



Option C chosen as preferred option for new N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road

WEXFORD County Council has confirmed the preferred scheme option for the new N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road following public consultation and further appraisal of the three scheme options.

Access to and from Rosslare Europort, the State's second largest passenger port and the fourth largest in terms of overall tonnage, is considered to be critical in maintaining the strategic connection between Ireland and the rest of the European Union and the UK.

Significant growth is forecast in the coming years, which will further increase Rosslare's strategic importance for international trade, business and tourism. A further new six-day per week ferry service between Rosslare Europort and Dunkirk in northern France was announced just last Friday, further highlighting the importance of Rosslare as a transport corridor with the European mainland.

Access to the Europort is via the N25 National Primary Road, which connects with the N11/M11 to form part of the Trans-European Transport Network, and currently passes through the village of Rosslare Harbour.

Wexford County Council is proposing to provide improved access

to Rosslare Europort from the N25 with the following aims - to secure competitiveness by improving accessibility and connectivity to the port; to improve road safety, particularly in the village of Rosslare Harbour; to avoid or minimise negative impacts on the existing environment; to improve social inclusion in the village by managing or removing port traffic; to promote regional balance by improving access to the south east and Rosslare, and to promote sustainable and active travel by integrating high quality cycling and walking infrastructure.

The option selection process took account of other proposed infrastructural investments including plans for a new internal port layout in the Rosslare Europort Master Plan, which received planning approval in August of this year and a new N25 Ballygillane Roundabout being developed as a stand alone project by the County Council, in order to ensure integration of the overall road/sea transport network.

Three feasible options were presented for public consultation in June of this year, with A and B proposing the continued use of the existing N25 corridor to Rosslare Europort and the second of these proposing improvement works to the existing N25.

Option C proposes the construction of a new offline access road to the port.

A total of 91 submissions were received and a Public Consultation Report was published in August, which summarised the consultation process and the matters raised by members of the public. This report and the Option Selection Report can be viewed on www.rosslareeuroportaccessroad.ie.

To identify the 'Preferred Scheme Option', the project team undertook an appraisal of the options and considered public feedback, in accordance with Transport Infrastructure Ireland guidelines. The selection process and outcome are as outlined in an information brochure which is being circulated in Rosslare Harbour this week. The brochure is also available on the project website.

Scheme Option C has been confirmed as the Preferred Scheme Option and will now be brought forward for design development and further environmental evaluation, as it has been identified as the option that can best deliver the project objectives.

The selected scheme option consists of a combination of existing road and new road corridor to provide a new access route to Rosslare Europort. The scheme will then directly connect with the proposed new internal infra-

structure layout in the Port, which is due to commence in 2021 following receipt of planning approval. These combined developments will ensure the sustainability and future operational capacity of this critical road-sea transport corridor into the future.

Two sub-options were also developed for the preferred option, based on a single carriageway road and a dual carriageway road respectively. Both sub-options follow the same alignment and are regarded as equivalent in terms of the overall appraisal and both will be brought forward for further evaluation and design.

Option C was chosen as the preferred option based on a number of criteria including economy, safety, environmental impact, accessibility and social inclusion, integration and physical activity.

The removal of port traffic from the village and the proposed provision of dedicated facilities for cyclists and pedestrians are considered to be important safety benefits of the route, and it will also improve social inclusion and accessibility to essential services and amenities for residents.

It is also considered the best performing in terms of integration with other planned infrastructural improvements, including the Rosslare

Europort Infrastructure Master Plan, the Ballygillane Roundabout, the Waterford to Rosslare Harbour Greenway and the proposed N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour road project.

Subject to receiving the necessary approvals and funding, the Preferred Scheme Option will now proceed to the next phase of the project which is Design and Environmental Evaluation, during which it will be further developed to refine the design of the road alignment, junctions, accesses and structures.

These design developments will also allow the land area required for the scheme to be defined and will facilitate more detailed engagement with affected landowners, local residents and other project stakeholders.

The environmental evaluation of the scheme will be progressed in tandem with design development, with both elements of the process influencing each other.

It is anticipated that the environmental evaluation may prompt design amendments which would eliminate or reduce potential environmental impacts. There will also be further engagement with landowners, local residents and other project stakeholders during the design and environmental evaluation process.