



I INTRODUCTION

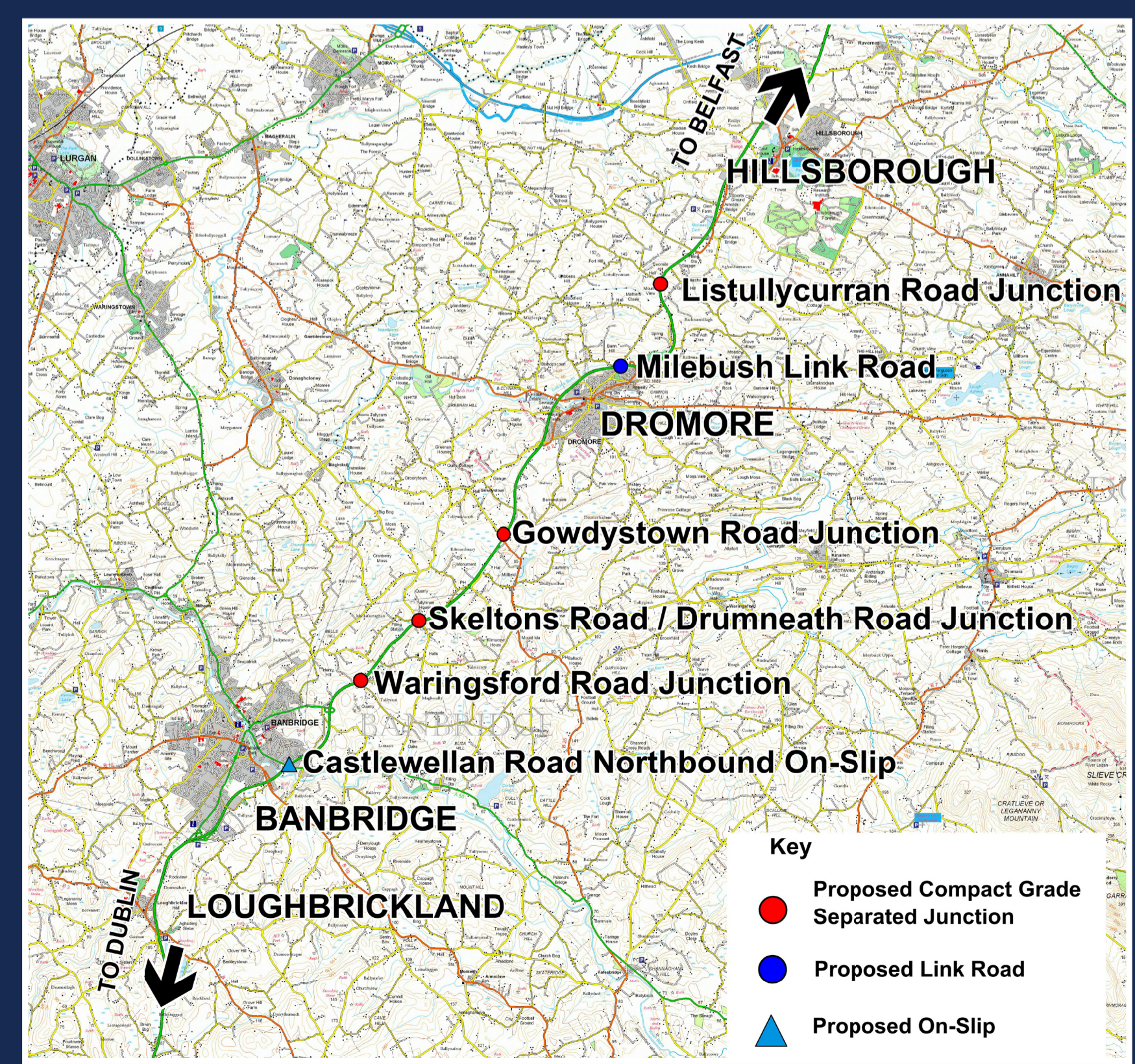
The A1 Dual Carriageway forms part of a strategically important north-south arterial route connecting the major cities and ports of Belfast and Dublin and is classified as a Key Transport Corridor (KTC) within the Regional Strategic Transport Network. Additionally the A1 also acts as the key transport link for a number of communities along its corridor and is considered to have national, regional and local significance both economically and socially.

The section of the A1 under consideration for improvement is a 25.1km long stretch of all-purpose dual carriageway, extending from the Hillsborough Roundabout in the north to Loughbrickland in the south.

This stretch of carriageway was designed and constructed to older highway standards, some sections up to forty years ago. As such, it has characteristics that are no longer considered desirable and which are presenting safety issues. In particular there are significant number of at-grade crossings and access points onto the carriageway, which are coupled with sections of poor horizontal alignment, vertical alignment, visibility and narrow central reserve.

In recent years the southern section of the A1, from Beech Hill to the border has been upgraded to a fully grade-separated high standard dual carriageway. A number of new flyover-type junctions have also been provided at strategic locations between Hillsborough and Loughbrickland.

The Stage 3 Scheme Assessment process for the Project is currently underway with the aim of producing a Stage 3 Scheme Assessment Report, Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Draft Statutory Orders. The Department is keen to obtain the views of the community on the scheme and the environmental issues associated with it.



2 BACKGROUND

Stage 1 and Stage 2 Scheme Assessments have already been carried out in accordance with TD37/93 Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).

Stage 1 and Stage 2 also included a community consultation exercise to encourage contributions and feedback from the local community and stakeholders to inform design evolution. The consultation exercise included a well advertised series of 3 Public Information events at Old Hillsborough Courthouse, Hillsborough 7th November 2013; Old Townhall Dromore 13th November 2013; Old Townhall Banbridge 19th November 2013 and a comprehensive leaflet drop to c.20,000 residences within the vicinity of proposals.

Stage 1 was completed 2011 and Stage 2 was completed 2015.

Stage 1 and Stage 2 scheme assessments together with the associated community consultation exercise identified specific concerns and aspirations for safety improvements including:

- Lack of route consistency;
- Issues associated with right turning and u-turning vehicles;
 - » Sub-standard right turn facilities resulting in vehicles overhanging or encroaching into the offside lane;
 - » Weaving vehicles;
 - » Vehicles pulling into the offside lane from side roads;
 - » Multiple vehicles waiting within the central median;
 - » Steeply inclined accommodation crossings
- Gaps in the central reserve permitting crossing manoeuvres;
- Geometric layout of certain junctions;
- Lack of central reserve safety barrier along most of the route;
- Limited weaving lengths between grade-separated junctions and minor road junctions and accesses; and
- Inconsistent and unreliable journey times.

The proposed option brought forward to Stage 3 incorporates the outcomes of the previous assessment stages and also considers the feedback received during the previous community consultation exercise.

3 PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The primary purpose of this Project is to consider safety concerns and propose further road improvements along the A1 between Hillsborough Roundabout and Loughbrickland.

Proposals include:

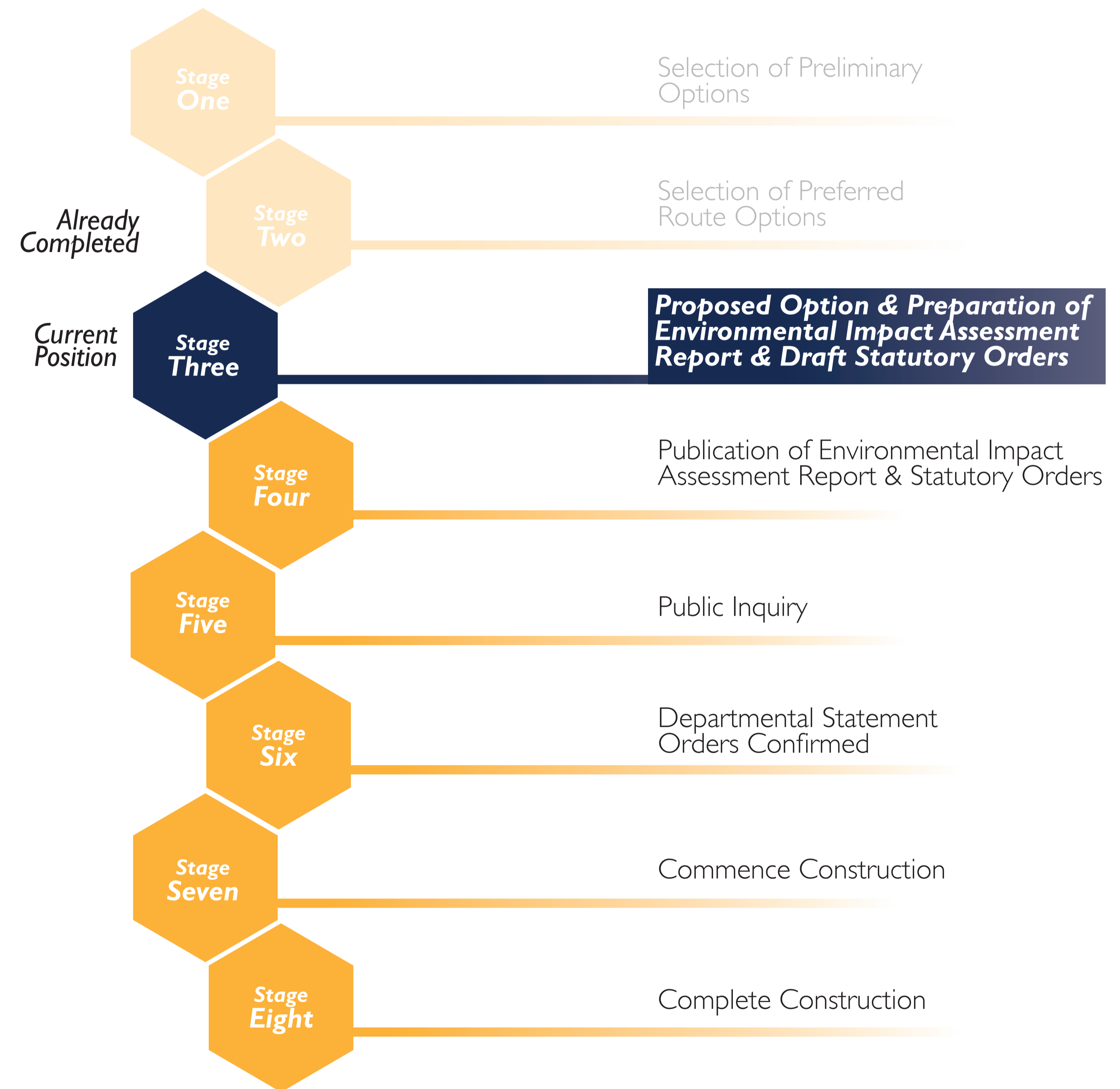
- Closure of all gaps in the central reserve between Hillsborough Roundabout and Loughbrickland;
- Provision of a continuous central reserve safety barrier between Hillsborough Roundabout and Loughbrickland;
- A northbound on-slip to the A1 from Castlewellan Road, Banbridge;
- The grade separation of 4 junctions as follows:
 - » Listullycurran Road
 - » Gowdystown Road
 - » Skeltons Road/Drumneath Road
 - » Waringsford Road;
- Closure of selected side road junctions - of the existing thirty-six minor road junctions within the scheme extents, 8 minor side roads are to be closed and twenty-two are to be retained, operating as left-in / left-out only. The remaining minor road junctions are to be incorporated into the proposed Compact Grade Separated Junctions (CGSJs);
- Provision of a link road between Milebush Road and the Hillsborough Road Compact Grade Separated Junction (CGSJ), Dromore; and
- Rationalisation / relocation of existing mainline bus-stops to adjacent junction locations.

A compact grade separated junction (CGSJ) provides a safer means of crossing high speed routes for all road users by removing right turn manoeuvres. It enables drivers to access side roads on both sides of the carriageway by using a combination of merge/diverge lanes and either an overbridge or an underpass. The main advantage of a CGSJ over a standard grade separated junction is that they minimise landtake and provide an economic solution for the modification of existing junctions to grade separation standards.

4 PROCESS

The power of the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to construct new and Improved roads is provided by statute under the provisions of The Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 (Article 3).

Before strategic road construction can proceed the project must pass through a number of stages, broadly summarised in the flow chart:





5 STAGE 3 SCHEME ASSESSMENT

The Stage 3 Scheme Assessment process for the Project is currently underway. The aim of Stage 3 is develop the design of the preferred option and carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to produce a Stage 3 Scheme Assessment Report, Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Draft Statutory Orders.

The primary tasks involved include:

- Complete a Preliminary Design;
- Undertake public consultation;
- Prepare a Draft Direction Order;
- Prepare a Stage 3 Scheme Assessment report including an Environmental Impact Assessment; and
- Prepare a Draft Vesting Order.

DfI is carrying out these works under the powers granted by Article 3 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993.

It should be noted that there is no planning application required for this project.

On completion of the Stage 3 Scheme Assessment, DfI will publish the Draft Direction and Vesting Orders, the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and the Stage 3 Scheme Assessment Report. Notices will be published in the local press informing the public that the draft orders and an Environmental Impact Assessment Report have been prepared.

Notices will specify the time within which objections can be made, the manner in which objections may be made and inform where the draft orders and the Environmental Impact Assessment Report may be inspected.

6 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

DfI is undertaking a Stage 3 Community Consultation event to present information of proposed road improvements along the A1 between Hillsborough Roundabout and Loughbrickland.

This community consultation process offers a further opportunity to engage with representatives of DfI and members of the project team on matters of design as well as the associated development process including preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Statutory Orders.

Furthermore the community consultation process:

- Ensures communities and stakeholders are provided with sufficient, timely information about the scheme;
- Ensures that decision making is inclusive of diverse community ideas and opinions;
- Ensures that planning, development and delivery of the project meets the 'balance of community' needs and expectations; and
- Enhances transparency and public accountability.

This consultation process aims to trigger local community and stakeholder engagement and facilitate views, comments and feedback on relevant issues associated with the scheme.

The process seeks the views of the local community, and other stakeholders to inform design approach as well as the preparation of an associated Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

This Community Consultation Process will last for 6 weeks from 5th June 2017 through to 14th July 2017.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is the process of compiling, evaluating and presenting all the likely significant environmental effects of the proposed road improvements along the A1 between Hillsborough Roundabout and Loughbrickland. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report which combines all the findings of the environmental assessments, will be produced as part of the EIA process.

Environmental impacts and assessment of the road improvements will include:

Landscape & Visual - viewpoint locations will be identified for the proposed scheme and assessments will be undertaken to determine the extent of visual impacts from the proposed development;

Noise & Vibration – Baseline noise monitoring will be undertaken to characterise the existing noise climate in the surrounding area. A noise impact assessment during construction and operation will be undertaken at the nearest noise sensitive properties;

Socio Economic – An assessment will be undertaken to determine the impacts on people's daily lives;

Soils Geology & Contaminated Land – A detailed assessment will be completed in relation to the geology, soils and potential areas of contaminated land in the study area and how these may be impacted by the proposed development;

Water Quality – A desktop assessment will be undertaken to identify all watercourses in the surrounding area. This will be used to determine the impacts on watercourses associated with development proposals;

Additional items considered as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process will include human health, land, climate, greenhouse gases and biodiversity impacts.

This community consultation process offers an opportunity via identified feedback channels to raise relevant environmental issues which should be considered as part of the ongoing environmental assessment process.

Ecology - A range of ecological assessments will be undertaken along the entire route to include Extended phase I habitat assessment, bat surveys, badger surveys and bird surveys during bird breeding season to assess the ecological impacts during construction and operational phases of the proposed development;

Air Quality – An assessment will be undertaken of construction and operation of junctions, and roads to include dust, air quality impacts and odour on the nearest sensitive receptors;

Cultural Heritage - A desktop study will be undertaken to determine all known features of cultural heritage interest in the study and this will be supplemented by baseline surveys in areas where works are proposed. A full detailed assessment of potential impacts on cultural heritage features will be undertaken; and

Flooding – Baseline surveys will be undertaken to determine areas susceptible to flooding in the study area. A full impact assessment will be undertaken to determine the impact of the proposed development in the context of existing areas prone to flooding.



Department for
Infrastructure
An Roinn
Bonneagair

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk



PANTRIDGE LINK, HILLSBOROUGH

HAVE YOUR SAY

DfI is undertaking this Community Consultation process to seek the views of members of the public, local communities, stakeholders and other interested parties in relation to the proposed works.

This community consultation will last for approximately 6 weeks from 5th June 2017 through to 14th July 2017. DfI hope to understand any other issues or concerns anyone may have to help inform proposed option refinement and the environmental impact assessment process.

If I have a query or question? How can I have this addressed?

At the Community Consultation - Please speak to one of our representatives as they are here to assist you in understanding the project proposals.

Feedback Forms - We would welcome your views and comments on the proposed project and invite you to submit your comments to our project team on the feedback forms provided. Feedback forms are also available for completion on the DfI website as well as at the unmanned exhibition displays.

Feedback can be forwarded to DfI at any stage during the Community Consultation Event (5th June – 14th July 2017) via email, website, or contacting DfI directly by telephone, or letter. Contact details are set out below.

These public events have been organised to offer all members of the local community and other interested parties an opportunity to engage directly with DfI staff and members of the appointed consultancy team.

ATTENDED COMMUNITY CONSULTATION EVENTS



ADDITIONAL UNATTENDED DISPLAYS AVAILABLE TO VIEW FROM 5TH JUNE 2017 TO 14TH JULY 2017

Dromore Town Hall, 38 Market Square,
Dromore, BT25 1AW

Hillsborough Village Centre, 7 Ballynahinch Road,
Hillsborough, BT26 6AR

Banbridge Old Town Hall, 1 Scarva Street,
Banbridge, BT32 3DA

It is important to note any comments you make to us during this consultation process will not affect your statutory rights to make further subsequent representations upon publication of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, Draft Direction and Vesting Orders

All project information will be available at:



**TransportNI.Southern@
infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**



**[https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/
articles/a1-junctions-phase-2-overview](https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/a1-junctions-phase-2-overview)**



(028) 3832 0188



**SRI Team, DfI Roads, Southern Division,
Marlborough House, Craigavon, BT64 1AD**



DUBLIN ROAD, LOUGHBRICKLAND

WHO IS THE DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) is one of nine Northern Ireland (NI) Departments. The main responsibilities of the Department are to develop infrastructure and services that are vital for everyone in NI. This includes water and sewerage networks, roads and footpaths, public transport services, vehicle regulation, road safety, driver licensing, and rivers and inland waterways.

The Department is responsible for the maintenance of over 25,000km of public roads together with about 9,700km of footways, 5,800 bridges, 290,000 street lights and 367 public car parks. DfI also has responsibility for the development of the transport network and a range of transport projects designed to improve network safety, sustainability and efficiency.

WHO IS RPS-SWECO

The RPS-Sweco Consortium (RSC) have been appointed on behalf of the Department for Infrastructure to provide technical advisory and consultancy support services to assist the Department on the A1 Junctions Phase 2 Project. As part of this role, RPS-Sweco will be required to develop the design and consider the environmental, engineering, economic, safety and traffic advantages, disadvantages and constraints of the preferred option. In particular, services will include the progression of a Stage 3 DMRB scheme assessment resulting in the production of a Stage 3 Scheme Assessment Report, Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Draft Statutory Orders.

