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Westmeath County Council

# **N4 The Downs Grade Separation Part 8 Planning Report**

B0756500 January 2010

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# Westmeath County Council N4 The Downs Grade Separation

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B0756500/P8/008 – Typical Cross Sections

B0756500/P8/009 – Structures General Arrangement

B0756500/P8/010 – Public Utilities – Proposed Diversions

# **Westmeath County Council**

## **N4 The Downs Grade Separation**

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## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Proposed Development**

Westmeath County Council have developed proposals for the improvement of the N4 National Primary Route between the N4/N52 Junction at Marlinstown, Mullingar and the N4 McNeads Bridge junction at Heathstown in County Westmeath. The location of the proposed development is shown in Drawing B0756500/P8/001. The proposed development is located in the townlands of Clongawny, Greatdown and Newdown.

The N4 is a key National Primary Route linking Dublin with Sligo and carries high volumes of mixed strategic and local traffic. Given the levels of traffic growth since the road was opened in 2001, the existing N4 with central reserve openings and number of at-grade T-junctions is a safety concern, in particular the R156 Killucan Road Junction at The Downs.

The N4 The Downs Grade Separation development proposes the closure of the existing N4/R156 Killucan Road Junction, the construction of a new grade separated junction located approximately 700m east of the existing N4/R156 junction, the construction of a single carriageway road to connect the new grade separated junction to the existing R156. The nine existing central reserve openings along the N4 between Clongawny and Newdown will be closed. The existing N4 junctions with local roads L1703 at Clongawny, LS05026 at Newdown, Old N4 at Newdown and LT56031 at Newdown and the combined access to two properties at Clongawny will be closed.

The grade separated junction will be a dumb-bell style grade separated junction comprising two roundabouts at the top of slip roads and an overbridge. A 745m reduced single carriageway connector road will be constructed from the northern roundabout of the grade separated junction to the existing R156 at the R156/LS05603 junction. A roundabout will be constructed at this junction. The local roads LT56031 at Newdown and the Old N4 at Newdown will be realigned for 230m and 350m respectively to tie in to the roundabouts at the new grade separated junction. A 480m access road will be constructed from the realigned Old N4 at Newdown to provide access to three properties. A 350m access road will be constructed at Clongawny to provide local access for two properties to the L1703.

The layout of the proposed development is shown in Drawings B0756500/P8/002 to B0756500/P8/004.

### **1.2 Benefits of The Proposed Development**

The existing nine central reserve openings, nine at-grade T-junctions and a number of private accesses along this section of the N4 result in safety being compromised. A high concentration of

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traffic collisions have been recorded in the area, particularly at the R156 Killucan Road Junction. Between 2000 and 2006, 16 minor, serious and fatal traffic collisions were recorded by An Garda Síochána along the N4 between McNeads Bridge Junction and the N4/N52 Junction at Mullingar. From the start of 2007 to May 2009, a further 18 incidents were recorded by An Garda Síochána along this section.

Closure of the five at-grade junctions, including the R156 Junction, and all of the central reserve openings will remove these significant safety hazards and provide a safer means of access for road users to the N4 National Primary Road network. The national strategic through traffic will benefit from improved economic efficiency and journey time reliability.

The proposed development will also have a beneficial impact on The Downs community with the removal of the majority of the traffic volumes, currently using the R156, leading to improvements in safety, air quality and a reduction in traffic noise for residents.

The proposed development is consistent with national transport policies. The National Development Plan 2007-2013 and Transport 21 objectives provide for the improvement of the N4 strategic route. The proposed development is also compatible with the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020, as it will improve the road transport link between the Dublin Gateway and Mullingar, part of the Midland Gateway.

The proposed development is a specific objective in the Westmeath County Council Development Plan 2008- 2014. The Development Plan objective O-IFR11 proposes the 'Closure of median openings and grade separation of Killucan Road junction'.

### **1.3 Planning and Development Regulations**

In accordance with the Planning and Development Acts 2000 - 2006, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended by Planning and Development Regulations 2006 and Planning and Development (No. 2) Regulations 2007, Westmeath County Council is making available for inspection to members of the public, documentation and drawings describing the proposed works. Drawings B0756500/P8/001 to B0756500/P8/011 should be read in conjunction with this document. The drawings that accompany this report are listed below:

B0756500/P8/001 –Location Plan

B0756500/P8/002 - 004 – Proposed Development

B0756500/P8/005 – Proposed Development and Closure of Central Reserve Openings

B0756500/P8/006 - 007 – Horizontal and Vertical Alignments

B0756500/P8/008 – Typical Cross Sections

B0756500/P8/009 – Structures General Arrangement

B0756500/P8/010 – Public Utilities – Proposed Diversions

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A copy of the Newspaper Notice for the proposed development as required by the above Regulations is included in Appendix A. A copy of the site notice to be erected on the land on which the proposed development is situated is attached as Appendix B. A list of the Bodies notified in Accordance with Section 82 of Planning and Development Regulations is included as Appendix C.

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## **2 Description of Proposed Development**

A description of the layout of the grade separated junction and the closure of the at-grade junctions and central reserve openings is provided in the following sections.

### **2.1 Design Criteria**

The proposed development has been designed in accordance with the National Roads Authority Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (NRA DMRB). An Environmental Assessment Report (EAR) has been prepared taking account of National Roads Authority Environmental Assessment and Construction Guidelines and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Guidelines.

### **2.2 Grade Separated Junction**

The proposed grade separated junction is located approximately 6 km east of Mullingar, between the existing N4/R156 Killucan Road junction and the existing LT56031 junction at Thomas Flynn & Sons agricultural business. The layout of the grade separated junction is detailed in Drawing B0756500/P8/003.

The existing N4/R156 Killucan Road junction, including the associated central reserve opening, will be closed (see location 4 on Drawing B0756500/P8/005) and replaced with a grade separated junction approximately 700 m east of the existing N4/R156 junction.

All turning movements will be facilitated by roundabouts located at the top of the east and westbound slip roads and a structure over the N4.

A 700 m single carriageway road will be provided from the northern roundabout to tie in to the existing R156 via a new roundabout located at the existing junction between the R156 and the LS05603 local road east of The Downs settlement.

### **2.3 Junction and Central Reserve Closures**

In addition to the closure of the existing N4/R156 Killucan Road junction and associated central reserve opening, a further eight central reserve openings and four local road junctions will also be closed between N4 McNeads Bridge junction and the N4/N52 junction at Mullingar as part of the proposed development. Each of these closures are described in the following section and reference should be made to Drawing B0756500/P8/005 for the locations of these proposals.

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The at-grade junction between the N4 westbound carriageway and the L1703 (Old N4) 1 km east of the N4/N52 Junction at Mullingar Junction and the central reserve opening at this location will be closed (see location 1).

Two residential properties currently have a shared private access onto the existing N4 opposite The Roadhouse restaurant in Clongawny (see location 2). This private access and the central reserve opening at this location will be closed under the proposed development. Connection to the two properties at this location will be provided via a new access road south of the N4 westbound carriageway from the L1703 (Old N4). The length of construction required for this single lane access road is approximately 350 m and it is identified as the Western Access Road on Drawing B0756500/P8/003.

The central reserve opening for the LS05720 local road traffic crossing to and from the N4 westbound carriageway will be closed under the proposed development (see location 3). The exit and entry between the LS05720 local road and the N4 eastbound carriageway at this location will be maintained as left in / left out only.

The N4/R156 Killucan Road junction at Newdown and the central reserve opening at this location will be closed (see location 4 on Drawing B0756500/P8/005). Access between the R156 and the N4 will be provided via the proposed grade separated junction and R156 Connector Road as described in Section 2.2.

The N4/LS05026 junction and associated central reserve opening will be closed (see location 5). The old N4 junction at Newdown onto the N4 westbound carriageway and associated central reserve opening will also be closed (see location 6). Under the proposed development, road users that currently access the N4 at the LS05026 junction will divert eastward and use the old N4 which will be partly realigned to tie into the southern roundabout of the new grade separated junction. The length of this section of the realigned local road is approximately 350m and is identified as the Realigned Old N4 on Drawing B0756500/P8/003.

Access to the three residential properties located to the south east of the new grade separated junction will be provided via a new access road from the Realigned Old N4. The length of this section of the realigned local access is approximately 500m and it is identified as the Southeast Access Road on Drawing B0756500/P8/003.

The LT56031 junction and associated central reserve opening at this location will be closed (see location 7). The LT56031 will be realigned over 230m to tie into the northern roundabout of the new grade separated junction.

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The central reserve opening for LT50293 local road traffic crossing to and from the N4 eastbound carriageway will be closed under the proposed development (see location 8). The exit and entry between the LT50293 local road and the N4 westbound carriageway at this location will be maintained as left in / left out only.

The central reserve opening for LT50292 local road traffic crossing to and from the N4 westbound carriageway will be closed under the proposed development (see location 9). The exit and entry between the LT50292 local road and the N4 eastbound carriageway at this location will be maintained as left in / left out only.

At each of the locations where the central reserve openings and at-grade junctions are to be closed, work will be undertaken on the pavement, kerbs, signs, road markings and vehicle restraint systems as necessary. At junctions that will be maintained for left in / left out access only, works will be undertaken to prevent right turning movements.

#### **2.4 Proposed Structure**

The proposed structure is an overbridge with full height abutments. The general arrangement of the proposed structure is shown in Drawing B0756500/P8/009.

#### **2.5 Public and Statutory Consultations**

In addition to consultation with the general public, consultations with various Statutory and Non-Statutory Organisations have been undertaken. Organisations consulted include Eastern Regional Fisheries Board, Shannon Regional Fisheries Board, Office of Public Works, Waterways Ireland, An Garda Síochána, Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG), National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and various Public Utilities including Eircom, ESB, BT and Westmeath County Council Water Services.

#### **2.6 Earthworks / Excavation**

A detailed ground investigation has been undertaken in the area of the proposed grade separated junction. Ground conditions in the area generally comprise topsoil overlying granular glacial deposits overlying Limestone bedrock. Bedrock was proven to be present locally at depths ranging from approximately 3.5m to 6.0m below ground level. Made ground was encountered in locations close to the existing N4. Peat and/or soft (organic) deposits were encountered along the northern section of the R156 Connector Road and cohesive glacial deposits were encountered locally in various areas, usually above the granular glacial deposits

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The majority of the proposed development will be built on embankments or at-grade with existing ground. Construction of the proposed development will require the excavation of the Peat/soft deposits along the northern section of the R156 Connector Road. During construction, the majority of fill material will be required to be imported to the site.

#### **2.7 Drainage**

Surface water collection will be provided by a predominantly sealed drainage system, to protect the underlying ground conditions and groundwater, and will discharge at suitable outfall locations.

The drainage for the main part of the proposed development will connect into the existing N4 mainline drainage system at points where the slip roads tie-in in to the mainline alignment. Attenuation Ponds will be provided where necessary. Carriageway surface water runoff from the R156 Connector Road will outfall into existing field ditches north of the proposed junction via suitable treatment systems.

#### **2.8 Signing and Lighting**

Cantilever gantries will be provided at the eastbound and westbound slip road exit tapers. Traffic signs for the proposed development will be provided in accordance with the Department of the Environment Traffic Signs Manual.

Street lighting will be provided at the immediate approaches to the grade separated junction roundabouts in each direction including the slip roads, realigned local roads and the across the overbridge. Lighting will also be provided at the immediate approaches to the new R156 Roundabout in each direction to aid driver visibility and safety around the junction.

#### **2.9 Public Utilities**

Existing public utilities in the area impacted by the proposed development will need to be diverted or protected to accommodate the works. Diversions of the affected services are required to a location which will not impact on the future use of the proposed development or service and will enable the safe construction of the proposed development.

All of the potentially impacted public utility providers were consulted to confirm the presence of existing utilities which could be impacted. The proposed services diversions are detailed in Drawing B0756500/P8/010. Utility diversions may be undertaken as advanced works or as part of the main construction contract.

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#### **2.10 Traffic Management**

Traffic management will be required principally in the area of the new junction and along the side roads to be realigned. Traffic management will also be required at the nine central reserve openings that will be closed and the at-grade junctions that will be closed or amended as part of the proposed development.

#### **2.11 Environmental Assessment**

An Environmental Assessment Report (EAR) has been prepared for the proposed development. As part of the EAR, a number of specialist surveys and assessments have been undertaken including human beings, flora and fauna; soils geology and groundwater, water quality, landscape and visual; air quality, noise and vibration, and cultural heritage. Further details are provided in the N4 The Downs Grade Separation Environmental Assessment Report. A summary of the results of the assessments are as follows;

- Human Beings: Moderate beneficial impact overall for the community and road users, minor negative impact on agricultural holdings;
- Flora and Fauna: Minor negative impacts due to disturbance of habitats;
- Soils, Geology and Groundwater: Negligible negative impact on soils, geology and groundwater;
- Water Quality: Minor negative impacts during construction and operation of the proposed development;
- Landscape and Visual: Moderate negative impact in the short to medium term reducing to a slight negative impact as mitigation planting develops;
- Air Quality: At a local level the proposed development will have no significant impact on air quality. At a regional level, the proposed development will result in a slight detrimental impact on background air quality; and
- Noise and Vibration: The existing noise levels are typical of a rural area influenced by a busy national road. Construction may lead to temporary adverse noise impacts at nearby residences.

#### **2.12 Cultural Heritage**

A number of sites of archaeological and cultural heritage sensitivity or areas of archaeological potential have been identified within or near to the proposed development. These sites include two levelled earthworks which are likely to be enclosures in the ringfort tradition both of which are Recorded Monuments and Places (RMP's).

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The proposed development has been designed to allow preservation of these sites in situ beneath the embankments. These proposals have been approved in principle with the National Monuments Section of the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG).

Further details of the cultural heritage assessment are provided in the N4 The Downs Grade Separation Environmental Assessment Report.

#### **2.13 Landscaping**

A landscape and visual assessment of the impacts of the proposed development has been carried out taking account of the character of the surrounding area. The effect of the proposed development on the landscape character, on the visual amenity of the surrounding area and on views of the site from public areas has been considered and mitigation planting has been proposed where necessary. This planting is proposed at locations to screen the impacts of the proposed development or to replace existing planting removed through construction. The results of the assessment are detailed in the N4 The Downs Grade Separation Environmental Assessment Report.

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**3 Land Acquisition and Accommodation Works**

The preliminary design focuses on the development of the junction design to permit Land Acquisition procedures to be undertaken. The land area to be acquired for the construction of the proposed development measures approximately 9.5 hectares (ha). Most of the land to be acquired is from agricultural holdings with some small areas of domestic properties and roadbed also affected. In total, thirteen landowners are directly affected by the proposed development. No properties will require to be demolished.

An agronomy assessment of the likely impacts on each of the individual land holdings has been undertaken. This assessment includes an estimation of the required accommodation works to mitigate impacts on these land holdings. Following consultation by an agronomist with the affected landowners, accommodation works requirements, including provision of revised access arrangements and replacement boundary fencing or walls, have been identified. .

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### **4 Submissions**

Plans and particulars of the proposed development are available for inspection during office hours up to and including Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2010 at the Mullingar Area Office, Westmeath County Council and the Westmeath County Council National Roads Design Office at the following locations:

Westmeath County Council  
Mullingar Area Office  
Foyer  
County Buildings  
Mullingar  
Co. Westmeath

Westmeath County Council  
National Roads Design Office  
Culleen Beg  
Mullingar  
Co. Westmeath

For any further queries with respect to the proposed development please contact Mr. Ambrose Clarke, Senior Executive Engineer at 044 933 4250.

Submissions and observations with respect to the proposed development dealing with the proper planning and development of the area in which the development is situated may be made to:

The Planning Section  
Westmeath County Council  
Mullingar Area Office  
County Buildings  
Mullingar  
Co. Westmeath

to reach there not later than 4.00pm on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2010.

Appendix A - Copy of Newspaper Notice of Proposed Development



## **WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006**

**In particular Planning & Development Act 2000 Section 179**

**Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (Part 8) as amended by**

**Planning and Development Regulations 2006**

**Planning and Development (No.2) Regulations 2007**

### **Public Notice**

#### **N4 The Downs Grade Separation**

Notice is hereby given in accordance with the requirements of the above Regulations, that Westmeath County Council proposes to undertake the following development.

The development will consist of:

The improvement of the N4 National Primary Route in the townlands of Clongawny, Greatdown and Newdown between the N4/N52 Junction at Marlinstown, Mullingar and the N4 McNeads Bridge junction at Heathstown comprising the closure of the existing N4/R156 Killucan Road Junction, the construction of a new grade separated junction located approximately 700m east of the existing N4/R156 junction, the construction of a single carriageway road to connect the new grade separated junction to the existing R156. The nine existing central reserve openings along the N4 between Clongawny and Newdown will be closed. The existing N4 junctions with local roads L1703 at Clongawny, LS05026 at Newdown, Old N4 at Newdown and LT56031 at Newdown and the combined access to two properties at Clongawny will be closed.

The grade separated junction will be a dumb-bell style grade separated junction comprising two roundabouts at the top of slip roads and an overbridge. A 745m reduced single carriageway connector road will be constructed from the northern roundabout of the grade separated junction to the existing R156 at the R156/LS05603 junction. A roundabout will be constructed at this junction. The local roads LT56031 at Newdown and the Old N4 at Newdown will be realigned for 230m and 350m respectively to tie in to the roundabouts at the new grade separated junction. A 480m access road will be constructed from the realigned Old N4 at Newdown to provide access to three properties. A 350m access road will be constructed at Clongawny to provide local access for two properties to the L1703.

Plans and particulars of the proposed development may be inspected at the **Westmeath County Council, County Buildings, Mullingar and the Westmeath County Council National Roads Design Office, Culleen Beg, Mullingar, between 9.00am to 1.00pm and between 2.00pm to 4.00pm each day, excluding weekends, from Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January to Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2010.**

Submissions and observations with respect to the proposed development, dealing with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, may be made in writing to Westmeath County Council, and should be addressed to:-

**The Planning Section, Mullingar Area Office, County Buildings, Mullingar, to reach there not later than 4.00pm on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2010.**

Appendix B - Copy of Site Notice



## WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006,  
In particular Planning & Development Act 2000 Section 179  
Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (Part 8) as amended by  
Planning and Development Regulations 2006  
Planning and Development (No.2) Regulations 2007

### SITE NOTICE

#### N4 The Downs Grade Separation

Westmeath County Council proposes to carry out development at this site.

The development will consist of:

The improvement of the N4 National Primary Route in the townlands of Clongawny, Greatdown and Newdown between the N4/N52 Junction at Marlinstown, Mullingar and the N4 McNeads Bridge junction at Heathstown comprising the closure of the existing N4/R156 Killucan Road Junction, the construction of a new grade separated junction located approximately 700m east of the existing N4/R156 junction, the construction of a single carriageway road to connect the new grade separated junction to the existing R156. The nine existing central reserve openings along the N4 between Clongawny and Newdown will be closed. The existing N4 junctions with local roads L1703 at Clongawny, LS05026 at Newdown, Old N4 at Newdown and LT56031 at Newdown and the combined access to two properties at Clongawny will be closed.

The grade separated junction will be a dumb-bell style grade separated junction comprising two roundabouts at the top of slip roads and an overbridge. A 745m reduced single carriageway connector road will be constructed from the northern roundabout of the grade separated junction to the existing R156 at the R156/LS05603 junction. A roundabout will be constructed at this junction. The local roads LT56031 at Newdown and the Old N4 at Newdown will be realigned for 230m and 350m respectively to tie in to the roundabouts at the new grade separated junction. A 480m access road will be constructed from the realigned Old N4 at Newdown to provide access to three properties. A 350m access road will be constructed at Clongawny to provide local access for two properties to the L1703.

Plans and particulars of the proposed development may be inspected at the **Mullingar Area Office, Westmeath County Council, County Buildings, Mullingar and the Westmeath County Council National Roads Design Office, Culleen Beg, Mullingar, between 9.00am to 1.00pm and between 2.00pm to 4.00pm each day, excluding weekends, from Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010 to Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2010.**

Submissions and observations with respect to the proposed development, dealing with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, may be made in writing to Westmeath County Council, and should be addressed to:-

**The Planning Section, Mullingar Area Office, County Buildings, Mullingar, to reach there not later than 4.00pm on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2010.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Barry Kehoe, Director of Services  
Transportation and Planning**

**DATE OF ERECTION OF SITE NOTICE: 25<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

Appendix C – Bodies notified in Accordance with Section 82 of Planning and Development Regulations

The following bodies were issued with a copy of this report in accordance with Article 82 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended-

- Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- The Heritage Council
- An Taisce
- Eastern Regional Fisheries Board
- National Roads Authority