Chapter 7 Planning, Land-Use & Socio Economic Impacts

7.1 Introduction

This section of the report outlines the findings of the planning, land-use and socio-economic assessment of the route corridor options. The planning aspects are presented in the context of the strategic and regional impacts. The impact on land-use examines the potential impact of each route corridor option on residential, community and commercial property and planning applications in close proximity to the route corridors options. The existing socio-economic conditions are briefly reviewed and then the socio-economic impacts of the route corridors are discussed, highlighting the main issues affecting the selection of a preferred route corridor.

7.2 Route Corridor Options

The scheme and associated route corridor options are defined as two distinct sections; Section 1 originates at Hughestown Meera (Node A) to the west of Carrick-on-Shannon, terminating at Node B to the east of Drumsna. Within Section 1 there are 3 route corridor options to the north of Carrick-on-Shannon (Route Corridors 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3) and two to the south (Route Corridors 1.4 and 1.5). Section 2 originates at Node B and terminates at the northern end of the recently completed N4 Dromod to Roosky Bypass. The route corridor options are described in Chapter 5 and can be seen on Drawing RCSR 501-505.

7.3 Assessment Methodology

7.3.1 Assessment Criteria

To address the breakdown of elements contained within this single chapter it is proposed to examine the issues under the following headings:

• **Strategic Planning Impacts**

  An overall assessment has been carried out to look at the strategic context of the development, and the conformity or otherwise to Nationally stated policies and objectives. Simple conclusions are drawn here, where the proposal is identified, either as beneficial (in conformity) or adverse.

• **Regional and Local Planning Impacts**

  The planning policies in the County Development Plans and, where available, Local Area Plans have been reviewed and the route corridor options checked for possible non-conformity to the plan. Again, relatively simple conclusions are drawn here with route corridor options being identified as either beneficial or adverse.

• **Land-use Impacts**

  This section looks at the number of properties, planning applications and community facilities which are within 300m of each of the route corridor options. Significance criteria are then used to rank the route corridor options.

• **Socio-economic Impacts**

  The purpose of the socio-economic assessment is to identify the potential impacts on local people and communities associated with each route corridor. The selection of a preferred route corridor therefore takes into consideration criteria such as journey length, community severance, amenity and economic impacts.
The assessments are based on a review of the following sources and a number of windscreen surveys undertaken in September and October 2009. Information on planning applications was provided by Leitrim and Roscommon County Councils.

7.3.2 Information Sources

The following sources were consulted:

- Information contained in the Draft Constraints Study Report dated September 2009;
- Information contained in MCOS’s N4 Carrick-on-Shannon Bypass Route Selection Report, dated September 2002;
- The Leitrim County Development Plan 2009 – 2015, the Roscommon County Development Plan 2008 - 2014 and the Carrick-on-Shannon and Cortober Local Area Plans;
- Population and Employment data was obtained from the Central Statistics Office website (www.cso.ie); and
- The route corridor options drawings showing the route corridor options (Refer to Drawings RCSR 501 – 505) on the Ordnance Survey 1: 50 000 scale Discovery Series background aerial photo was used to determine the proximity of the routes to the towns and villages along the proposed corridors.

In addition to the above, cognisance was taken of information resulting from the Route Corridor Option Public Consultation No. 2 (as outlined in Chapter 6.0 of this report).

7.4 Strategic Planning Impacts

National Spatial Strategy

The National Spatial Strategy for Ireland (NSS) promotes polycentric development and recognises that the success of this development strategy is dependent on networks of physical infrastructure linking Dublin to the Gateways and Hubs:

‘To support balanced regional development, Ireland’s transport networks must build on Ireland’s radial transport system of main roads and rail lines connecting Dublin to other regions by developing an improved mesh or network of roads...’

The NSS vision for Ireland’s transport network clearly recognise the N4 Dublin to Sligo route, encompassing Carrick-on-Shannon, as a Strategic Radial Corridor. These are considered as key infrastructure priorities requiring completion under the current National Development Plan.

National Development Plan, 2007 - 2013

In January 2007, the Government published the National Development Plan 2007 – 2013 Transforming Ireland - A Better Quality of Life for All.

One of the Landmark Challenges identified in the NDP is to:
‘remove the remaining infrastructure bottlenecks that constrain our economic development and inhibit balanced regional development and environmental sustainability.’

To meet the challenges a number of General Goals (Objectives) have been identified which expand upon the need to continue to upgrade the transport network. These include:

- **Decisively tackle structural infrastructure deficits that continue to impact on competitiveness, regional development and general quality of life and to meet the demands of the increasing population;**

- **Integrate regional development within the National Spatial Strategy framework of Gateway cities and Hub towns to achieve the goals of economic growth in the regions and provide for major investment in the rural economy;**

While Carrick-on-Shannon is not defined as a Gateway or Hub it does form a bottleneck on the Strategic Radial Corridor connecting the Gateways – Dublin and Sligo. It can clearly be determined therefore that this project addresses the two Objectives highlighted above.

This assertion is supported by an examination of the Strategic Investment Priorities. The Roads Sub-Programme within the Economic Infrastructure Priority clearly identifies that a particular focus and priority will be investment on routes which link Gateways, including the N4 Dublin to Sligo route.

It is considered that the scheme will have a beneficial effect in terms of satisfying the National Planning Policy outlined in the National Spatial Strategy and reinforced by the support for the development of the N4 in the Strategic Investment Priorities of the National Development Plan.

### 7.5 Regional and Local Planning Impacts

#### 7.5.1 Introduction

In this section the Regional Planning Guidelines, the Leitrim and Roscommon County Development Plans and the Local Area Plans for Carrick-on-Shannon and Cortober were reviewed in the context of existing land-use and community facilities. Policies and objectives of the plan are considered and the impact of the route corridor options on the planning environment of the area have been identified.

#### 7.5.2 Regional Planning Guidelines

The primary aim of the Regional Planning Guidelines is to achieve the balanced regional development outlined in the National Spatial Strategy. To this end the key Strategic Goals for the Border Region promote the development of the Gateways Dundalk, Sligo and Letterkenny and supports the development of the Hubs Cavan and Monaghan and the Regionally Strategic town of Carrick-on-Shannon. The guidelines prioritise the delivery of the necessary networks of physical infrastructure required to support this development. This includes the N4 Dublin – Sligo route.

Similarly the Regional Planning Guidelines for the West (includes Roscommon) provide Strategic Goals which seek to secure for the Western Region an integrated transport and access infrastructure.
7.5.3 County and Local Development Plans

Specific Policies / Objectives

1. Transportation

Both Leitrim and Roscommon County Development Plans and Carrick-on-Shannon Local Area Plan explicitly recognise and support the requirement for a Carrick-on-Shannon bypass and the upgrade of the N4 Carrick-on-Shannon to Dromod road. As such any of the route corridor options would fulfil this objective and the proposed road project, in transportation terms can, therefore, be considered as having a beneficial planning effect.

(refer Policy 5.6a of the Leitrim County Development Plan, Policy 39, Objective 21 and Table 3 of the Roscommon County Development Plan and Policy 3.2.2a of the Carrick-on-Shannon Local Area Plan).

Map 2.5: Carrick on Shannon By-Pass – N.4 Upgrade/Re-alignment

The requirement for a connection of the proposed scheme with the R280 is also recognised in Policy and Objectives 5.6d which states:

Policy 5.6d  It is the policy of the Council to upgrade the Regional Routes serving the county and seek to have them upgraded to National Route status where appropriate.

The R.280 is the backbone of the County, linking the N.4, N.15 and N.16 National Primary Routes. This road connects Carrick-on-Shannon to Manorhamilton and onwards to the N.15 at Bundoran/Ballyshannon Bypass. It is a vital link if the north of the county is to prosper. The Council will prioritise this road for upgrading to National Route standards and will seek its designation as a National Primary Route.
Objective 5.6d It is an objective of the Council to pursue the upgrading of the R.280 to National Primary standard and status.

For this reason the northern Route Corridor Options achieve this objective to a much greater extent than Route Corridors 1.4 and 1.5 to the south of the town.

2. Employment and Enterprise

The development plans recognise the need for further infrastructural development, including the transport infrastructure, to allow them to continue to develop economically. The development of enhanced infrastructure is seen as being of paramount importance in the enticement of industry and business to the area and the subsequent development of employment opportunities. The proposed road project is therefore in broad conformity with planning policy in terms of employment and enterprise.

Despite this general conformity certain route corridor options have an impact in this area:

The Cortober Area Plan recognises to date the upgrade of the N4 has resulted in the sporadic development of retail and warehousing units on the N4 Boyle road and the establishment of industrial units at Tullyleague. Policy 24 states “Facilitate the expansion of industrial development at Tullyleague” and Objective 4 states “Promote and develop the vitality of the existing shopping area and to facilitate the provision of local retail needs where appropriate”.

Route Corridor Option 1.4 slices through the Tullyleague area before joining the existing N4 at node F. This runs contrary to policy 24 as it is unlikely that there will be adequate access provided from the Type 2 dual carriageway at this point to allow for the expansion of this area to the south of the route corridor option. However, this is offset by the proximity of the route to the existing retail and commercial units. This proximity enhances the economic attractiveness of the zone as it will provide advertisement opportunities to capture passing traffic, thus assisting in the attainment of Objective 4.

In Section 2 there are no predicted impacts on employment and enterprise although there is an animal feeds mill, McDonagh Feeds, owned by Connacht Gold, which has been closed for some time.

3. Rural Development and Tourism

In terms of rural development and tourism it is the aim of both county councils that the full potential of tourism as an economic force is achieved and a number of policies under different headings exist in support of this aim. These include policies for the development and support of agri-tourism.

For example, Leitrim County Development Plan states:

Policy 6.6d “It is the policy of the council to support agri-tourism in the form of visitor accommodation and other agri-tourism related activities such as open farms, etc.”

And Roscommon County Development Plan states:

Policy 371 The Council shall “Support on farm tourism accommodation and supplementary activities such as health farms, pony trekking etc.”
The main tourism products in the area relate directly to the Shannon Waterway. As a consequence the main tourism generated business, accommodation, restaurants and facilities, are concentrated within the confines of the town and the associated boat moorings. There is therefore only a relatively limited number of tourism related businesses outside of Carrick-on-Shannon town centre.

- Route Corridor Option 1.3 will have a direct impact on Hartley’s Lodge B+B;
- Route Corridor Option 1.3 will have an indirect impact, as a result of proximity, on Sheemore Hill B+B; and
- Route Corridor Option 1.4 will have an indirect impact, through potential severance, on Taylors Rest B+B.

4. **Recreation and Amenity**

The following extract from the Carrick-on-Shannon Draft Local Area Plan (2010 – 2016) succinctly captures the intention behind the Recreation policies contained within the development plans:

Policy 10.01e “It is the policy of the council to ensure appropriate open space and recreational facilities are conveniently accessible to all the people of Carrick-on-Shannon”.

There are two instances where a route corridor option runs contrary to this policy, as follows:
- Route Corridor Option 1.4 will have a direct impact on the sports pitches and facilities at Drishoghue; and
- Route Corridor Options 2.2 and 2.3, at node P, will have a potential significant impact on the Annaduff GAA pitch. However it is considered that access to this facility can be maintained without adversely affecting the facilities.

5. **Protected Views and Prospects**

Both County Development Plans recognise the importance of Landscape and Landscape Character. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and High Visual Amenity are recognised and policy is in place to protect them from inappropriate development. Similarly views and prospects of high amenity value are specified and protected. The potential impact on these issues is discussed in detail in Chapter 14.

6. **Land-use zoning strategies**

Carrick-on-Shannon, Cortober and Drumsna have all had zoning strategy maps developed as directed by the relevant County Development Plan (refer to Drawings RCSR 701-703). Development proposals are expected to be compatible with these zoning strategies (Refer Policy 94 of the Roscommon County Development Plan.)

**Carrick-on-Shannon**

None of the route corridor options will have a negative impact on the Carrick-on-Shannon zoning strategy. In essence the northern Route Corridor Options 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 will form an effective and desirable development limit (see Drawing RCSR 704) constraining and densifying the future expansion of the
town. From this perspective Route Corridor Option 1.3 (nodes F-G-I) is the most advantageous.

**Cortober**
Route Corridor Option 1.4 (nodes E – J) slices through the middle of the zoned area within the Cortober Local Area Plan. This will have a significant impact on the attainment of the objectives attached to each of the zoned areas within Cortober. There will be a negative impact on areas zoned for ‘public utilities’, ‘neighbourhood centre’, ‘business enterprise park / light industry’ and ‘industrial uses’.

**Drumsna**
Between Nodes M and N all the route corridor options are on-line and the necessary widening will impact the most northerly elements of Drumsna village zoning strategy. This area is zoned as ‘General’ and is primarily residential.

Table 7.3 at the end of this Chapter identifies which route corridor options will have the greatest potential planning impact. In arriving at this ranking it considers the number of businesses directly affected and the compliance with planning policies as discussed above.

### 7.6 Land-use Impacts

#### 7.6.1 Introduction and Methodology

This section examines the impacts on land-use for each of the route corridor options. The Study Area is primarily rural and as such the associated land-use is primarily agriculture. Impacts on agriculture are addressed separately in Chapter 13. This section therefore examines the impact of each route on property, community facilities and planning applications in close proximity to each of the routes. The number of properties within 50m, 100m, 200m and 300m of the centreline of each route has been accurately counted and this is used to make a simple assessment of the impact the route corridor options will have on land-use.

Refer to Drawings RCSR 705 to 708 in Volume 2 for main land uses other than agriculture.

#### 7.6.2 Assessment of Effects

**Section 1**

Section 1, runs from Node A at Hughestown Meera in the west to Node B at Drumsna in the east. There are three northern route corridor options and two southern route corridor options to be considered.

Route Corridor Option 1.1 is the longest of the three northern route corridor options, travelling offline from Node F at Cloonmaan all the way to Node M at Mountcampbell (A-F-G-H-M-B). This route will have the potential to impact a total of 213 properties, 9 of which fall in 50m of the centreline, and four planning applications within 100m of the centreline. Planning Applications are shown on Drawing RCSR 709 -712.

Route Corridor Option 1.2, travels offline from Node F to Node L and online from Node L – Node B (A-F-G-H-L-B), has the potential to impact a total of 238 properties, 11 of which are within 50m either side of the centreline, and four planning applications.
Route Corridor Option 1.3 travels offline from Node F to Node I (A-F-G-I-B) has the potential to impact a total of 271 properties, 23 of which are within 50m either side of the centreline, and four planning applications.

Route Corridor Option 1.4, the first of the southern route corridor options, runs from Node E to Node J (A-E-F-J-B) and dissects the village of Cortober. This route corridor option has the potential to impact a total of 373 properties, 37 of which are within 50m either side of the centreline, and five planning applications.

Route Corridor Option 1.5 is the longest offline route travelling directly from Node D to Node K (A-D-K-B). This route has the potential to impact a total of 153 properties, 21 of which are within 50m either side of the centreline, and four planning applications.

Section 2
Section 2 runs from Node B at Drumsna eastwards to Node C at Faulties. There are three route corridor options within this section.

Route Corridor Option 2.1 (B-N-C) is the only offline route corridor option in Section 2 and runs parallel but to the north east of the existing N4. This route has the potential to impact a total of 142 properties, 10 of which are within 50m either side of the centreline and three planning applications.

Route Corridor Options 2.2 and 2.3 are both online with only a small bypass of Aghamore. Route 2.2 (B-N-O-P-C) bypasses Aghamore to the east, whereas 2.1 (B-N-O-P-C) bypasses Aghamore to the west. Route Corridor Option 2.2 has the potential to impact a total of 150 properties, 32 of which are within 50m either side of the centreline, and six planning applications; Route Corridor Option 2.3 has the potential to impact 136 properties, 38 of which are within 50m either side of the centreline, and six planning applications.

7.6.3 Conclusion
Table 7.3 at the end of this Chapter identifies which route corridor options will have the greatest potential impact on land-use by identifying the number of properties and planning applications within 50 metres either side of the centreline and therefore have the potential to be directly impacted. In Section 1 the route which will have the greatest impact is clearly Route Corridor Option 1.4. This is to be expected as it passes through the centre of Cortober. Route Corridor Option 1.1 correspondingly has the least potential impact and that relates directly to the extensive rural nature of this option.

In Section 2 the offline option, Route Corridor Option 2.1 has the least potential impact, especially in terms of property within 50m. Again this is the expected outcome as there is significant residential development along the existing N4 which Route 2.1 will primarily avoid impacting.

7.7 Socio-Economic Impacts

7.7.1 Introduction and Methodology
This section evaluates the potential socio-economic impacts of the route corridor options. A comparative evaluation of the impacts of each route corridor option is provided in order to assist in the identification of the preferred route.
The assessment has been undertaken in line with the EPA ‘Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements (2002)’, the EPA ‘Advice Notes on Current Practice (in the preparation of EIS)’ (2003) and the NRA ‘Environmental Impact Assessment of National Road Schemes – A Practical Guide’ (NRA 2006). Reference has also been made to the detailed guidelines provided in the UK DMRB Volume 11, Section 3, Part 8 ‘Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community Effects’.

### 7.7.2 Socio-economic Impact Categories

The purpose of the socio-economic assessment is to identify the potential impacts on local people and communities associated with each route corridor. Socio-economic or community, impacts fall into four key categories, namely:

- **Journey length**

  New roads have an inevitable effect on local journey times and travel patterns for vehicle journeys, journeys by public transport, journeys by bicycle and for pedestrians.

  The following criteria will be referred to in assessing the impact the route corridor options will have on journey time and journey pattern:

  **Table 7.1  Journey Length Assessment Criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact Level</th>
<th>Significance Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imperceptible</td>
<td>No appreciable change to present journeys, i.e. less than 10% change in typical journey length or duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>Some inconvenience but journey patterns likely to be maintained, i.e. 10-30% change in typical journey length or duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Journeys become longer and some groups may be dissuaded from making trips, i.e. 30 – 60% change in typical journey length or duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>Considerable inconvenience. Many people will be deterred from making trips, i.e. 60 – 100% change in typical journey length or duration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profound</td>
<td>More than 100% increase in journey length or duration sufficient to cause marked change in behaviour of sizeable proportion of population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Community Severance**

  Severance occurs whenever access to community facilities, such as schools, surgeries, hospitals, churches, post offices and shops, is impeded by the physical barrier of the road itself (e.g. due to traffic load or fencing) or any lengthening of journey time.

  New or increased severance is a negative impact that occurs where either a new road, or increased traffic on an existing road, forms a barrier between people and community facilities.

  The following criteria, adapted from the UK DMRB Guidelines will be referred to in assessing the impact of the route corridor options:
Table 7.2 Community Severance Assessment Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact Level</th>
<th>Significance Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imperceptible</td>
<td>Journey patterns maintained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>Present journey patterns likely to be maintained, albeit with some hindrance to movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Some residents, particularly children and elderly people, are likely to encounter some severance, perhaps due to a need to access a pedestrian crossing / OR At grade crossing of a road carrying 5000 – 10 000 vehicles AADT when unassisted by pedestrian lights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>Most residents are likely to encounter severance which, in some cases, will cause them to make less frequent use of particular community facilities / OR At grade crossing of a road carrying 10000 – 15 000 vehicles AADT when unassisted by pedestrian lights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profound</td>
<td>People are likely to be deterred from making more important trips to an extent sufficient to induce a re-organisation of their habits / OR Crossing of a road carrying more than 15 000 vehicle AADT when unassisted by pedestrian lights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is also worth noting that above a certain threshold people may be deterred from making certain casual journeys to an extent that an element of psychological severance arises. In such instances, people’s accessibility is restricted or communities become identified by their containment within certain road boundaries.

- **Amenity**
  Amenity is defined as the relative pleasantness of a journey. The UK DMRB describes it as being concerned with:
  - Changes in the degree and duration of people’s exposure to traffic, i.e. fear/safety, noise, dirt and air quality; and
  - The impact of the road itself – primarily any visual intrusion associated with the scheme and its structures.

Aspects such as the level of traffic on a road, the availability of footpaths, and cycle-paths and the nature of the crossings or junctions to be negotiated are of particular importance when assessing amenity, as are the numbers and type of people affected.

In addition environmental impacts affecting the pleasantness of journeys such as pollution, noise and landscape impacts can also affect the general amenity or quality of life for people living in the vicinity. Environmental impacts can also have direct impacts on particular community facilities and recreational sites. While these environmental issues are considered in other chapters they can also have a community dimension and such are considered here.

- **Economic Impacts**
  Economic and employment impacts will occur at both regional and local levels, and can be either positive or negative. In terms of road development these impacts can be difficult to quantify. Much road development is proposed with the intention of improving the business environment, particularly in relation to
reducing journey time and improving journey time reliability for commercial goods and for travel and commuting by employees. However, there can also be negative impacts in relation to loss of passing trade to businesses such as newsagents, grocery stores, coffee shops, filling stations, guest houses, etc.

The specific economic impacts will be largely influenced by the chosen route and the location of junctions. At this stage in the selection of a preferred route corridor only broad assumptions can be made about junction locations. Taking cognisance of this limitation, ‘slight’ impacts are broadly defined as those to which a small effect on the business environment can be attributed to the scheme. ‘Moderate’ economic impacts are defined as those to which a somewhat greater effect on the business environment can be identified; and ‘significant’ impacts would be such as to substantially affect business performance or to influence the location of new business.

7.7.3 Route Corridor Analysis

The Receiving Environment – Considerations for the Entire Study Area

Settlement Pattern
The main urban conurbation is formed by the town of Carrick-on-Shannon and its connection to Cortober. Outside of this the villages of Jamestown and Drumsna lie immediately south of the study area and Aghamore lies within the study area to the east.

Elsewhere within the study area settlement generally takes the form of scattered individual houses. There is also significant ribbon development along some of the existing roads, including the N4, as they radiate from Carrick-on-Shannon and the villages of Drumsna, Jamestown and Aghamore.

Economic Functions
As would be expected, outside of agriculture, Carrick-on-Shannon / Cortober performs the major employment, administrative and service functions. The town centre supports a range of retail and banking facilities commensurate with its size.

In recent years, following the opening of the Shannon-Erne waterway, the profile of the tourism industry has been greatly raised with the development of river related tourism holidays (cruising and angling). As a consequence there has been an expansion in the number of quality hotel rooms, restaurants and public houses in the town. This development has further enhanced the attractiveness of the area as a tourism destination and as a result tourism is now integral to the economy of Carrick-on-Shannon and Cortober.

Carrick-on-Shannon’s administrative and service role also contributes significantly to its economy. The presence of the County Council, North Western Health Board, Garda Station and Courthouse are pertinent in this instance.

In Carrick-on-Shannon the biggest private employer is the MBNA bank. Also of significance is the Masonite Europe offices and production site in Drumsna. There are also a range of smaller companies operating throughout the area and the retail function of Carrick-on-Shannon town centre is important as a draw from the wider rural area.

A major retail park, which includes Tesco, Woodies, and a range of retail facilities, has opened in recent years on the eastern approach to the town on the N4 at
Attifinlay. To the west of the town, on the N4 to Sligo, at Drishoge and Tullyleague there is also mixed use development and commercial / industrial areas of importance. Carrick-on-Shannon also has a number of smaller industrial premises, such as to the north of the town at Townparks.

**Existing Infrastructure**

The N4 National Primary Route from Dublin to Sligo is the key element of infrastructure in the area. This section of N4 carries both long distance traffic between the east and north-west of the country and significant regional and inter-urban traffic flows between Mullingar, Longford, Carrick-on-Shannon, Boyle and Sligo.

Around Carrick-on-Shannon / Cortober the N4 also provides regional connections to north Leitrim and Donegal on the R280, to Frenchpark and the N5 on the R370 and to Roscommon Town and the N61 via the R368.

There are also a significant number of local and minor roads traversing the study area.

In addition, the Dublin-Sligo Railway Line passes through the area, with eight services daily (Monday to Friday) stopping at the station which is located in Cortober.

**Facilities and Amenities**

As the main administrative and service centre in the area, Carrick-on-Shannon supports the key facilities which are essential to the prosperity of any urban area.

There is one post primary and two primary schools. There is also a Teacher Training Centre and a centre providing full time training for travellers and early school leavers. St Patrick’s Hospital is situated in the north of the town and there is a Health Centre in the town on the R280 Leitrim Road.

In terms of amenity facilities, the River Shannon is widely promoted with the provision of angling stands, marinas and boat moorings.

There are also a range of clubs and recreational facilities, including a rowing club of national importance, a lawn tennis club and GAA, rugby and soccer clubs.

Outside of Carrick-on-Shannon there is a school, church, shop, pub and sports pitches and facilities at Aghamore which are entirely within the study area.

**Potential Impacts of Route Corridor Options**

*Impacts of upgrading the existing N4*

All the route corridor options include, to a greater or lesser extent, an upgrade of the existing N4 from single carriageway status to dual carriageway status. This brings with it inherent impacts on journey lengths, community severance and amenity. The need for left in, left out accesses at local junctions will require impacted residents and road-users to take longer journeys involving u-turns to get to their destination, thus impacting journey time. Similarly roadside properties will not be able to directly access the dual carriageway and, while alternative accesses may be provided there will be potentially significant impact on journey times. This aspect also has a potentially significant community severance impact as pedestrians and cyclists will no longer be able to safely and comfortably cross the road to visit friends, go to the shop, avail of facilities or perform other daily duties.
Although it may be possible to develop new property accesses and a junction strategy such that these impacts are minimised the detail of this is not yet agreed and as such, at this point, the weighting of the impact of these elements is primarily based on the probable number of properties impacted.

**Section 1**

Section 1, A-B, runs from Hughestown Meera in the west to Drumsna in the east. There are three northern route and two southern route corridor options to be considered.

**Economic Impacts**

All the route corridor options in Section 1 will facilitate the existing access to Carrick-on-Shannon / Cortober, Drumsna and Jamestown. Equally all the route corridor options will produce the reduced journey times and increased reliability of journey times required to consider the road as economically beneficial from a regional and national perspective.

There are two notable possible differences in economic impact. Firstly, the removal of traffic from Carrick-on-Shannon town centre will substantially enhance its attractiveness as a tourism destination, especially for the existing recreational Shannon Waterway based tourism. In Section 1 the southern route corridor options will not remove the substantial traffic volumes on the R280 and as such will not deliver the increased attractiveness required.

The second issue relates to the loss of passing trade. Where negative economic impacts may occur, it will be as a result of loss of passing trade in Carrick-on-Shannon / Cortober. The level and worth of this is difficult to predict accurately. All the route corridor options will allow traffic to rapidly bypass Carrick-on-Shannon / Cortober and travel on to Sligo. However, it is suggested that the eastern and western extremities of the town will fare differently from this perspective due to proximity to the junctions and that the route corridor options will have essentially the same impact on passing trade.

The proximity and visibility, especially from Nodes E and F, of the retail facilities available at Tullyleague / Drishogue on the N4 to the west of Carrick-on-Shannon will allow continuing and perhaps enhanced capture of passing trade and may even present an opportunity. Conversely the new retail park on the N4 to the east of Carrick-on-Shannon, and to some extent the town centre, will lose passing trade. For the smaller retail outlets and coffee shops this loss of passing trade may have a moderate economic impact.

In conclusion, the route corridors will have very similar economic impacts with the northern route corridor options being slightly more beneficial as a result of the removal of the R280 traffic from the town centre.

1. **Northern Routes**

   **Nodes F-G**

   The three northern route corridor options are identical between nodes F and G. This section which passes through agricultural land, with the River Shannon and Lough Drumharlow to the west, has no impact on any property within 50m and does not cross any roads or limit access to facilities. As such it is not considered as having any negative impact on journey characteristics, community severance or local economic performance. This route does...
however have a significant impact on amenity as a result of the length of crossing within the Shannon River Floodplain – Area of High Visual Amenity. This will impact the amenity of users of the Shannon Waterway.

**Route Corridor 1.1 (A-F-G-H-M-B)**

- **Journey Characteristics**
  Route Corridor Option 1.1 is the longest of the three northern route corridor options. The offline element between Nodes G and M crosses local roads a total of six times and also crosses the R280. There is also some minor impact on agricultural accesses which are discussed in Chapter 13. At present it is proposed to provide overbridges or underpasses for all impacted local roads and roundabouts or grade separated junctions linking the regional roads. As such it is considered that the impact on local journey times and journey patterns will be imperceptible.

  The online element of Route Corridor Option 1.1 (M – B) is very short and has no impact on any property access. It does impact two field accesses, the R299 on both sides of the road and one local road on the right. The requirement to maintain and improve the existing grade separated junction at the R299 lowers any potential impact on journey times to be imperceptible.

- **Severance**
  To the east of Node G, a substantial number of residential developments occur along the local roads to the north of Carrick-on-Shannon in the townlands of Cloonsheebane, Cloonsheerevagh and Hartley. This is also the case for the local road to the east of Node H. While these groupings may suffer some element of psychological severance the provision of overbridges, underpasses and footpaths will ensure that journey patterns are maintained and as such the impact is imperceptible.

  A number of properties and an old school building now used by FÁS occur along or in close proximity to the existing exits and entrances to Drumsna (the R299). It is considered that the maintenance and improvement of the existing grade separated junction will ensure only slight impact on journey patterns occurs.

- **Amenity**
  The extensive off-line rural nature of Route Corridor Option 1.1 and its distance from the main conurbation results in it having primarily minimal negative impact on amenity for residents. However, visually it passes over the top of two substantial hills and, although the area is not heavily used by recreational walkers, the visual impact for the local residents may be significant. In addition the impact on visual amenity between Nodes F and G must be considered.

**Route Corridor 1.2 (A-F-G-H-L-M-B)**
Route Corridor Option 1.2 shares the same route and hence impacts as Route Corridor Option 1.1 until after the local road to the east of Node H, in the townland of Dromore.
Journey Characteristics

In terms of journey characteristics the offline element of Route Corridor Option 1.2 impacts 6 local roads and one regional road (R280). At present it is proposed to provide overbridges or underpasses for all impacted local roads and roundabouts or grade separated junctions linking the regional roads. As such it is considered that the impact on local journey times and journey patterns will be imperceptible as a result of the construction of this route.

The online element from Node L to Node B is relatively short and has no direct impact on property access. There are a total of 8 field accesses impacted and 5 local roads and the R299. This is considered as having a slight impact as the junction strategy and existing local road access will ensure that journey patterns are maintained with a minimal increase in journey time.

Severance

It is considered that this route has the identical severance impacts as Route Corridor Option 1.1. Offline, one less, lightly populated, local road is impacted but an additional two farm accesses are. In addition the extra online section from Nodes L-M has no additional community severance impacts.

Amenity

Again, as with Route Corridor Option 1.1, the extensive off-line rural nature of Route Corridor Option 1.2 and its distance from the main conurbation results in the route having minimal impact on amenity for residents and will result in a pleasant journey for road users. No recreation facilities are impacted and the road will be well hidden by drumlins and landscape features such as hedgerows and tree-lines. However the impact on visual amenity between Nodes F and G must be considered.

Route Corridor 1.3 (A-F-G-I-B)

From Node G Route Corridor Option 1.3 follows much more closely the boundary limits of Carrick-on-Shannon, dropping sharply south to Node I.

Journey Characteristics

Offline, Route Corridor Option 1.3 impacts 3 local roads and the R280 and will have no impact on journey times. Again the provision of overbridges or underpasses for all impacted local roads and roundabouts or grade separated junctions linking the regional roads result in the impact being imperceptible.

However, the online element is considerably longer than Route Corridor Option 1.1 and 1.2, running from Node I to Node B. This results in a significant impact, with 10 property accesses at Corbally (between Nodes I and K) and an additional 2 local roads and 13 field accesses. In this instance the U-turn distance will be significant and the impact on journey times is considered Moderate – whereby typical journeys may become 30 – 60% longer and some groups will be dissuaded from making trips.
• Severance

As before with Route Corridor Options 1.1 and 1.2, Route Corridor Option 1.3 will have an imperceptible impact on journey patterns as a result of the maintenance of existing access points. However this element does ‘separate’ a greater number of properties and as such the psychological feeling of severance may occur.

The number and grouping of properties at Corbally indicates the presence of a local neighbourhood community. As such the construction of a dual carriageway through here will impact journey patterns as it will prevent the comfortable and safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists across the road. This is considered a significant severance impact.

• Amenity

No recreational or community facilities will be impacted. However this route for most of it’s length (between Nodes F and I) does pass close to a number of relatively dense residential areas and as such will have an impact on the amenity currently enjoyed by these groups.

2. Southern Routes

Route Corridor Options 1.4 and 1.5 pass to the south of Carrick-on-Shannon. Route Corridor 1.4 is off-line from Node E to Node J, passing through Cortober. It is then on-line from Node J - B. Route Corridor 1.5 is off-line for a considerable distance from Node D to Node K.

Route Corridor 1.4 (A-E-J-B)

• Journey Characteristics

The off-line element of Route Corridor Option 1.4 will impact 2 local roads, the R368 and a number of local accesses. No access will be provided to the proposed road for this traffic as the new road will bridge over the R368 adjacent to the existing railway bridge. The existing roads will not be affected except for a reduction in traffic at the existing roundabout with the N4 and road users can access the proposed road at the junction at Cloonmaan or Lismeeghan ensuring that there will be no appreciable change to present journey lengths and the impact will be imperceptible.

The online element has essentially the same impact as Route Corridor 1.3 and as such is considered as having a moderate impact on journey times.

• Severance

The maintenance of access on the local roads and the R368 will ensure that existing journey patterns are maintained and as such the real/physical impact is considered imperceptible for the offline element. However this element will cause substantial additional psychological separation of the inhabitants of Cortober, adding to the barrier already formed by the railway line and station. Although this could be considered a transport corridor Route Corridor 1.4 is only tight to the railway line for a short distance and severs lands zoned lands to the north west of the R368 crossing.
In addition the impact of the online element is the same as for Route Corridor Option 1.3, where a significant impact is recorded.

- **Amenity**
  In terms of exposure to traffic and visual intrusion the general amenity of the residents of Cortober will suffer significantly. However assuming that footpaths etc are provided there will be no impact on the access to community and recreational facilities. Route Corridor Option 1.4 will also pass directly above the new fishing stands on the River Shannon which has been recently constructed to enhance the tourism product of Carrick-on-Shannon. The playing pitches (soccer and gaelic) at Drishoge will also be affected by Rout Corridor 1.4.

- **Economics**
  Route Corridor Option 1.4 is the only route in Section 1 which has a direct impact on existing businesses. At Cortober it will have an impact on an Eircom office/storage facility, the mart, the playing pitches and to the west at Tullyleague it will impact some of the existing warehousing facilities.

**Route 1.5 (A-D-K-B)**

- **Journey Characteristics**
  The off-line element of Route Corridor Option 1.5 will impact 2 local roads and 2 Regional roads (R368 and R370). No access will be provided to the proposed road for this traffic as the new road will bridge over both regional roads. The existing roads will not be affected except for a reduction in traffic at the existing roundabout with the N4 and road users can access the proposed road at the junction at Cloonmaan or Lismeeghan ensuring that there will be no appreciable change to present journey lengths and the impact will be imperceptible.

  Online, this route has a very similar impact to Route Corridor Option 1.2. The fractionally longer online element impacts an additional two local roads and three field accesses, although the impact is still considered slight.

- **Severance**
  The distance of the off-line section from Carrick-on-Shannon / Cortober, the lack of gatherings of residential property along the route and the maintenance of existing access to the town and its facilities ensures that this route will have an imperceptible community severance impact.

  In terms of community severance the online element has the same slight impact as route corridors 1.1 and 1.2.

- **Amenity**
  The extensive off-line rural nature of Route Corridor Option 1.5 and its distance from the main conurbation results in the route having minimal negative impact on amenity for residents and will result in a pleasant journey for road users. No recreation facilities are impacted and the road, for the most part, will be well hidden by drumlins and landscape features such as hedgerows and tree-lines. There is however a relatively large crossing of the Shannon River Floodplain Area of High Visual Amenity.
Section 2

Section 2, Nodes B - C, runs from Drumsna in the north to Faulties in the south. There are three routes, one off-line (Route Corridor Option 2.1) and two primarily on-line (Route Corridor Options 2.2 & 2.3) with either a small western or small eastern bypass of Aghamore.

Economic Impacts

All the route corridor options in Section 2 will produce the reduced journey times and increased reliability of journey times required to consider the road as economically beneficial from a regional and national perspective. In terms of negative economic impacts, effects may be felt by the shop and pub in Aghamore as a result of loss of passing trade. All route corridor options will have the same impact on passing trade in Aghamore village and all three routes will have the same impact on McDonagh Feeds at Fearnaght. As such it is not possible to differentiate between the route corridors of Section 2 on an economic impact basis.

Route Corridor Option 2.1 (B-N-C)

Route Corridor Option 2.1 is the off-line option which runs parallel but to the east of the existing N4.

• Journey Characteristics
  Route Corridor Option 2.1 will impact 4 local roads and one regional road (R201). The proposed provision of compact grade separated junctions or roundabouts along this section and the relative proximity of existing local roads ensures that there will be no appreciable change to present journey lengths or duration and the impact will be imperceptible.

• Severance
  The facilitation of local accesses onto the proposed grade separated junctions ensures that the vehicular journey patterns will be maintained. However, the presence of a significant number of residential properties to the east of Aghamore village should be noted. In this instance the design and access for pedestrians and cyclists across / over the junction at Aghamore is exceedingly important. If the access for pedestrians or cyclists is physically unattractive or difficult then people will be cut off from the facilities of Aghamore and severance will be experienced.

• Amenity
  The off-line nature of route corridor 2.1 and its distance from the main housing agglomerations results in the route corridor having minimal negative impact on amenity for residents. No recreational facilities are impacted and the road, for the most part, will be visually integrated into the background of drumlins and hedgerows and tree-lines.

Route Corridor Option 2.2 (B-O-P-C) and 2.3 (B-O-P-C)

Route Corridor Options 2.2 and 2.3 are both online between Nodes B – O and Nodes P – C. As such these impacts are considered and assessed together and can only be assessed against Route Corridor 2.1

At Aghamore, between Nodes O and P, Route Corridor 2.2 bypasses to the east of the village and Route Corridor 2.3 to the west. The difference in potential impact
between these nodes is used to differentiate between Route Corridor Options 2.2 and 2.3.

- **Journey Characteristics**
  
  **Nodes B - O**
  
  Between Nodes B and O five local roads and the R201 are impacted, as are the 11 properties at Gortinty and fourteen field accesses. In this instance the U-turn distance, depending on the chosen alignment in Section 1, will be significant and the impact on journey times is considered Moderate, whereby typical journeys may become 30 – 60% longer and some groups will be dissuaded from making trips, to Significant, whereby journey times may be increased between 60% and 100%.

  **Nodes P – C**
  
  3 local roads, 10 field accesses, 10 property accesses providing access to a number of groups of houses and access to a GAA pitch and facilities will be impacted by this proposed route. In this instance, as a result of the proposed compact grade separated junctions at Aghamore and at Faulties, the U-turn distance will not be significant and the impact is considered slight.

  **Nodes O – P**
  
  Aghamore Village lies between Nodes O and P. For both 2.2 and 2.3, the maintenance of the existing N4 through Aghamore and the provision of a grade separated junction will ensure that any required U-turns result in only a slight impact on journey times.

- **Severance**
  
  **Nodes B - O**
  
  The number and grouping of properties at Gortinty indicates the presence of a local neighbourhood community. As such the construction of a dual carriageway through here will impact journey patterns as it will prevent the comfortable and safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists across the road. This is considered a significant severance impact.

  **Nodes O – P**
  
  Both Route Corridor Options 2.2 and 2.3 will create a feeling of physical separation for those residents whose properties are beyond the limits of Aghamore village. In both instances access, will be provided to maintain the existing level of connectivity to the village.

  Route Corridor Option 2.2 traverses Aghamore to the east and has the potential to sever a large number of properties on the adjacent local roads. The presence of the school and church immediately south west of this option enhances this potential for severance as these two facilities will be very important to the local community. However it is considered that centrally locating this option in the fields between the village and the properties on the local roads combined with the maintenance of the local access to the village will result in only imperceptible to slight real or psychological severance occurring.

  Route Corridor Option 2.3 lies very close to the village and will require the acquisition of a number of residential properties. The proximity of this option to
both the village and the residential properties on the local road will result in those residents experiencing a significant level of severance and will have a more significant impact than Route Corridor Option 2.2.

**Nodes P – C**

As with Gortinty, the number and grouping of properties at Fearnaght and along the local road to the east indicates the presence of a local neighbourhood community. As such the construction of a dual carriageway through here will impact journey patterns as it will prevent the comfortable and safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists across the road. Route Corridor 2.3 will impact access to the GAA pitch and facilities. This is considered a significant severance impact, however junction design may allow for a solution which minimises any impact. Route Corridor Option 2.2 is likely to provide a favourable access solution to the GAA facilities by turning the existing N4 into a service road terminating at the GAA club.

- **Amenity**

**Nodes B – O**

The impact on pedestrian and cyclist movement will result in a significant loss of amenity. There will also be an increased level of traffic noise due to the change in road cross section.

**Nodes P – C**

The increased difficulty in accessing local amenities (bus stops, pitches, access to the village) for pedestrians and cyclists, in addition to the increased level of traffic noise and pollution, ensures that the impact on amenity is significant.

**Nodes O – P**

Both bypass options will enhance the amenity and attractiveness of Aghamore village for the majority of the local residents. However, as with severance, the proximity of the Route Corridor Option 2.3 to the village and the properties present will result in a significant negative impact on current amenity enjoyed by these residents.

Centrally locating Route Corridor Option 2.2 in the fields between the village and the properties on the local roads to the east will result in a lesser degree of amenity loss as it is sufficiently separated from the village and the residential properties present. However, in this instance, careful design and landscaping is essential to ensure that the local primary school does not suffer substantial loss of amenity.

### 7.7.4 Summary

By breaking socio-economic impact into four separate categories it has been possible to review and weight each route against the other. The ranking of each route is shown in Table 7.3. In brief what the review has clearly identified is that the offline elements, except Route Corridor 1.4, have minimal impact; whereas the online element has the potential to have a significant impact on community severance, journey length and amenity.

Mitigation measures will have to include minimising the noise and visual impacts felt by residents where the route is in close proximity to dwellings, a junction strategy which minimises as far as possible U-turn lengths and a local access strategy which reduces the community severance and journey times felt by those residents whose
properties are currently online. These are discussed in more detail in Chapter 18 'Development of the Preferred Route Corridor'.

7.8 Accessibility, Social Inclusion and Integration

As discussed in Section 7.5.3 the importance of the R280 to County Leitrim is highlighted by the County Development Plan identifying the desire to upgrade it to National Primary status. "The R.280 is the backbone of the County, linking the N.4, N.15 and N.16 National Primary Routes. This road connects Carrick-on-Shannon to Manorhamilton and onwards to the N.15 at Bundoran/Ballyshannon Bypass. It is a vital link if the north of the county is to prosper. The Council will prioritise this road for upgrading to National Route standards and will seek its designation as a National Primary Route." There is therefore a benefit to the scheme if the Emerging Preferred Route Corridor provides a connection to the R280 and in turn to most of north Leitrim. Connections to the R280 are only possible for the northern route corridors, 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 and therefore these route corridors are preferred to the southern route corridors (1.4 and 1.5) under this heading.

There are no discernible differences between any of the route corridor options in Section 2.

7.9 Ranking of Route Corridor Options

This review of the potential impacts on planning policy, land-use and socio-economic impacts allows a ranking of the route corridor options to be undertaken. Table 7.3 below highlights the ranking of each route corridor against each of the headings. The conclusion reached is that the assessment does not identify any issues which are profound enough in their impact to rule out any route corridor.

For Section 1 the primary finding of this chapter, as expected, is that Route Corridor 1.4 clearly has a significantly higher impact. This is a direct consequence of its impact on Cortober.

For Section 2 the main issue is the degree of severance which will occur as a result of the online elements of Route Corridor Options 2.2 and 2.3.
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