

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

The Trunk Road T9 (Coleman's Corner to Ballyrickard Road) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012

S.R. 2012 No. 172

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department for Regional Development to accompany the Statutory Rule (details above) which is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.
- 1.2. The Statutory Rule is made under Articles 14(1), 68(1), (3) and (5) of and paragraph 5 of Schedule 8 to the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 and is subject to the negative resolution procedure.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of the order is to allow for the upgrading, to dual carriageway standard, of the remaining stretch of A8 single carriageway between Belfast and Larne. This would complete to a minimum of dual carriageway standard the entire route between Larne, Belfast and on to Dublin.

3. Background

- 3.1. The scheme is identified in the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) 2008-2018 as one of the key milestones in working towards the goal of upgrading Key Transport Corridors connecting our major towns and cities to regional gateways, the Belfast Metropolitan Area and the Republic of Ireland road network. An estimated delivery date between 2013/14 and 2017/18 is outlined in the Department for Regional Development's policy document Investment Delivery Plan for Roads (IDP).
- 3.2. The existing A8 is part of the Eastern Seaboard Key Transport Corridor and the Euroroute Network connecting Larne to Belfast and the Republic of Ireland. This section of the A8 is rural in nature, although the existing road bisects the small settlement of Bruslee and the village of Ballynure. Sections of the road carry traffic volumes of up to 17,000 vehicles per day and the road suffers surges in flow and queuing of vehicles at times coinciding with ferry arrivals and departures at the Port of Larne.
- 3.3. The proposed dual carriageway is predominantly an online improvement scheme that will effectively widen the existing road, although for two sections the dualling is off-line. The first section of off-line dualling is the 1.5km section of the road around the hamlet of Bruslee. The second, and more significant section, is the 3.4km section of the road to the west of Ballynure. There will be roundabouts at each end of the scheme and a number of grade separated junctions, left-in left-out junctions and bridges along the scheme providing access to the new road and local access.
- 3.4. The scheme will improve this section of the A8 to dual carriageway standard, therefore completing a minimum of dual carriageway provision

along the Eastern Seaboard Key Transport Corridor. This will lead to improvements in journey times and road safety.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. Public Consultation events were held in May 2007 and November 2008 to explain the process, update the public on progress and to allow the public an opportunity to make comments on the proposals. In July 2009, the Roads Service Board granted Gateway 1 Approval for the Preferred Route to proceed to the statutory process and this was presented to the public at a two-day public exhibition in August 2009.
- 4.2. The Environmental Statement, Notice of Intention to Make a Direction Order and Notice of Intention to Make a Vesting Order were published in the Press in January 2011 and an exhibition was also held the same month. 204 letters of objection and 7 letters of comment were received. Due to the number and nature of the objections, it was decided to hold concurrent Public Inquiries to consider the proposals, which commenced in June 2011. The Inspectors reported their findings to the Department in September 2011. Having considered the Inspectors' report and all other recommendations, the Department proposes to proceed to make the original Order with modifications. As a consequence of the public inquiries and the Inspectors' recommendations, Church Road will not be stopped-up, instead, the scheme will incorporate an open span bridge over both Church Road and Ballynure Water. In addition, the proposed Rushvale Road - Calhame Road Link road has been replaced with a left-in left-out at the end of Rushvale Road, removing the requirement for the stopping-up of the Rushvale Road junction.

5. Equality Impact

- 5.1. An equality impact assessment for the wider Strategic Road Improvement Programme was considered and 'screened out' as unnecessary.

6. Regulatory Impact

- 6.1. A Regulatory Impact Assessment was not considered necessary.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. Funding for the scheme has been secured as detailed in the DRD ministerial announcement of 14 February 2012.

8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

- 8.1. The Department has carried out a Human Rights Act Screening Analysis and issues have been identified in relation to people's right to respect for private and family life as well as people's right to property. While recognising such impacts, it is, however, felt that the greater public good associated with the project outweighs the disbenefits.

9. EU Implications

- 9.1. Not applicable

10. Parity or Replicatory Measure

- 10.1. None

11. Additional Information

11.1. Not applicable