

Submission to the Joint Committee on Transport, Tourism & Sport
From The Joint N4 / N5 Affiliated Chambers.

(Letterkenny, Sligo, Mayo, Ballina, Carrick - on - Shannon, Roscommon, Athlone, Longford & Mullingar)

Presentation by:

Cllr. Seamus Butler – Butler Manufacturing Services & Longford Chamber of Commerce
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Mr. Ciaran Corcoran – Site Director, Abbott Longford & President of Ibec Midlands.
Mr. William Carty - Sligo Chamber of Commerce & Ret. Group Finance Director Abbott Irl.
Ms. Lisa Brady – CEO Longford Chamber of Commerce & N4 / N5 Chambers Co-ordinator.

1. Introduction: Mr. Seamus Butler

2. Road Transport Infrastructure Priorities: Dr. Brian McCann – Technical & Brexit Implications

3. Key Priorities:

- N4 Motorway from Mullingar to Rooskey- completion of all pre-construction works in the short term leading to commencement of construction by 2021
- N4 – Dromod to Carrick-On-Shannon bypass- completion of all planning and preconstruction works leading to commencement of construction by 2021
- N5 – Scramogue to Ballaghaderreen – construction to commence 2018 and be completed by 2021 following current pre-Construction stage
- N4 - Collooney to Castlebaldwin - construction to commence 2018 and be completed by 2020 following current pre-Construction stage
- N5 – Westport to Turlough- construction to commence 2018 and be completed by 2021 following current pre-Construction stage.

4. Current Infrastructure

The N4 and N5 beyond the M4 is primarily of single carriageway type with a deficient alignment and capacity. Large sections are close to or above capacity (TII 2017) and have collision rates which are twice that expected (TII 2015). The inefficient and unsafe nature of this strategic road infrastructure has a detrimental effect on travel times, ease and safety of movement and the wider economy.

5. Current Road Infrastructure Policy

DTTAS (2015) Investing in Our Transport Future- Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport is designed to lead Government policy and influence the development of the National Planning Framework in terms of transport infrastructure planning, funding and provision for the State. The relevant high level findings and priorities include to target investment to *provide access to poorly served regions*, for large-scale employment proposals, to complete missing links and address critical safety issues. It also identifies that present funding levels are not sufficient to maintain the existing land transport network and that there is no scope for investment in infrastructure improvements to cater for future demand growth and to support competitiveness and economic development.⁶⁵.

6. Brexit Effect on N4/N5 traffic

The DTTAS All Ireland Sectoral Dialogue on Transport consultation with stakeholders in January 2017 concluded that disruption to current access arrangements between North and South will have major implications for the economy. Almost 26% of Irish imports come from the UK and North/South trade is estimated at €3b annually. Concerns were expressed that new border and regulatory

controls, additional administrative arrangements and technical requirements will be detrimental to transport operators and the economy, increase the cost of doing business and have a negative impact on the efficiency of transit of goods and people.

Depending on Border outcomes from Brexit the N4 Corridor usage could significantly increase, we need the infrastructure in place to mitigate this risk.

7. Recommendations:

Due to the current and projected increased levels of traffic expected to access the West, BMW and North-west regions it is imperative that:

A. The radial primary route network from Dublin is completed with the deficient N4 and N5 upgraded to dual carriageway status by extension of the M4 from Mullingar to Longford to service both N4 and N5 destinations and the wider region with a safe and efficient road network.

B. The N4 and N5 beyond Longford are upgraded to an appropriate dual carriageway road type and that all proposed road schemes are accelerated to ensure the safety and efficiency of transit for the population, tourism and business in the region and the wider economy are not further impacted by the threats of Brexit and the growing economy.

8. Ciaran Corcoran – Business Implications

Capital Plan is tight and up for review - it provides €6 billion for investment in the roads network in the period to 2022, with €4.4 billion (73%) earmarked for the maintenance of the existing extensive network and €1.6 billion for new projects so we all agree that resources are scarce and apart from Brexit as mentioned already, the other key reason why the N4/N5 priorities should be at the top of the agenda for the Capital review is to ensure we have balanced regional investment and by default the only gap in the radial network is the deficit in road infrastructure along the N4 Corridor to the Northwest.

This region serves a population of approx 650,000 and it is long overdue that this is the area which must attract urgent investment to redress that imbalance.

It is important in this context to use any uplift in spending to pick the right projects, ones which will enhance regional development and address the infrastructure gaps.

The N4 is a high value project in this context and having been part of the capital plan over a decade ago we must now prioritise investment here once again.

Other Implications from a Business Perspective:

- Certainty
- Competitiveness
- Social Implications
- Improved Accessibility
- Positive Impression
- Talent

Of 55 currently suspended road projects 26 (47%) are in the counties surrounding the N4. A failure to address regional infrastructure deficits will be continued growth in housing costs, urban sprawl, congestion and pollution in urban centres like Dublin. Dublin is already one of Europe's most congested cities. By having the N4 infrastructure gaps addressed this can be a solution to some of these risks.

9. Conclusion

Table 1: IDA jobs and growth by region 2012 to 2016.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Change	% change, 2012 – 2016
Dublin & Mid-East	76,104	80,937	84,296	89,413	95,054	18,950	24.9%
Midlands	3,937	3,915	4,023	4,222	4,280	343	8.7%
Mid-West	13,900	14,107	14,714	15,627	17,143	3,243	23.3%
North East	3,573	4,281	4,654	4,747	5,126	1,553	43.5%
North West	5,304	5,059	5,237	5,562	5,742	438	8.3%
South East	12,072	12,003	12,462	13,826	14,403	2,331	19.3%
South West	27,921	29,064	30,319	34,232	36,059	8,138	29.1%
West	18,171	18,956	19,512	20,406	22,070	3,899	21.5%
Totals	160,982	168,322	175,217	188,035	199,877	38,895	24.2%

