



Tionscatal Éireann  
Project Ireland  
2040

# N20

Cork to Limerick



N/M20 Cork to Limerick Improvement Scheme

# PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Long Brochure - English

November 2020

# Project Description



Limerick City and County Council, in partnership with Cork County Council, Cork City Council, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the Department of Transport are developing the N/M20 Cork to Limerick project.

The 2040 National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan 2018-2027 establish a minimum target population growth of 50% by 2040 for Cork and Limerick, with these cities being the second and third largest in Ireland respectively, by population. Although these cities are only approximately 100km apart, there are limited economic links and little evidence of agglomeration (economic interaction) between the two. This is due, in part, to the shortcomings in transport links.

Good transport links are essential for economic sustainability and development. Improving connectivity by reducing journey times, improving journey time reliability and improving safety will support in the enhancement of economic growth. An improved transport network between Cork and Limerick has been identified in the 2018-2027 National Development Plan as a major enabler for balanced regional development.

The overarching project objective for the N/M20 Cork to Limerick project is:

To enable national and regional planning policies, particularly those supporting the National Strategic Outcomes of the National Planning Framework to promote balanced regional development, through enhanced population and economic growth.

This is to be achieved by improving connectivity between the cities of Cork and Limerick, and ultimately Galway, by:

- Reduced land transport journey times,
- Improved journey time reliability, and
- Facilitating the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services on the transport network both now and in the future.



# Project Background



Since the identification and appraisal of the preferred route for the M20 Cork Limerick Motorway Scheme in 2010, there have been many changes to design standards, environmental legislation and economic appraisal assessment criteria for locating and developing schemes. Therefore, the scheme had to 'start again' and be assessed in accordance with current legislation, design standards and appraisal requirements in line with the Government's Public Spending Code.

The work completed in Phase 1 (Concept and Feasibility), identified the preferred road-based scenario as being broadly within the N20 corridor via Charleville and Mallow. This road-based scenario performed best overall in relation to the project objectives following appraisal of seven road-based scenarios. (For more detail please see Project Website for Phase 1 Update)

As part of the assessment of alternative options, two rail-based scenarios were identified in Phase 1, one involving improved service frequency with through services at Limerick Junction on the existing line, the other providing a new direct line between Charleville and Limerick which would connect with the existing Cork to Charleville rail line.

In the current Phase 2 (Option Selection) work, the project team has developed road-based and rail-based options in the broad N20 corridor to connect Cork and Limerick.



In 2019, Limerick City and County Council appointed Barry Transportation and its project partners Sweco and WSP (BSW) as Technical Advisor to progress the planning and design for the N/M20 Cork to Limerick Road Improvement Scheme. BSW has been commissioned to deliver the planning and development of the scheme through Phases 1 to 4 of Transport Infrastructure Ireland's Project Management Guidelines encompassing Concept and Feasibility, Option Selection, Design and Environmental Evaluation, and Statutory Processes.

# Project Phases

## Phases:

The Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Project Management Guidelines (PMG) provide a framework for a phased approach to the management of the development and delivery of National Road and Public Transport Capital Projects as outlined below;

Planning and Design	Phase 0	Scope and Pre-Appraisal
	Phase 1	Concept and Feasibility
	Phase 2	Option Selection
	Phase 3	Design and Environmental Evaluation
	Phase 4	Statutory Processes
Construct/ Implement	Phase 5	Enabling and Procurement
	Phase 6	Construction and Implementation
	Phase 7	Close Out and Review

## What's happening now:

The scheme development is currently at Phase 2 Option Selection, which comprises two stages. During the recently completed Stage 1 of this phase, the project team considered the identified constraints to develop a range of technically feasible road-based and rail-based options within the study area.

In Stage 1, 18 road-based options between the outskirts of Cork and Limerick were initially assessed under three criteria; Engineering, Environment and Economy. The assessments enabled the better performing road-based options to be identified, and also determined that a number of options will not be given further consideration.

As a part of the consideration of alternatives for provisions of an improved transport link between Cork and Limerick, three rail-based options have been developed to improve rail service journey times and frequency between the cities.

During this public consultation we are inviting feedback on the road-based and rail-based options being proposed for further examination. Please note that the options are being appraised on the basis of 500m wide corridors within which option alignments have the potential to be developed. Such design development will be undertaken for the preferred option in Phase 3 when the overall extent of the proposed works will be defined.

Please carefully consider all of the options and submit your comments by completing and returning the feedback form, making a written submission or scheduling an online or telephone meeting with one of the team.

## Next Steps:

The feedback and submissions received through this public consultation will be considered by the project team in Stage 2 of the option selection phase. Stage 2 will involve further refinement of the road-based and rail-based options followed by appraisal under the following criteria:

- Safety,
- Economy,
- Environment,
- Accessibility and Social Inclusion,
- Integration, and
- Physical Activity.

The Stage 2 assessment and appraisal will lead to the identification of the best performing option or combination of options, which will be taken forward as the preferred option. This will be displayed at a future public consultation, which is expected to take place in Summer 2021.

---

# Developing Options

---

## Guiding Principles:

The guiding principles for developing options to be considered during the Preliminary Options Assessment are as follows;

- They are technically feasible.
- They are significantly different from each other, and
- They are designed with environmental considerations in mind from the start of the process

## Environmental Principles:

Environmental considerations are taken into account from the start of the process in order to minimise the impact of options on their environs where possible.

Environmental constraints are a combination of physical features that can be easily seen and less obvious constraints such as flora, fauna or underground features.

In developing options, our objective is to avoid environmental constraints where possible, including;

- Settlements and economic centres – cities, towns, villages, residential properties, businesses and agricultural enterprises,
- Physical topography – high ground and deep valleys,
- National Parks & Wildlife Services Designated Sites – Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHA),
- Cultural Heritage Sites (Archaeological and Architectural Heritage),
- Locally important sites – historical, recreational or services,
- Floodplains, and
- Groundwater and Geology – water source protection and karst features.



## Stage 1 - Preliminary Options Assessment:

Multi criteria analysis (MCA) is used to assess all feasible options under the assessment criteria of Engineering, Environment and Economy, which results in a refined number of options called a shortlist.

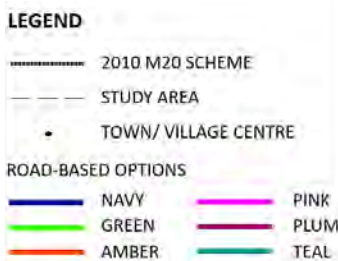
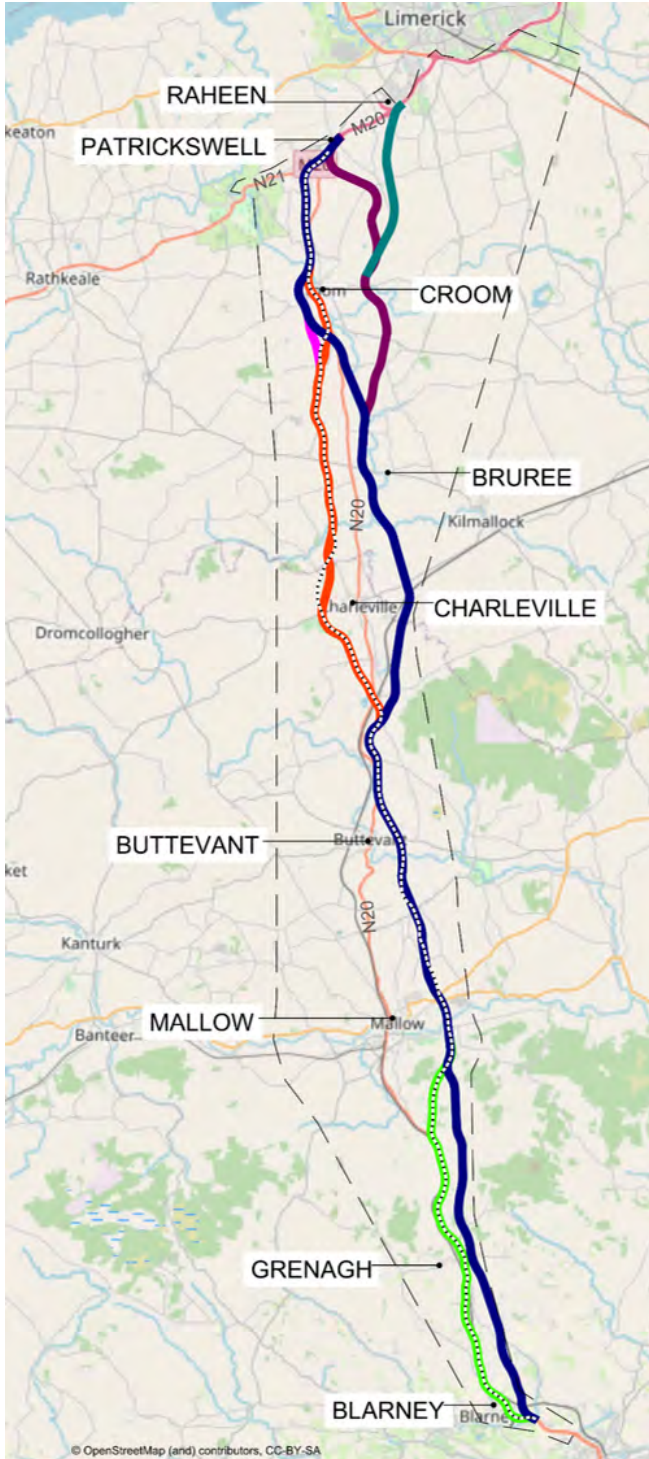
The shortlisted options developed by the project team in Stage 1 are now being presented to the public as part of this consultation.



# Road-Based Options -Part 1

The road-based options have been developed to provide improved routes between Cork and Limerick by road, providing new routes (off-line) or upgrades of the existing road (on-line). Options can be completely on-line, off-line or a mixture of both

It is assumed that the new road-based options would either be a high quality dual carriageway or a motorway with grade separated junctions.



The shortlisted options are presented as distinct non-overlapping colours. There is a facility for the public to view the options in more detail through the interactive mapping tool in the virtual public consultation and subsequently on the project website.

Pinch points in the study area can emerge where the available space for options is restricted due to physical, environmental or other constraints resulting in options converging and sharing common sections.

The option elements can be linked together in various combinations. These will be comparatively assessed to select the best performing overall road-based option, which will be appraised with the rail-based options to identify the overall Preferred Option.

Due to physical constraints, all the road-based options start on the existing N20 at Blarney but there are 3 potential end points being considered at the northern end; the M20 Junction 5 (Attyflin), the M20 Junction 4 (Patrickswell) or the M20 Junction 3 (Raheen).

Between Blarney and south of Mallow the elements (Green and Navy) offers an on-line versus off-line comparison.

Heading northwards the elements converge offline, east of the existing N20 to the south of Mallow, following Navy to south of Charleville.

From south of Charleville to south of Croom the elements (Amber and Navy) offer a west versus east comparison. Whilst at Croom the Pink, Amber and Navy elements offer off-line versus on-line comparisons. Heading north from Croom these elements converge, mostly on-line, following Navy to an end point at Attyflin.

To the east of the existing N20, on the Navy between Bruree and Croom, there is an opportunity to diverge further east following the Plum element to an end point at Patrickswell.

As a further variant there is another diverge eastward following the Teal element to an end point at Raheen. An option further west at the existing N20, from south of Mallow to Charleville was also examined. However, it was deselected as a poor performer against the elements presented in the shortlist.

Also for comparative purposes the historic 2010 M20 scheme is shown highlighting its continued inclusion in the assessment process.

# Road-Based Options -Part 2

The targeted improvement road-based options involve varying degrees of improvement to the existing N20 road, providing combinations of localised works, local town bypasses and off-line dual carriageways. In contrast with the other road-based options, these targeted improvement options represent less significant extents of new works and make significantly more use of the existing N20 road.

Proposed localised improvements include works to the existing N20 to address road alignment and/or junctions that do not meet current design standards or sections of road that are identified as collision blackspots.

Local bypasses of towns along the existing N20 will be developed where a need is identified, junction improvements will be developed to improve junction capacity where necessary and off-line dual carriageway sections will be introduced where justified by the anticipated traffic volumes.

East and west localised bypasses for Buttevant and Charleville have been considered with the better performing shortlisted for further consideration.

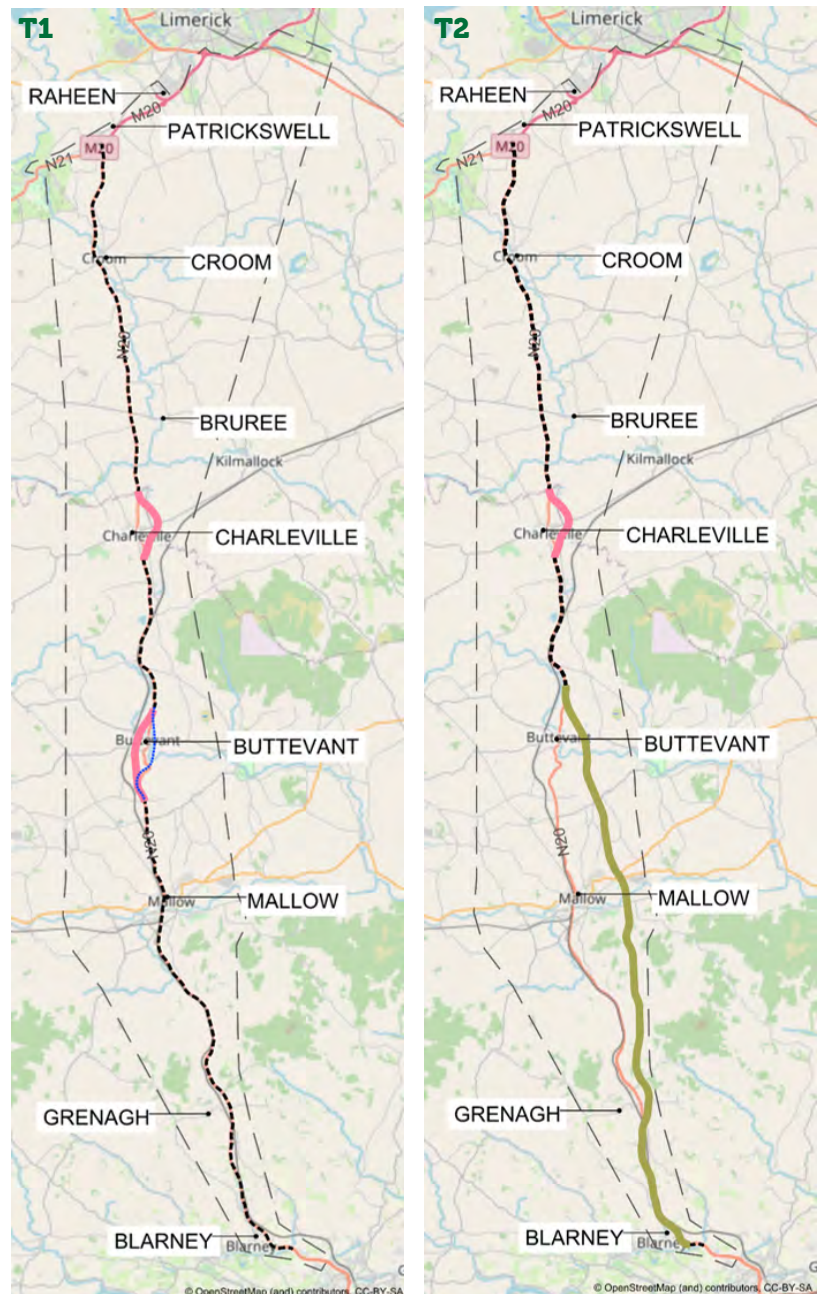
## Road-based Option T1

This option comprises localised on-line improvements on the existing N20 to address collision blackspots, road alignment and junction issues. Safety and capacity improvements of the existing N20 junctions through Mallow are being assessed and considered. Local bypasses of Buttevant and Charleville are also being considered.

## Road-based Option T2

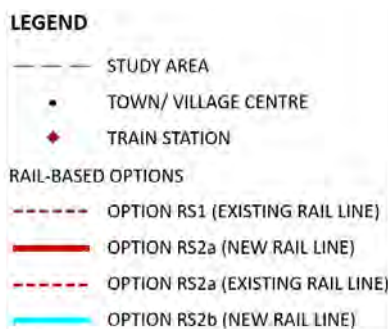
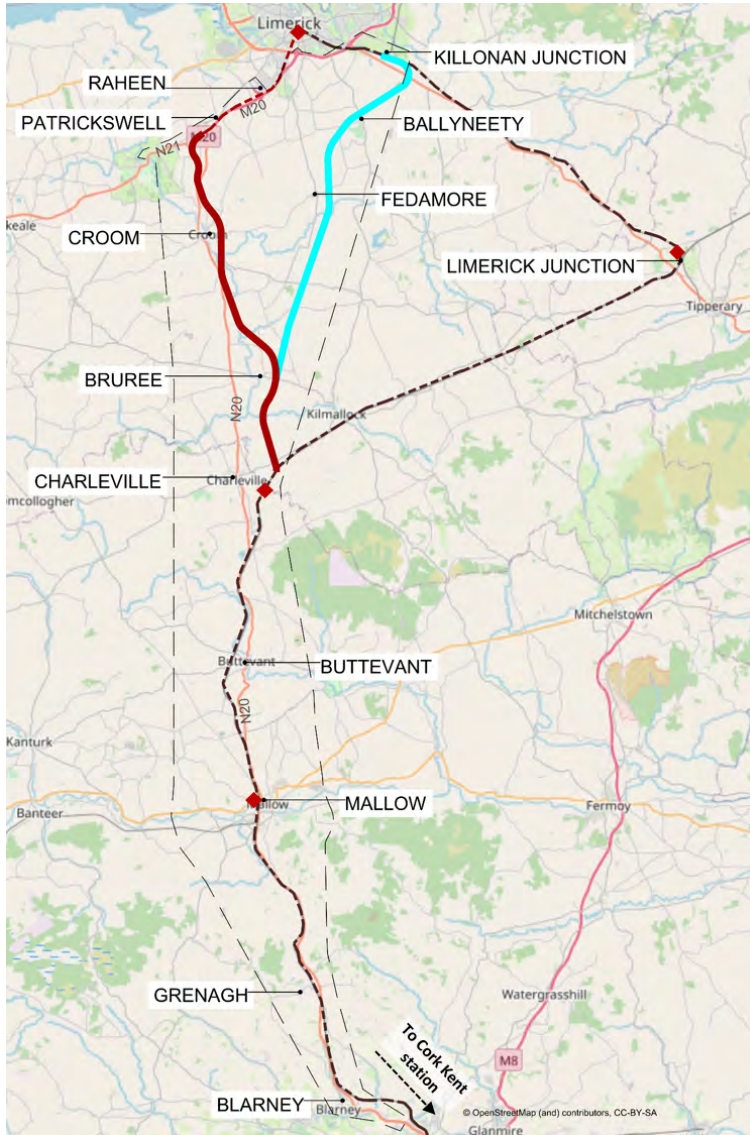
To address the heavily trafficked section between Cork and Mallow, this option comprises a dual carriageway running from Blarney to north of Buttevant, initially online, then offline to the east of the existing N20. This is combined with localised on-line improvements on the existing N20 to address collision blackspots, road alignment and junction issues. A local bypass of Charleville is also being considered.

An alternative option similar to Option T2 was considered running parallel to the west of the existing N20 from Blarney to north of Buttevant but it was deselected when finalising the shortlisted options, on the basis that the alignment to the west performed less favourably under the criteria of engineering, environment and economy, particularly due to environmental impacts.





# Rail-Based Options



Rail-based options are being considered to improve connectivity between Cork and Limerick. These options involve doubling the rail service frequency by providing a new “no-change” service running on either the existing rail lines or on a mix of using the existing together with a new rail line north of Charleville.

The existing rail services runs approximately every hour between Cork and Limerick and takes on average 100 minutes. It stops at Mallow, Charleville (not all services) and Limerick Junction (where passengers are required to change for the train to Limerick which can take up to 15 minutes).

Dashed lines indicate existing rail lines and the bold lines indicate sections of proposed new rail line.

## Rail-Based Option RS 1

New “no change” service using existing Cork to Limerick rail lines. This rail-based option results in a doubling of rail service frequency to half-hourly between Cork and Limerick. The new service would stop at Mallow, Charleville and Limerick Junction.

## Rail-Based Option RS 2a

New “no-change” service using the existing rail line from Cork to Charleville with a new rail line provided between Charleville and Limerick using part of the former Limerick to Foynes rail line. This rail-based option results in a doubling of rail service frequency to half-hourly between Cork and Limerick. The new service would stop at Mallow, Charleville and potential new stations.

## Rail-Based Option RS 2b

New “no change” service using the existing rail line from Cork to Charleville with a new rail line provided between Charleville and the east of the Limerick metropolitan area and then using part of the existing Limerick/Limerick Junction rail line. The new service would stop at Mallow, Charleville and potential new stations.



# Active Travel



## Benefits:

Active Travel can help:

- Support local businesses,
- Boost tourism,
- Improve our health,
- Improve air quality,
- Reduce congestion,
- Save people money.

## Objectives:

- To maintain and improve connectivity between communities along the corridor,
- To maintain connectivity between communities separated by the corridor, and
- To facilitate improved accessibility, connectivity and permeability within communities along the corridor.

## Opportunities:

The Scheme offers:

- Opportunities to integrate with the wider active travel networks, outlined in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS), the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS), the cycle hub town of Kilmallock and public transport hubs for multi-modal interchange,
- Opportunities to use the proposed transport corridor (road or rail) or the existing road network, where possible, to provide safe, segregated urban and inter-urban active travel routes,
- Liaison with local groups and the public to ensure proposed infrastructure maximises active travel preferences and addresses existing issues. Opportunity to provide views is available in the active travel section of the feedback form.





Comhairle Cathrach  
& Contae Luimnigh  
Limerick City  
& County Council



Cork  
County Council  
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí  
Cork City Council



Bonneagar Iompair Éireann  
Transport & Infrastructure Ireland



An Roinn Iompair  
Department of Transport

**N20**  
Cork to Limerick

# CONTACT INFORMATION

## Post

N/M20 Project Office  
Lissanalta House  
Dooradoyle  
Limerick  
V94 H5RR

## Phone

061 973730

## Email

[info@corklimerick.ie](mailto:info@corklimerick.ie)

## Website

[corklimerick.ie](http://corklimerick.ie)