

Approved Options Study (Stage 2)

Engineering, Environmental and Economic assessments were carried out on the Red, Green and Blue Routes. The information from consultations with the statutory organisations and the Public Exhibition was considered in detail. In response to the output and feedback of these studies and consultations, some variations were introduced on each of the three routes. These refinements have been considered with the objective of minimising the impact of any particular route on landowners and the environment.

The following key issues were considered in arriving at the preferred route:

- Upgrading the existing A1 (the Blue option) will create a substantial barrier through the City and do little to reduce the conflict between strategic and local traffic in the Fiveways roundabout area.
- Removal of the through traffic from the city will allow the existing road to act more effectively as a local distributor serving the Northern and Western parts of the City.
- The off-line route options will cause the least disruption to the City of Newry and motorists travelling on the A1 during the construction phase.
- Of the off-line options, the variation on the Green route takes the shortest line across existing farmland, minimising severance and keeping the impact on properties to a minimum.
- As the variation on the Green route crosses significantly less farmland the length of hedgerows affected, and their associated habitats, will be minimised.
- The northern most junction on the Green route will be situated two kilometres closer to Newry than the equivalent junction on the Red route. This will provide a better link to Newry and onward to Warrenpoint when approaching from the North.
- As many cultural heritage sites are present in the area, ongoing assessment of the developing scheme will be undertaken to identify appropriate mitigation measures.

The Way Forward

Work is now continuing with the design of the preferred route and more detailed studies of the environmental and engineering issues. The scheme will now be taken forward in accordance with the relevant environmental, Direction Order and land acquisition statutory procedures.

These procedures will provide the public and statutory consultees with an opportunity for formal comment, including objections. Public Inquiries may be held to determine whether or not the scheme should go ahead as proposed. The timing of the commencement of the scheme will therefore depend on the progress of these procedures. It is unlikely that construction work will start before 2005/2006.

Public Announcement

A1 Beech Hill to Cloghogue, Newry

September 2003

At a Public Exhibition in February 2003, Roads Service presented three proposed route options (Red, Green and Blue) for a new high standard dual carriageway on the A1 between Beech Hill and Cloghogue.

The objective of the exhibition was to inform people of the options under consideration and seek comments to assist in route selection and design development.

Following consideration of feedback from the Public Exhibition, taking account of local issues, knowledge and comment, and on the continuing assessment of environmental engineering and economic issues, the Roads Service has now decided on the preferred route.

The preferred route is a variation of the Green Route

The preferred route, shown overleaf, will now be developed further and progressed through the necessary statutory procedures. Further details of the selection process and a brief explanation of the next stages of the project are included in this leaflet.

A1 Beech Hill - Cloghogue

Preferred Route

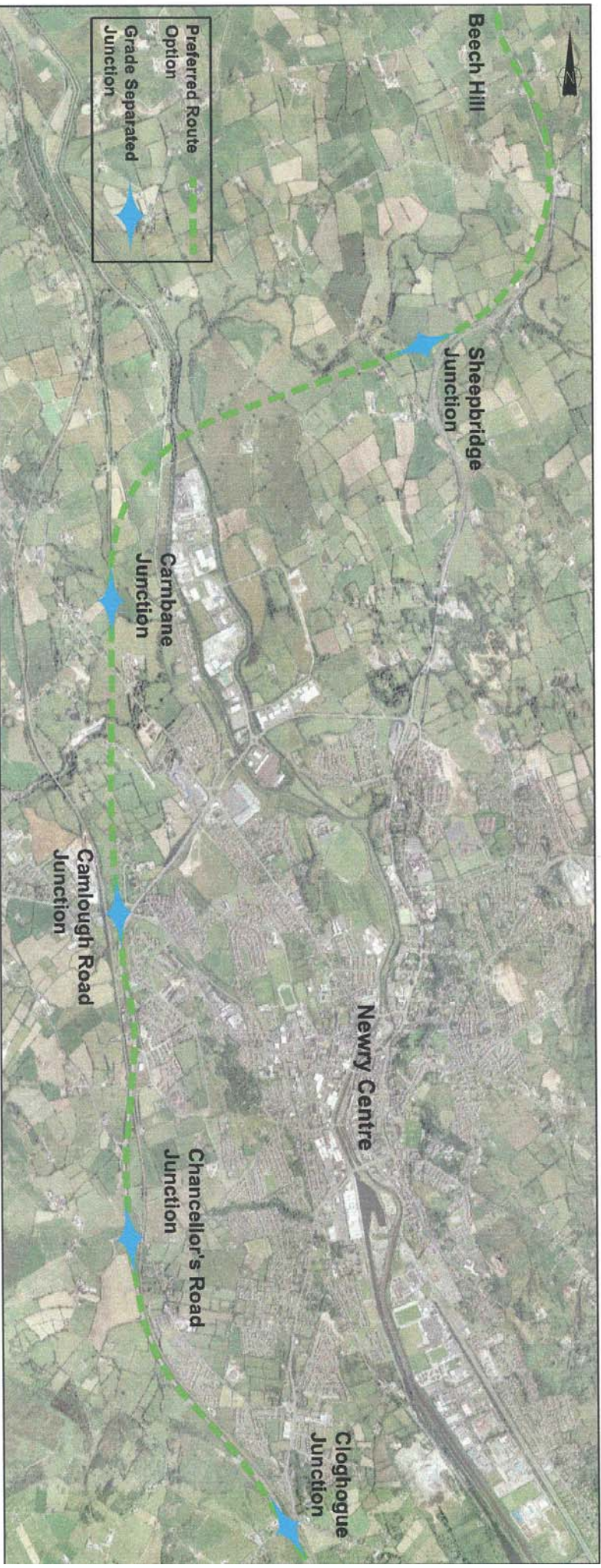
Background

The A1 route from Beech Hill to Cloghogue forms part of the Strategic North-South link between Belfast and Dublin. It is one of the Key Transport Corridors identified in the Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland.

The A1 is progressively being upgraded to dual carriageway standard. The Beech Hill to Cloghogue scheme is the final section to be considered for dualising. It will link between the Loughbrickland to Beech Hill Scheme, which is expected to commence in 2004, and the Newry to Dundalk Scheme, which is currently being progressed through the Statutory Procedures.

Public Consultation

The public exhibition was held for three days in Newry Arts Centre and was attended by over 450 members of the public, which demonstrated a considerable interest in the proposals. A questionnaire was provided to all attendees at the exhibition and 280 completed questionnaires were returned.



The returned questionnaires were analysed and revealed the following:

- 97% of the responses wanted the A1 improved around Newry
- The most important issues raised were:
 - Improve road safety
 - Minimise the effect on people living near the corridor
 - Minimise the impact on property
- A significant majority were opposed to the Blue Route, i.e. the route adjacent to the existing Carnbane/Fiveways Roundabout area. Of the other two (off-line) routes, a majority favoured the Green Route.