



Meath County Council Compulsory Purchase (No. 1) Order 2023.

N2 Slane Bypass and Public Realm Enhancement Scheme

Bord Pleanála Reference ABP - 318629 - 23

April 2025

Meath County Council

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Section 1 Introduction

This report is prepared by Wendy Bagnall, Senior Executive Planner, Meath County Council.

Meath County Council proposes to compulsorily acquire the necessary lands to carry out the Slane By Pass and Public Realm Enhancement Scheme.

Section 2

Policy

Section 2.1

National Policy

Project Ireland 2040 comprises the National Planning Framework and National Development Plan.

The **National Planning Framework Plan (NPF) 2018-2040**. The NPF aims to create a single vision and a shared set of goals for every community across the country. These goals are expressed as National Strategic Outcomes (NSO's). The following NSO's are considered relevant to the scheme:

NSO 1: Compact growth seeks to *'carefully manage the sustainable growth of compact cities, towns, and villages to create more attractive places in which people can live and work.'*

NSO 2: Enhanced Regional Accessibility which identifies a co-priority *'to enhance accessibility between key urban centres of population and their regions. This means ensuring that all regions and urban areas in the country have a high degree of accessibility to Dublin, as well as to each other. Not every route has to look east and so accessibility and connectivity between places like Cork and Limerick, to give one example, and through the Atlantic Economic Corridor to Galway as well as access to the North-West is essential.'*

This NSO identifies policies, actions and investment which include:

'Maintaining the strategic capacity and safety of the national roads network including planning for future capacity enhancements.

Upgrading access to the North-West border area, utilising existing routes (N2/N14/A5)'

NSO 7 Enhanced Amenities and Heritage. This NSO seeks to *'ensure that our cities, towns and villages are attractive and can offer a good quality of life. It will require investment in well-designed public realm, which includes public spaces, parks and streets, as well as recreational infrastructure. It also includes amenities in rural areas, such as national and forest parks, activity-based tourism and trails such as greenways, blueways and peatways. This is linked to and must integrate with our built, cultural and natural heritage, which has intrinsic value in defining the character of urban and rural areas and adding to their attractiveness and sense of place.'*

The NPF identifies 10 strategic national priorities, (page 13 refers) for investment which include our National road network.

The **National Development Plan 2018–2027 (updated in 2021)** in Section 4.3 lists proposed National Road projects which include:

- N2 Slane Bypass

Section 2.2 Regional Policy

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) provides regional level strategic planning and economic policy in support of the implementation of the NPF and provides a greater level of focus around the NPOs and NSOs of the NPF.

Meath is located in the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly area within the Eastern Strategic Planning Area which includes counties Louth, Kildare and Wicklow. The RSES is a strategic plan and investment framework to shape the future development of the region to 2031 and beyond.

RPO 8.10: ‘The RSES supports *appraisal and or delivery of the road projects set out in Table 8.4 subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process.*’

The “N2 Slane Bypass” is included in Table 8.4 of the Strategy.

Section 2.3 Local Policy

The **Meath County Development Plan (CDP)**, 2021-2027 in section 5.8 of the CDP addresses developments of “National and Regional Strategic Importance”.

It is an objective of the Council:

MOV OBJ 36

‘To support and facilitate the delivery of an N2 Bypass to the east of Slane Village, which is considered to comprise essential infrastructural development and to construct same subject to obtaining the relevant development consents required and to reserve and protect route option corridors from development which would interfere with the provision of the project. Development of the project will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process.’

MOV OBJ 49

‘To support essential public road infrastructure including, bypasses of local towns and villages and proposed national road schemes and where necessary reserve the corridors of any such proposed routes free of development, which would interfere with the provision of such proposals. Such road schemes include those specified in the non-exhaustive list in Table 5.1: Each of these projects will subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process.’

Table 5.1

Scheme Name	Description of Works
Slane By-pass (N2)	To deliver key strategic infrastructure including Slane Bypass incorporating new bridge over the River Boyne.

Chapter 11, Section 11.3.1 of the CDP contains policies and objectives for public realm. These are as follows:

DM POL 1

'To support, be proactive and implement the objectives, actions and recommendations of the Public Realm Plans as completed.'

DM OBJ 1

'To prepare and implement Public Realm Strategies, throughout the County where appropriate, liaising closely with residents, community and local business groups and other relevant stakeholders.'

DM OBJ 2

'To enhance the visual amenity of existing town and village centres, minimising unnecessary clutter, and provide guidance on public realm design, including wirescape, shopfront design, street furniture and signage.'

Volume 2 of the CDP contains a written statement for Slane. The vision as set out in the CDP is:

'To enhance and protect the historic character of Slane village while providing for the needs of the local community, businesses and visitors; and, to support the village's role as a gateway to the Boyne Valley, cultural tourism and artisan food hub in Meath. A central tenet of this Plan is to support and further develop tourism and craft industry in Slane and its wider hinterland thus maximising Slane's proximity to the Bru na Bóinne UNESCO World Heritage Site.'

The CDP identifies the following opportunities for the village:

- *There is a significant opportunity to further develop Slane as a tourist destination and as hub for visitors to the Boyne Valley.*
- *Village branding/presentation along main roads and at village entry points would add to the sense of place and strengthen Slane's unique identity.*
- *The main access roads through the village are characterised by a large volume of traffic much of which includes HGVs. It is an objective of the Council to bypass Slane village.*
- *Consistent public lighting and a quality footpath network throughout the village would make a significant contribution to improving the pedestrian environment.*
- *There are comparatively few opportunity sites that do not have extant permissions. Residentially zoned lands in the centre of the village present good opportunities to reinforce the existing compact development*

'The land use strategy for Slane aims to maintain and add to a built environment of the village that is both attractive and distinctive to create a unique sense of place for those who both live and work, as well as those whose visit, Slane. This will be achieved through the sensitive treatment of infill development and the conservation of important key buildings particularly within the 3 no. Architectural Conservation Areas. The provision of a compact and vibrant village centre is essential if Slane is to cater for its current and future population needs in a manner that is sustainable.'

The Slane written statement sets out the following policies and objectives:

SLN POL 1

'To consolidate and strengthen the commercial and residential village centre of Slane and encourage development which will contribute to the character and structure of the village core and to preserve and enhance the quality of the village's attractive built and natural environment, while catering for the needs of all sections of the local community to ensure that the village develops in a sustainable manner, as an attractive place to live, work, recreate and visit.'

SLN OBJ 6

'To support and facilitate the delivery of an N2 Bypass for Slane to the east of the Village, which is considered to comprise important infrastructural development and to construct same subject to obtaining the relevant development consents required and to reserve and protect route option corridors from development which would interfere with the provision of the project. Development of the project will be subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process.'

SLN OBJ 9

'To seek to introduce efficient traffic calming measures along the main village roads and at the key locations to reduce traffic speeds and improve pedestrian safety.'

The **Slane Public Realm Plan** was published in 2022 and sets out the Council's future approach to the streets and spaces of the village. The ambition of the plan is to offer solutions to reorganise the street layout to create a pleasant, functional environment. Measures recommended include improvements to footpaths, pedestrian crossing points, redesign of the Square to improve its setting and promote new pedestrian and cycling recreational links to the main cultural heritage in the area with opportunity to link the village to the future Boyne Greenway.

Section 3

Conclusion

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied) is the current statutory plan.

The Development Plan policy and objectives relevant to this CPO are set out in this Report.

The proposed development, to which the CPO relates is in accordance with the policies and objectives of the Meath County Council Development Plan 2021-2027.

The proposed development gives effect to and facilitates the implementation of the current County Development Plan, National and Regional planning policies.