b>	A meeting was held with the Meath NPWS Ranger to discuss assessment approach to ecological aspects for route selection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project team gave an overview of the route options and bridge heights.</li> </ul>

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Stakeholder Correspondence Type and Date	Summary of Key Issues
Meeting (No. 1), Education Centre, 26 September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPWS noted preference would be for a narrower crossing of the River Boyne, queried possibility of a shorter straight crossing of Boyne adjacent the existing bridge; Project team flagged heritage constraints and traffic would still be in close proximity to village; best crossing suggested as where there is no requirement for vegetation management.</li> <li>Project team outlined the ecological surveys carried out to that point, including timing of surveys, and provided summary document to NPWS. Ranger provided feedback in relation to ecological constraints in the area, queries on particular species.</li> <li>Concerns raised over bat activity if the bridge is lit. Also noted that unless bridge piers in river, bridge unlikely to be an issue for kingfisher.</li> <li>Project team presented the risk-based approach to route option selection in terms of the qualifying and special conservation interests for the SAC and SPA.</li> <li>Project team requested a follow-up on the data request sent to NPWS and received data and species records.</li> <li>Discussion on the requirement for an Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and noted one would be prepared for the preferred route brought forward for planning.</li> <li>Ranger in general agreement with the risk-based approach, conservation objective used, and added value to the assessment.</li> </ul>
<b>Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI)</b> Meeting (No. 1), Lake Dr, Cheeverstown, Dublin 5 October 2018	<p>A meeting was held with relevant regional office of IFI to discuss assessment approach to ecological aspects for route selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project team gave an overview of the background to the scheme, overview of route options under consideration, and noted all watercourses being crossed in the area contain salmonids.</li> <li>IFI in general agreement with the existing design of the Boyne crossing but noted drainage and the need to consider outfall design and visual impact.</li> <li>Project team outlined the ecological surveys carried out to that point, and discussion held on water quality, status, fish passes, flooding in the area and need to design for climate change. IFI expressed a preference for clear span of crossings. Where culverts are required then they recommended that the project team look to contribute to habitat enhancement. Local aquatic-related issues were flagged by IFI and noted by the team.</li> <li>Discussion of aquatic qualifying interests/ species for the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (and tributaries) and discussion of project team risk-based assessment approach for ecological considerations to aid in route selection.</li> <li>IFI noted general support for the approach but a preference for a more practical approach and IFI offered to provide feedback on any proposed enhancements. Noted the proposed setback distances from the river but flagged consideration of drainage/ presence of trees.</li> </ul>
<b>ICOMOS Ireland</b> Meeting (No. 1), TIL, Parkgate Street, Dublin 8 12 October 2018	<p>Project team requested a meeting with ICOMOS Ireland to discuss the World Heritage Property of Brú na Bóinne and its consideration in relation to the N2 Slane Bypass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project teams' world heritage expert outlined the work undertaken to prepare a Statement of Significance based on the approach to impact assessment for World Heritage Properties promoted by ICOMOS: HIA. Outlined that a HIA was being undertaken in parallel with each stage of the project.</li> <li>Discussions on various aspects of heritage in Slane and wider area, potential for cumulative impacts, intangible heritage, bridge heights, visibility issues and the 3D model for the project.</li> <li>Project team outlined context of the scheme to the wider N2 corridor and the heritage survey and desktop work carried out to date and ongoing, presented an overview of aerial survey results, as well as approach to arriving at an emerging preferred bypass option and the balance of the various environmental considerations.</li> </ul>
<b>NMS and Built Heritage Section of the DCHG</b> Meeting (No. 3), Custom House, Dublin 1 21 November 2018	<p>Project team requested a meeting with the heritage units of the department to provide an update on project progress and work carried out in respect of heritage considerations/ the World Heritage Properties in relation to the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project team heritage experts provided maps and gave an overview of the route selection process, the HIA approach for the WHP being carried out in parallel and the survey work carried out and ongoing.</li> <li>Project team outlined the 3D model prepared for the project.</li> </ul>

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Stakeholder Correspondence Type and Date	Summary of Key Issues
ICOMOS Ireland Meeting (No. 2), TII, Parkgate Street, Dublin 8 29 November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion on the drone survey carried out during drought, new heritage features identified and discussion on architectural heritage aspects.</li> <li>• Project team described how the team arrived at the bypass options presented as well as the traffic management alternatives being assessed. Also described the risk-based approach to the qualifying/ special conservation interests of the European sites was also being undertaken from the biodiversity perspective of the option selection process.</li> </ul> <p>Project team requested a meeting with ICOMOS Ireland to discuss the World Heritage Property of Brú na Bóinne and its consideration in relation to the N2 Slane Bypass, with the main topics for discussion covering consideration of alternatives, cumulative impacts, significance and values and cultural landscape, as well as OUV:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project team noted a wide area traffic model had been developed to produce traffic management alternatives and a significant number of preliminary bypass options were also considered.</li> <li>• Discussion of the Statement of Significance presented at the previous meeting, noted the functional relationship between WHP and Slane, intangible heritage and protection of WHP.</li> <li>• Discussion regarding traffic management alternatives and architectural heritage aspects.</li> <li>• Regarding the cultural landscape, noted potential for the options to sever the relationship between the WHP and Slane, and that the thinking on cultural landscapes has moved on since inscription of the Retrospective Statement on OUV (2013). Project team noted the draft Statement of Significance authored by Dr Carter as part of the route selection HIA set out to articulate that relationship.</li> <li>• ICOMOS Ireland noted the need for the state party to notify UNESCO of the proposed scheme.</li> </ul>

## 6.4 Consultation on the Emerging Preferred Route

### 6.4.1 Third Public Consultation

A series of public consultations took place over a three-day period from 13 November 2019 to 15 November 2019 as part of the third round of public consultation. The purpose of this consultation was to inform the public and other stakeholders of the N2 Slane Bypass Emerging Preferred Option. The consultation was comprehensively advertised to the public via the following means: advertisement in the Meath Chronicle; advertisement on the LMFM radio station; social media post on MCC's Twitter account; and letter-drop to landowners that were likely to be impacted by the Emerging Preferred Option.

The main objectives of this public consultation were:

- To present the Emerging Preferred Option to landowners affected by the scheme and other members of the public.
- To obtain feedback on the Emerging Preferred Option from members of the public.
- To obtain information from local residents to aid further development of the design.

A brochure was prepared to provide information to stakeholders engaged in the third public consultation event. This included an explanation of why the scheme is required, a description of the design process, an outline description of the Emerging Preferred Option and a map indicating the route corridor. All brochures handed out at each of the consultation events re available on the scheme website at the following link: <http://www.n2slanebypass.ie/>.

#### 6.4.1.1 Presentation to Landowners

On the 13 November 2019, the Emerging Preferred Option was presented to landowners that were likely to be impacted by the scheme. During this event, which was held at the Conyngham Arms Hotel Slane,

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members of the RPS design team and MCC were available to answer queries relating to the proposed scheme.

The landowner presentation on the Emerging Preferred Option was attended by 18 individuals. Feedback received from the landowners included the following:

- Whether an overall N2 strategy was available?
- Questions about east-west traffic? Emerging Preferred Option would not address the N51 traffic going through the village.
- Did the alternative routes not offer greater benefits than the Emerging Preferred Option?
- Traffic volumes on the N2 and N51 and what proportion of this traffic is HGVs? Whether the proposed bypass would stop HGVs using the N2 and whether removal of tolls from existing road networks and/or a HGV ban had been considered?
- Length of construction period for the scheme?
- Are these proposals similar to the previous proposals? Could the scheme fail to get through planning again? Would houses be required as part of the scheme as per previous proposals?
- Questions on what type and height of bridge structure is proposed? Whether a tunnel was considered? What were the main reasons for changing the proposed bridge location?

### 6.4.1.2 Presentation to Local Councillors

On the morning of 14 November 2019, for information purposes, the Project Team presented the Emerging Preferred Option to local councillors at the Laytown-Bettystown Municipal District Ordinary Meeting at the Duleek civil offices.

### 6.4.1.3 Public Consultation Day and Questionnaire Feedback

On the afternoon and evening of 14 November 2019, the Emerging Preferred Option was displayed to the public in the Conyngham Arms Hotel, Slane, Co. Meath. Throughout the public display, members of the RPS design team and MCC were available to discuss the proposed scheme with the attendees. Each attendee was also handed a Feedback Questionnaire Form which could be used to provide any comments in relation to the Proposed Scheme.

The completed attendance record for the event noted 166 people attended the public display. Attendees provided feedback to representatives of the Project Team regarding the proposed scheme and Emerging Preferred Option. Feedback received from these attendees included the following:

- The need to consider east-west bypass. Query on whether consideration was given to tunnel options.
- Role of M1 tolls in HGV traffic through Slane.
- Cultural heritage and sensitive views in the area need to be assessed. Concern about protection of the natural environment/biodiversity around the River Boyne in relation to the bridge crossing. East-west migration of deer should be considered. Concern about severance/ landtake.
- The need for footway and lighting on the N51 east. Concern that proposed scheme will increase traffic on N51 through Slane. Concern regarding traffic speed and access to property along the N51.
- Queries on the height of the proposed bridge and the amount of cut approaching either side of the bridge crossing.
- Whooper swan noted to have flown past Slane Castle, and in the fields over to the west but well outside of the study area.
- Many attendees gave positive feedback and highlighted the need for the bypass to improve safety.

The issues raised were given consideration as part of the design development of the project and impacts assessed as part of the EIA.

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### 6.4.1.4 Meetings with Landowners Directly Impacted by the Proposed Scheme

On the 15 November 2019, representatives from RPS and MCC held private meetings at the Conyngham Arms Hotel Slane with nine individual landowners directly affected by the Proposed Scheme.

Themes raised at these meetings included:

- **Route options:** Preference expressed for original route that avoided property of these landowners; preference expressed for schemes as they would provide a better bypass of the village.
- **Surveyors:** Advanced notice and care needed by any surveyors accessing land; control of introduction/ spread of disease on lands; any consequence of refusing access?
- **Traffic levels:** Increase in traffic volumes, particularly five axle trucks noted already; query if bypass will increase this further; concerns over traffic management in village.
- **Design detail:** Further detail on road location, cut extents etc. requested; right of way for old Dublin Road not shown; concern regarding proximity to proposed roundabout junction and access to property; lighting and footpath from roundabout to Slane needed; restricted speed should be extended to roundabout; potential loss of trees and fencing at front of property; concerns over drainage of land; concern over living near a '4 lane' bypass.
- **Accommodation works/ Mitigation:** Request for overpass and need for same to be installed before construction of road; visual intrusion of noise barriers; request for high wall/ electronic gate to offset safety concerns relating to 'cul de sac'ing' of old N51; preference for buy-out over encroachment on property curtilage.
- **Property valuation:** Potential devaluation of property; compensation concern that the visibility of the proposed bridge will be an issue and will devalue the village and existing bridge.
- **Other specific concerns:** Commemorative Oak trees planted within property to commemorate family members.

All issues raised have been considered as part of the design development/ preliminary design stage and impacts assessed as part of the EIA.

### 6.4.2 Other Stakeholder Consultations

Following the selection of an Emerging Preferred Route, the stakeholders set out in were again contacted to seek feedback and observations on the Emerging Preferred Route. A letter and brochure were circulated on 15 November 2019 inviting comments up to 29 November 2019. Six submissions were received which are summarised in **Table 6-6**.

**Table 6-6: Summary of Consultation Responses on the Emerging Preferred Route**

Stakeholder	Summary of Response
ICOMOS Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted for information that there are two World Heritage Units in the ICOMOS Secretariat and that it is the World Heritage Advisory and Monitoring Unit that deals with State Parties in relation to paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines (ICOMOS 2017) in relation to State Party notifications on developments that may impact on site OUV.</li> <li>• Commented on four issues, some of which elaborated on points discussed at the meeting held on 29 November 2018: The Buffer Zone and the wider setting of the World Heritage Property. Additions to the baseline data to be considered; Data on cumulative impacts on the WHP; The retrospective Statement of OUV by the Dept. of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG 2013).</li> </ul> <p><b>Buffer Zone and wider Setting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference made to the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (ICOMOS 2017) and the importance of the WHP buffer zone to the wider setting of the site and that the guidelines are clear that consideration should be given to the impact of the proposed Scheme on the wider setting of the WHP.</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional baseline data to be considered</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List provided of information sources that might be useful to consider since the retrospective Statement of OUV was adopted by UNESCO (World Heritage Committee) in 2013.</li> </ul>



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Stakeholder	Summary of Response
	<p><b>Data on cumulative impacts on the World Heritage Property</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suggest its appropriate to assess the impact of whether there have been developments or Proposed Scheme in the context of the HIA undertaken in 2009 for the previous bypass scheme (Comer 2009) and Meath planning policies (in terms of developments whether incrementally or individually) that could impact on site integrity.</li> </ul> <p><b>Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) from 2013</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wished to clarify that the Statement of OUV focuses in detail on the WHP and would note that the Operational Guidelines (ICOMOS 2017) makes clear this concept is static. Research documents emphasise the importance of the early medieval connection with Slane.</li> </ul>
<b>Royal Irish Academy (RIA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact on cultural heritage and the WHP in particular must be fully considered.</li> <li>Expect that an appropriate programme of mitigation will be put in place due to the potential for discovery of archaeological features during road scheme development.</li> <li>The heritage assessment should include a detailed desk-based survey of existing features.</li> <li>Details in the EIAR to include how the assessment of impact was arrived at for the preferred route and how it will be considered in the overall balance of environmental, social and economic factors in the context of the preferred route.</li> <li>The issue of cumulative effects on the integrity of the WHP is highlighted. Should be clarification in the heritage assessment of whether the choice of preferred route took account of the impact of cumulative effects.</li> </ul>
<b>Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Though no preference for the route option, note that it does intersect the Boyne Valley County Geological Site (site report attached with submission).</li> <li>Request for any karst data gathered to add to the national database and any site investigation reports, particularly any borehole sections, to add to the national geotechnical database.</li> <li>Request for notification of when construction works to facilitate access during the construction phase, as important geological features can be found in road cuttings.</li> </ul>
<b>Irish Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted that all proposed build-over and diversion works for all sections of the Irish Water network are to go through the Irish Water Developer Services – Diversion’s process.</li> </ul>
<b>An Taisce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed a bypass is needed to resolve the traffic problems in Slane as well as congestion/ long traffic queuing times.</li> <li>Noted that while the current north-south hazard dominates, turning on/ off the N51 on the Navan side also hazardous.</li> <li>Bypass should be capable of removing traffic volumes from the N51 route not just N2.</li> <li>Current scheme does not seem to include mitigation measures for the increasing volume of traffic within the town.</li> <li>Preferred option only provides for N2 traffic; with no N51 link in the north-west quadrant, the town would still require traffic signals, disrupting movement of traffic and pedestrians. Should reconsider N51 link as an essential part of the bypass scheme.</li> <li>Preferred option considered a flawed solution, considering a similar scheme in the past was not approved by ABP.</li> <li>Concern that human and town planning elements have been forgotten about in the evaluation.</li> <li>Mitigation and traffic calming measures must be considered with the bypass scheme for the town and its people.</li> </ul>
<b>Meath Archaeological and Historical Society</b>	<p>Submission raised a number of queries on distances in relation to the proposed option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The nearest distance of the proposal to the buffer zone of the WHP and that a map to indicate this would be helpful.</li> <li>The distance north of McGruder’s Crossroads where the bypass starts.</li> <li>The distance east from the existing bridge crossing to the new bridge crossing.</li> <li>The height of the bridge crossing above normal river level.</li> <li>Whether the bridge crosses the river at level or whether inclined and by how much.</li> <li>The length of the bypass proposal.</li> </ul>

To supplement the written submissions noted above, the Project Team also sought a number of meetings with as summarised in

**Table 6-7** and the feedback received was considered in the refinement of the preferred route.

**Table 6-7: Meetings with Stakeholders – Emerging Preferred Route**

Stakeholder Correspondence Type and Date	Summary of Key Issues
<b>ICOMOS Ireland</b> Meeting (No. 3), TII, Parkgate Street, Dublin 8 25 February 2020	Discussion on the preferred option for the N2 Slane bypass and its impact on the UNESCO World Heritage Property of Brú na Bóinne: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation given that cumulative impact assessment on OUV was undertaken, a Public Realm Plan for Slane had been prepared and an East-West bypass supplementary study was undertaken.</li> <li>• Presentation of the Option Selection Process and queries in relation to weighting of environmental issues, visual effects, and development encroaching on integrity of the site.</li> <li>• Discussion of impacts on the World Heritage Property and assessment arising from the HIA.</li> <li>• Overview of the assessment process in terms of scale of impact and significance of impact and the need to ensure balance of benefits. Broad agreement with the overall methodological approach.</li> <li>• ICOMOS noted onus on State Party to formally notify World Heritage Committee; project team confirmed raised with Dept. Culture, Heritage &amp; Gaeltacht.</li> <li>• Noted the HIA is an evolving process running in parallel to the option selection, design and EIA stages. Fully completed HIA to be included as an appendix to the EIA.</li> </ul>
<b>National Monuments Service and Built Heritage &amp; Architectural Advisory Unit of the Dept. Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DCHG)</b> Meeting (No. 4), Online vis Microsoft Teams 13 October 2020	Project team requested a meeting with the heritage units of the Department to provide an update on project progress and work carried out in respect of heritage considerations/ the World Heritage Property in relation to the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPS and heritage experts provided an update on scheme progress and noted the project team has been in consultation with ICOMOS Ireland.</li> <li>• NMS noted the department are bound to notify UNESCO of the development as the state party for the World Heritage Convention.</li> <li>• Discussion on the HIA Guidelines (ICOMOS 2021), thresholds of acceptability of impact, noted the need to look at newer retrospective statements of OUV for the property.</li> <li>• NMS noted the differences between the previous 2009 scheme and the Proposed Scheme.</li> </ul>
<b>Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI) - Boyne Navigation Branch (An Taisce)</b> Meeting (No. 1), Online (via Microsoft Teams) 24 March 2021	RPS sought a meeting with IWAI – Boyne Navigation Branch to present the various bridge options developed to cross the Boyne, which would also span the canal and towpath. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The minimum clearances were noted as well as tie-in points to facilitate maintenance, and rights of access, and ongoing restoration works of canal system.</li> <li>• The preferred options were indicated, discussion of construction works and approaches; Inland Waterways were agreeable to proposal of creating a causeway and infilling/removing during bridge construction works.</li> </ul>

## 6.5 Consultation for the EIA Process

### 6.5.1 EIA Scoping Consultation

The purpose of this consultation stage was to set out the scope of the EIAR along with the proposed approaches used to enable an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Scheme. As such, an EIA Scoping Report was prepared and used as the basis for informal consultation with consultees as set out in **Table 6-8**; refer to the EIA Scoping Report included as **Appendix 6.1**. The scoping report contained information on the following:

- The key issues to be addressed in the EIAR;
- The proposed content of the EIAR and the potential impacts that were scoped in/ out;

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- The proposed assessment methodologies to assess the potential impacts; and
- Any other data that the environmental assessments should consider and address in the EIAR.

Consultation was undertaken by the Project Team on EIA scoping between 1 October – 5 November 2021. The responses received were used to inform the assessments undertaken for the EIAR and are summarised in **Table 6-9**.

**Table 6-8: Consultees for Informal EIA Scoping**

Consultees Contacted During EIA Scoping	
ABP	Fáilte Ireland
An Chomhairle Ealaíon (The Arts Council)	Francis Ledwidge Museum
An Taisce - The National Trust for Ireland	Gas Networks Ireland
Bat Conservation Ireland	Geological Survey of Ireland
BirdWatch Ireland	Health and Safety Authority
Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre	Health Service Executive
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Heritage Council
Department of Environment, Climate and Communications	IBEC
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage - Development Applications Unit [National Parks & Wildlife Service; National Monuments Service; Built Heritage & Architectural Policy Unit; Archaeological Survey of Ireland]	ICOMOS Ireland
Department of Rural and Community Development	Industrial Heritage Association of Ireland
Department of Transport	Inland Fisheries Ireland
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media	Inland Waterways Association of Ireland / The Boyne Navigation / Waterways Ireland
The Discovery Programme	Institute of Public Health
Dundalk Institute of Technology (Department of Humanities)	Irish Georgian Society
Environmental Protection Agency	Irish Road Haulage Association
Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office	Irish Water
Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly	Irish Wildlife Trust
Eastern and Midlands Regional Waste Management Office	Louth County Council (Heritage Officer and Conservation Officer)
EirGrid	Meath County Council (Heritage Officer and Conservation Officer)
ESB	National Biodiversity Data Centre
Fáilte Ireland	National Museum of Ireland
Francis Ledwidge Museum	National Transport Authority
Gas Networks Ireland	Office of Public Works
Geological Survey of Ireland	Royal Irish Academy (Committee for Historical Studies)
Health and Safety Authority	Teagasc
Health Service Executive	Telecom's providers
Heritage Council	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media	Trinity College Dublin (Department of Classics, School of Histories & Humanities)
The Discovery Programme	University College Dublin (School of Archaeology)
Dundalk Institute of Technology (Department of Humanities)	University College Galway (Discipline of Archaeology)
EirGrid	University College Cork (Department of Archaeology)
ESB	Water and Communities Office (LAWCO)

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Table 6-9: Summary of EIA Scoping Responses

Stakeholder	Summary of Response
<b>Department of Climate, Environment and Communications (DECC) – Waste Policy &amp; Resource Efficiency Division</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommended the respective Regional Waste Management Planning Office should be consulted regarding development of the final plans.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) – National Monuments Service (NMS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommended the DAU should be included in the consultation.</li> <li>Recommended that a HIA should be carried out as part of EIA process, in line with the Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties (ICOMOS 2011).</li> <li>Recommended the HIA should fully assess and address the impact of the proposed scheme on the OUV of the World Heritage Property of Brú na Bóinne.</li> <li>Recommended a historic landscape characterisation study should be carried out to investigate the interrelationships between architectural and archaeological heritage with the surrounding landscape. Referenced National Landscape Strategy (DHLGH 2020), Draft Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA 2017) and Historic Landscape Characterisation in Ireland - Best Practice Guidance (Heritage Council 2013). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should address both the terrestrial and underwater cultural heritage, with the River Boyne integral to the character of the cultural landscape of the area.</li> <li>Should inform and complement the HIA and support the harmonisation of the different components of the cultural heritage section of the EIAR.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Fáilte Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attached a copy of the non-statutory Guidelines for the treatment of tourism in an EIA (Fáilte Ireland 2011), which could be informative in the preparation of the EIAR.</li> </ul>
<b>Francis Ledwidge Museum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queried the interface between existing walking loops and the location of the proposed pedestrian/cyclist crossing of the N51.</li> <li>Suggested an alternate N51 crossing proposal could have a second footpath from the village on the northside to the new roundabout.</li> <li>Requested assurance that access will remain open to the museum at all stages of the construction works.</li> <li>Raised concern over noise levels from an increase in traffic on the proposed N51 roundabout. Would like sound barriers/ landscaping to mitigate the noise.</li> <li>Raised concern over length of construction period and proximity to museum. Potential for significant increased volumes of noise during construction and operational phases, in particular the increases in HGVs along the N51.</li> <li>Raised concern the proposed proximity of a new entryway for a proximal landowner and how this will link in with the museum's own bus parking facility.</li> <li>Requested consideration of a second bus parking bay to be included in any possible revised plans for realignment outside the museum.</li> <li>Requested speed limit of 50 km/h from village should be continued from the village right through to the roundabout.</li> <li>Sought further clarification on reasons for deciding current proposed location of the N51 roundabout and why it could not be located further east on N51.</li> <li>Noted that the museum itself is a protected structure and should be viewed as a built heritage and cultural asset, and the distances to the proposed works considered during route selection.</li> <li>Suggest that signage promoting the museum could be erected at the roundabout and bypass approaches on the N51 east and west as well as approaches to the bypass on the N2 north and south.</li> </ul>
<b>Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment)</b>	<p><b>General</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request for sharing of information to improve the national datasets.</li> <li>Encouraged the use and reference of GSI datasets e.g. geochemistry, bedrock and subsoils geological mapping, aggregate potential mapping.</li> </ul> <p><b>Geoheritage</b></p>

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Stakeholder	Summary of Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted potential for impacts on the current County Geological Sites (CGSs) by the Proposed Scheme. Need for appropriate mitigation measures and where relevant preservation of road cutting faces and access to the site.</li> </ul> <p><b>Groundwater</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted that Proposed Scheme need to consider any potential impact on specific groundwater abstractions and on groundwater resources in general. Also, effects of any potential contamination/ dewatering.</li> <li>Recommended use of the Groundwater Viewer to identify areas of High to Extreme Vulnerability and 'Rock at or near surface' which can be used to inform appropriate mitigation measures.</li> <li>Noted design of road drainage will need to be cognisant of the public water scheme and the interactions between surface water and groundwater as well as run-off.</li> <li>GWClimate data identified as potentially useful in relation to Flood Risk Assessment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Geohazards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommended geohazards be considered, especially where risks are prevalent in the data. Use landslide data and guidance documentation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Natural Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted that natural resources used in the proposed road development should be sustainably sourced from properly recognised and licensed facilities and that consideration of future resource sterilisation should be considered.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health Service Executive (HSE) – Environmental Health Department</b></p>	<p><b>General</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted that the EIAR should describe existing physical environment, potential impacts on the existing environment during construction and operational phase, future monitoring requirements and alternatives considered.</li> <li>Noted there should be a description of public consultation activities undertaken to inform the public; feedback from public consultation and information on how the concerns were assessed and evaluated.</li> <li>Recommended sensitive receptors in the vicinity of construction works should be identified and measures implemented to ensure they are protected. Also recommended a site-specific Construction Management Plan be prepared.</li> </ul> <p><b>Water</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommended that the impact of the Proposed Scheme on natural flood plains / wetlands on or in the vicinity of the site and also watercourses/wetlands further downstream should be assessed.</li> <li>Recommended and integrated approach to surface water management and inclusion of green space and nature-based solutions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Climate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommended climate considerations are fully integrated into the planning of the Proposed Scheme including a climate assessment to estimate potential for greenhouse gas emissions, estimated carbon footprint during construction phase, measures to reduce/ offset carbon emissions.</li> <li>Recommended that the vulnerability of the proposed scheme against the predicted impacts of a climate change be assessed and proactive adaption measures to ensure the long-term resilience of the proposed infrastructure to the impact's climate change.</li> </ul> <p><b>Biodiversity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommended an outline of how measures for ecological enhancement, green infrastructure, planting and landscaping, and the objectives and actions of the National Biodiversity Data Centre's All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 (NBDC 2015) have been incorporated into the design.</li> <li>Recommended planting should be appropriate to the local climatic conditions and support native flora and fauna.</li> </ul> <p><b>Air and Noise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommended that the possible impact of increased air emissions on the public or sensitive receptors should be investigated. Identify noise sensitive receptors.</li> <li>Recommended that noise surveys are carried out for construction and operational phase including up to date baseline monitoring including rationale for the noise monitoring locations. Predict the impact of traffic noise from the Proposed Scheme and carry out an evaluation of the significance of this impact in line with the health-based guidelines.</li> <li>Recommended reducing noise levels at night to below 45 dB Lnight.</li> </ul>

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Stakeholder	Summary of Response
	<p><b>Health and Wellbeing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommended that green planting is integrated at all opportunities throughout the public realm works.</li> <li>Recommended that recreational facilities should be provided in the village for younger children, adolescents and the elderly. Consideration of installing art installations or highlighting unique points of interest.</li> </ul> <p><b>Sustainable transport and active travel:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate and implement initiatives that promote and facilitate a model shift towards more sustainable forms of transport.</li> <li>Demonstrate how the severance of communities has been avoided and how facilities which promote walking and cycling facilities (including provision of secure bike parking) and safe access and connectivity from Slane village have been provided.</li> <li>Consider the impact the Proposed Scheme will have on the proposed Boyne Greenway.</li> </ul>
<p><b>International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Ireland</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted from the EIAR structure outlined in the Scoping Report that Volume 5 of the EIAR will HIA report and that the ICOMOS Guidelines on HIA (ICOMOS 2011) have been utilised.</li> <li>Noted that reference is made to the 2019 HIA report of Dr Carter written as part of the route selection (RPS for MCC, 2020); noted that ICOMOS Ireland has previously commented on this draft report.</li> <li>Welcomed mitigation measures where significant landscape and visual impacts are predicted to occur.</li> <li>Welcomed the clear acknowledgement that there is potential for the proposed scheme to impact adversely on the OUV of the WHP.</li> <li>Conceded that the minimising of any adverse impact at two locations, the crossing of the Boyne where the southern end of the bridge may be visible from Knowth and the route north of the N51 junction where the road would be visible in views towards the WHP from the Hill of Slane, is stated to be a key issue for the EIAR.</li> <li>Noted that there will be an impact on some of the views from the WHP.</li> <li>Suggested that the appropriate approach to protection of World Heritage requires a very high bar with a zero tolerance of negative impacts on the WHP.</li> <li>Suggested that the scale should be given further consideration – 2/3 lane instead of 4.</li> <li>UNESCO World Heritage Property and Tentative World Heritage Properties should be considered in conjunction with the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (ICOMOS 2021).</li> <li>Suggested that these obligations placed on the Irish State by The World Heritage Convention should be considered in this process.</li> <li>Must demonstrate that there is no appropriate alternative route available.</li> <li>The EIA should address the traffic concerns at Slane village.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted the requirements of the WFD and the protection of the ecological status of water bodies.</li> <li>Noted that Article 5 of the 2009 Surface Water Regulations requires that public authorities shall not, in carrying out its functions, knowingly cause the deterioration of status of a water body. Water bodies are to be returned to at least Good status by 2015 and should remain at least this status.</li> <li>The Proposed Scheme is noted to be within the catchment of the River Boyne SAC and the Mattock River. The Boyne is currently at Good WFD status (EPA status as of 2020) at Slane Bridge as is the main channel of the Mattock River.</li> <li>Both rivers contain stocks of Atlantic salmon, brown trout lamprey and eel.</li> <li>IFI endorsed the selection of topics in the EIA Scoping Report as outlined in Section 4 (Environmental Scope). Several headings are highlighted as particularly important in the context of sustainable development.</li> <li>Recommend that any fisheries-related baseline survey work references the fisheriesireland.ie and wdfish.ie websites.</li> <li>Guidelines attached with submission: Planning for Watercourses in the urban Environment (IFI) and Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries during Construction Works in and adjacent to Waters (IFI, 2016).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Irish Georgian Society (IGS)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcomed the proposed provision of a bypass.</li> </ul>

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Stakeholder	Summary of Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted the proposed crossing and new bridge would have greatest impact on the view downstream that is composed of the old bridge.</li> <li>• Suggested this could be mitigated to a degree by creative and intelligent detailing and a landscape response of quality.</li> <li>• Suggested that with a bypass, the existing bridge could become a pedestrian route.</li> <li>• Noted that the new bridge could be visible in views from Slane Castle and its forecourt.</li> <li>• Suggested that the final extent of the road's visual intrusion be mitigated by judicious land profiling and planting that compliments the field patterns, hedgerows and massing of trees.</li> </ul>
<b>Irish Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If impacting on an Irish Water drinking water sources, measures should be detailed to ensure no negative impacts. WFD requires that waters used for abstraction are protected.</li> <li>• Potential impacts on nearby reservoir as public water supply should be assessed (hydrogeology and any groundwater/surface water interactions).</li> <li>• Waste sampling strategy for a project should ensure waste generated from the Proposed Scheme is inert.</li> <li>• Pre-Connection Enquiry required if the development requires a connection to public water supply or sewage collection system.</li> <li>• Consider up-grading of water services that may be required in order to accommodate the development.</li> <li>• Treatment or attenuation of discharges would be required if development discharged trade effluent, prior to discharging to an Irish Water collection network.</li> <li>• Consider the potential impact of surface water discharges to combined sewer overflows, and potential measures to minimise/stop surface water from combined sewers.</li> <li>• Consider physical impacts/relocation of Irish Water assets.</li> <li>• Contact Irish Water in advance of designing the proposal of determine the location of public water service assets.</li> <li>• Consider impacts to assimilation capacity of receiving waters in relation to Irish Water discharge outfalls.</li> <li>• Consider impacts to the contributing catchment of water sources, and potential to impact on capacity or quality of water abstracted by Irish Water for public supply.</li> <li>• Where a development proposes to connect to an Irish Water network that abstracts or discharges to a protected area/sensitive site, consider whether this might impact on the integrity of the site or its conservation objectives.</li> <li>• Mitigation measures to any of the above to ensure zero risk to any Irish Water drinking water sources (surface and ground).</li> </ul>
<b>Royal Irish Academy (RIA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the potential for reported and unknown archaeological features and for the need to engage appropriate expertise at the earliest possible opportunity to enable compliance with statutory requirements.</li> <li>• Recommend that the project team contact the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's NMS and its Architectural Heritage Unit for further direct consultation as appropriate.</li> <li>• Recommend early and thorough consultation of the registers of RIA and registers of National Museum of Ireland (NMI) so that a comprehensive finds retrieval strategy can be programmed.</li> <li>• Suggest that our built and archaeological heritage has the potential to add a layer of appreciation of the surrounding landscape.</li> <li>• Recommend that special attention is taken with regard to any works adjacent to riverine and wetland locations.</li> <li>• Consider the indirect impacts on the setting of monuments, their place in the landscape and views into and outwards from monuments.</li> <li>• Ensure a commitment is made to prepare a HIA as part of that process and that the HIA would follow the revised ICOMOS Guidance.</li> <li>• Note the requirement to set out alternative options and suggest that access to the M1 for heavy goods traffic be included as an option to reduce traffic on the N2.</li> <li>• Consideration of legally unprotected/undesigned heritage assets.</li> </ul>

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## 6.5.2 Other Stakeholder Consultations

During the EIA process, a number of meetings were held with stakeholders to inform aspects of the EIAR in terms of heritage, biodiversity and water, as summarised in **Table 6-10**; the feedback received was considered in the environmental impact assessments.

**Table 6-10: Meetings with Stakeholders – Environmental Impact Assessment Stage**

Stakeholder Correspondence Type and Date	Summary of Key Issues
<b>Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI) – Boyne Navigation Branch (An Taisce)</b> Meeting (No. 2), Online (via Microsoft Teams) 14 December 2021	Meeting convened to discuss the bridge/ canal crossing in further detail: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project Team provided an overview of the works proposed in the vicinity of the canal, including a potential outfall to the canal. Noted canal is within SAC and drainage proposals would require discussion with NPWS.</li> <li>Discussion of bridge soffit levels and clearance requirements, and vertical alignments.</li> <li>Project Team provided an overview of proposed temporary works required for the bridge crossing including temporary crossing of the canal discussion of accessibility during construction, and current frequency of maintenance.</li> <li>Project Team noted it is proposed to provide maintenance access for Boyne Bridge via towpath; no issue from IWAI.</li> </ul>
<b>National Monuments Service</b> Meeting (No. 5), Online (via Microsoft Teams) 26 January 2022	Meeting was sought with the NMS on foot of the response received to the informal EIA scoping consultation to discuss some of the topics raised in relation to suggestion to carry out a Historic Landscape Character Study (HLCS) and the state party notification requirement to UNESCO/ICOMOS International of the Proposed Scheme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project Team presented an update on progress and an outline of the heritage work completed to date and how heritage, landscape and historic character aspects and their interrelationships are being approached for the EIA.</li> <li>Group discussion on the NMS letter and its recommendation and around World Heritage aspects.</li> </ul>
<b>National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)</b> Meeting (No. 2), Online (via Microsoft Teams) 1 December 2022	A meeting was sought with NPWS to discuss in particular the bridge crossing and the construction methodology which would occur within the footprint of the SAC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project Team presented an update on progress and an outline of the ecology work completed to date and an overview of the construction phase methodology for the Proposed Scheme.</li> <li>Group discussion on the ecology surveys, aspects of the survey methodologies.</li> <li>NPWS suggested further surveys/ updates to existing surveys which might be considered by the project team.</li> </ul>
<b>NMS</b> Meeting (No. 6), Online (via Microsoft Teams) 13 December 2022	A meeting was sought with NMS to discuss the letters sent by the UNESCO ICOMOS committee to NMS. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project Team gave a short presentation in order to provide a brief update on scheme status and indicative programme, as well as a summary of consultation undertaken to date with NMS and ICOMOS Ireland.</li> <li>The presentation also touched on some of the key issue areas raised in the ICOMOS Technical Report, in order to set the context for the discussion that followed, which included some commentary in response to the ICOMOS Technical Report.</li> <li>NMS queried the mitigation proposals included in the EIA/ HIA and these were outlined.</li> </ul>
<b>Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI)</b> Meeting (No. 2), Online (via Microsoft Teams) 15 May 2023	Meeting was sought with IFI to provide an update on the scheme and to discuss the watercourse crossings, give an overview of the bridge construction methodology for the Boyne and the culverts proposed for the Mattock (Mooretown) Stream. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The key discussion points were around the mitigation measures proposed for aquatic ecology, discussion of the culvert design and fish mitigations, and confirmation of timing restrictions for certain works.</li> </ul>

In addition to the above meetings, the Scheme Team organised face-to-face meetings on site in Slane, particularly in relation to the WHP. Representatives from the NMS attended a site visit with the team on 13 March 2023. Representatives from ICOMOS Ireland and the Heritage Council attended a site visit with the team on 16 May 2023.



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### 6.6 Other Consultations

#### 6.6.1 Public Information Day

A public information day was held on 19 January 2023. The aim was to provide an update on scheme progress and anticipated next steps for the scheme. Members of the Project Team, both design and environmental, were present to answer questions.

#### 6.6.2 Ongoing Landowner Liaison

Members of the Project Team met with each landowner who was directly and significantly impacted where contactable, and the potential impact of landtake was discussed. Both online and on-site meetings have been held between the landowners, MCC and the Project Team to discuss the particular issues for each landowner. Where feasible, adjustment of the alignment to minimise impact on landtake have been accommodated within design development. Further discussions will be undertaken to agree compensation as part of the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process; this aspect is not dealt with in the EIAR.

#### 6.6.3 Utilities Consultation

Consultations were conducted with utilities providers from early in the process from constraints stage through to the EIA and will continue beyond this as needed. Contact was made with relevant utility stakeholders as follows:

- Electricity Supply – EirGrid, ESBI and ESB Networks
- Gas Network Ireland (GNI)
- Water Supply/ Wastewater – Irish Water
- Eir
- Vodafone
- Meteor
- Three
- Virgin Media
- enet
- BT

Of the above list, infrastructure from three utility providers was confirmed to be present within the scheme footprint: ESB, Irish Water and Eir.

#### 6.6.4 Public Realm Strategy

MCC carried out public consultation on a draft Public Realm Strategy for Slane published in January 2021. Comments raised from this consultation related to traffic, footpaths and pedestrian crossings, parking, trees, street furniture, cycling, heritage and future projects. MCC noted that the benefits from the public realm strategy related to improvements in the traffic situation in the village and as such a decision was taken to include relevant public realm enhancements from the overall plan into the Proposed Scheme.

Public consultation was undertaken by MCC on the PRP, which closed in February 2022. In August 2022, MCC published the finalised Public Realm Plan for Slane. This Plan sets out the future approach to the design of streets and public spaces in the village and included proposals for the redesign of the junction on the square, the creation of a new village garden and improved recreational connections along the southern approach to the village.

A number of Public Realm enhancements for Slane which relate to the N2 Slane Bypass have been designed and integrated into the overall Proposed Scheme and are described in **Chapter 4 – Description of the Proposed Scheme**.

#### 6.6.5 Pre-Application Meetings with An Bord Pleanála

A pre-application statutory process was held with ABP relating to the Proposed Scheme. This occurred over a series of four pre-application consultation meetings between 2015 and 2023 on the dates listed in

**Table 6-11.**

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**Table 6-11: Key Environmental Issues during the Pre-Application Meeting with An Bord Pleanála**

<b>ABP Meeting</b>	<b>Key Environmental Issues Raised</b>
Meeting (No. 1) 21 September 2015	<p>The boards representatives raised the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The prospective applicant should demonstrate the justification for the nature of the road and cross sections pertaining particularly having regard to the need for the road and any impact on the environment.</li> <li>• Board recommended that the prospective applicant should engage with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) at an early stage in relation to ecological matters.</li> <li>• In relation to river crossings, the Board recommends consultations with the NPWS and Inland Fisheries Ireland.</li> <li>• In relation to future planning application, Board will formally engage in consultations with Northern Ireland Planning Service in relation to transboundary effects.</li> <li>• Board advised that the prospective applicant should consult with the Department in relation to engaging a world heritage expert.</li> <li>• Board pointed out that it would not be appropriate to submit an EIS (or draft EIS) at pre-application stage.</li> <li>• Board asked to include a copy of the maps which were referenced in the EIS chapter of the further information response received on 17 September 2015.</li> </ul>
Meeting (No. 2) 7 December 2018	<p>The boards representatives raised the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board referred to matters that 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 Property should be addressed in any forthcoming application.</li> <li>• Board enquired if consultations with NPWS are progressing.</li> <li>• Board advised the prospective applicant to address the provisions of the Water Framework Directive.</li> <li>• The Board said there should be clarity on how the project fits into the broader picture for traffic management 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.</li> <li>• Recommended consideration of the option of a landscape conservation area and to remain cognisant of other planning issues.</li> </ul>
Meeting (No. 3) 12 March 2020	<p>The boards representatives raised the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board queried if the matter of possible future development at the roundabout at the northern end of the proposed bypass had been raised by ICOMOS as an issue.</li> <li>• Board enquired if the deep cutting to the south of the Rosnaree Road would be visible from Brú na Bóinne. Board also enquired about the geology of this location and whether it would be in rock.</li> <li>• Board queried the height of the bridge in relation to potential conflicts with birds and bats.</li> <li>• Noting the use of a traffic light colour system in the assessment of the options, the Board questioned whether the prospective applicant is satisfied that this method is sufficient in the circumstances. The Board noted that some receptors might be seen to be given a higher weight than others.</li> <li>• The Board's representatives noted that it would be necessary to assess the cumulative impacts in the NIS and the EIAR.</li> <li>• Recommended that in the preparation of the EIAR the prospective applicant should ensure that any adverse effects are fully communicated and clearly described.</li> <li>• The Board's representatives explained that if the application relates to a development which is deemed to have transboundary effects, the Board will contact the DHLGH.</li> </ul>
Meeting (No. 4) (27 February 2023	<p>The board's representatives raised the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board advised the prospective applicants to provide robust reasoning in the application for the route selection and stated that alternatives should be fully assessed with focus on environmental aspects and reasonings. This should address the decision to locate the Slane bypass.</li> <li>• Board representatives referred to the Galway ring road as an example of how climate has become a main issue in assessing road cases. It was advised that any issues on induced traffic and encouraging car use be addressed.</li> <li>• Board advised that the prospective applicant to look at the Galway and Foynes road cases with respect to climate impact assessment.</li> <li>• Board confirmed that the pre-application file becomes public once the consultation is closed.</li> </ul>

## 6.7 Summary of How Consultation Influenced the Proposed Scheme

The consultation process has helped shape the Proposed Scheme as described in **Chapter 4 – Description of the Proposed Scheme**. Key changes to the design that have resulted from the consultation process are summarised below:

- Location of the River Crossing to reduce visibility in the landscape and to avoid Priority Annex I Habitat and Architectural Conservation Areas.
- Design of the bridge crossing to reduce visibility in the landscape (low level rather than statement bridge).
- Inclusion of a 10 m setback distance from either side of the banks of the River Boyne to help preserve otter movements.
- Discussions with significantly impacted landowners and agricultural enterprises and alignment adjustments where feasible and provision of suitable accommodation works.
- Consideration and integration of the Boyne Navigation towpath clearance, access and maintenance requirements into the bridge crossing design and during construction.
- Consideration of the various heritage assets – ensuring agreed approaches to assessment of impacts with key stakeholders.
- Engagement of a World Heritage Expert early in the environmental assessment processes from constraints stage through to EIA to consider and assess impacts on the Brú na Bóinne WHP.
- Design and location to minimise visibility from WHP at Bru na Bóinne and from the monument at Knowth, in particular.
- Design and inclusion of sympathetic Public Realm Enhancement (having regard to the overall Public Realm plan) to the Proposed Scheme to reflect and connect heritage, and to enhance the village amenity for the local and wider community.
- Consideration and assessment of a wide range of traffic management alternatives, alone and in combination with bypass options, with feasible options brought forward alongside the Proposed Scheme (bypass and public realm).
- Consideration and appraisal of an east-west bypass link in the north-west quadrant.
- Engagement of a Human Health Expert to undertake a Health Study to holistically address health concerns in respect of the Proposed Scheme.

## 6.8 Chapter References

- Comer, D. (2009) Slane Bypass Heritage Impact Assessment.
- DAHG (2013) Brú na Bóinne Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.
- DCHG (2017) National Biodiversity Action Plan [NBAP] 2017-2021.
- DEHLG (2009) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities.
- DHLGH (October 2020) National Landscape Strategy.
- DHLGH (2018) Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment
- EC (2013) EU Strategy on Green Infrastructure.
- EC (2001) Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- EPA (2017) Draft Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports
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- Heritage Council (2013) Historic Landscape Characterisation in Ireland - Best Practice Guidance.
- ICOMOS (2021) Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.
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- ICOMOS (2011) Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties.
- IFI (2020) Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment.
- IFI (2016) Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries during Construction Works in and adjacent to Waters.
- NBDC (2015) All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020.
- RPS for MCC (2020) Appendix 4 – Heritage Impact Assessment to Appendix A1 of the N2 Slane Bypass Option Selection Report. Available at: <https://n2slanebypass.ie/>
- RPS for MCC (2020) N2 Slane Bypass Option Selection Report. Available at: <https://n2slanebypass.ie/>
- TII (*Various dates*) Project Appraisal Guidelines for National Roads.
- TII (2020) Project Management Guidelines for National Roads.
- TII (2017) Project Management Guidelines for National Roads.