Additional comments:
₩ DRD

Introduction

Roads Service is developing three Transport Plans to facilitate the implementation of the Regional Transport Strategy for Northern Ireland (RTS). One of these plans, the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTN TP) presents a range of multi-modal transport initiatives to manage, maintain and develop Northern Ireland's Strategic Transport Network. The implementation of the initiatives will depend on the availability of finance, relevant statutory procedures and economic appraisals. The plan includes for the connection of the M2 Ballymena Bypass underneath the Larne Road Roundabout to the A26 Ballee Road East dual carriageway. Roads Service would hope to commence construction of this within the next five years or so.

Why the Scheme is needed

The A26 is part of the Northern Key Strategic Transport Corridor connecting Belfast to Londonderry. It is the main road connecting the major hub towns of Antrim, Ballymena and Coleraine. There is an unacceptably high number of accidents where the traffic on this strategic route circulates around the Larne Road Roundabout.

Existing Conditions

The Larne Road Roundabout at Ballymena currently joins the Ballee Road East dual carriageway to the Ballymena Bypass and the A36 radial route connecting Ballymena to Larne. This large five-arm roundabout includes two underbridges originally planned to allow the Ballymena Bypass to be continued underneath the roundabout.

North of the roundabout the Ballymena Bypass is dual 2-lane motorway carrying flows in excess of 25,500 vehicles per day. South west of the roundabout Ballee Road East is 2-lane all-purpose dual carriageway carrying flows in excess of 22,500 vehicles per day. About 15,000 vehicles per day is long distance north south strategic traffic passing straight through the roundabout. This long distance strategic traffic conflicts with local traffic negotiating the roundabout and results in queues and delays at peak times. The high speeds on the large roundabout are a contributory factor in the unacceptably high number of accidents at this junction. There have been 39 Personal Injury Accidents at the Larne Road Roundabout in the last 4 years (2000-2004), twice the national average.

Scheme Proposal

This leaflet describes a proposal for a dual carriageway link road underneath the Larne Road Roundabout to provide a direct connection between the Ballymena Bypass and Ballee Road East, allowing strategic north south traffic to continue uninterrupted underneath the Larne Road Roundabout. The geometry of the roundabout underbridges, the motorway to the north and the dual carriageway to the south west fixes the line of the proposed all-purpose dual carriageway link road.

The new dual carriageway link road would be approximately 1.6 kilometres long and would include new merge and diverge facilities to the south of the existing "half diamond" interchange at Larne Road Roundabout. It is

likely that some property demolition would be necessary and alternative links would be provided to connect the remaining properties to the local road network. East of the new link road, the Liminary Road from Kells would be realigned to connect directly to the Larne Road Roundabout. West of the new link the redundant part of Ballee Road East would retain its connection with the Larne Road Roundabout and would continue to service Pennybridge Industrial Estate; it may also offer possible future access to lands south west of Pennybridge Industrial Estate, which are zoned for industry and housing.

Environmental Effects

Roads Service attaches great importance to environmental issues. An assessment of the environmental advantages and disadvantages and constraints associated with the link road has been considered to determine if the link is viable. A detailed Environmental Assessment will be carried out on the route option as it progresses towards construction. This will also identify mitigation measures to minimise any adverse environmental effects of the scheme.

Other Options Considered

The redundant northbound lane of Ballee Road East was considered as an off-slip from the proposed link road to the Larne Road Roundabout. This was rejected because of possible conflict between slow moving traffic accessing Pennybridge Industrial Estate and fast moving traffic diverging from the proposed link road.

Bridging the Liminary Road over the proposed link road was considered, this would have maintained the Liminary Road connection to the redundant part of Ballee Road East. This was rejected because of unacceptable geometry and possible demolition of property on the Liminary Road

Commenting on the Proposals

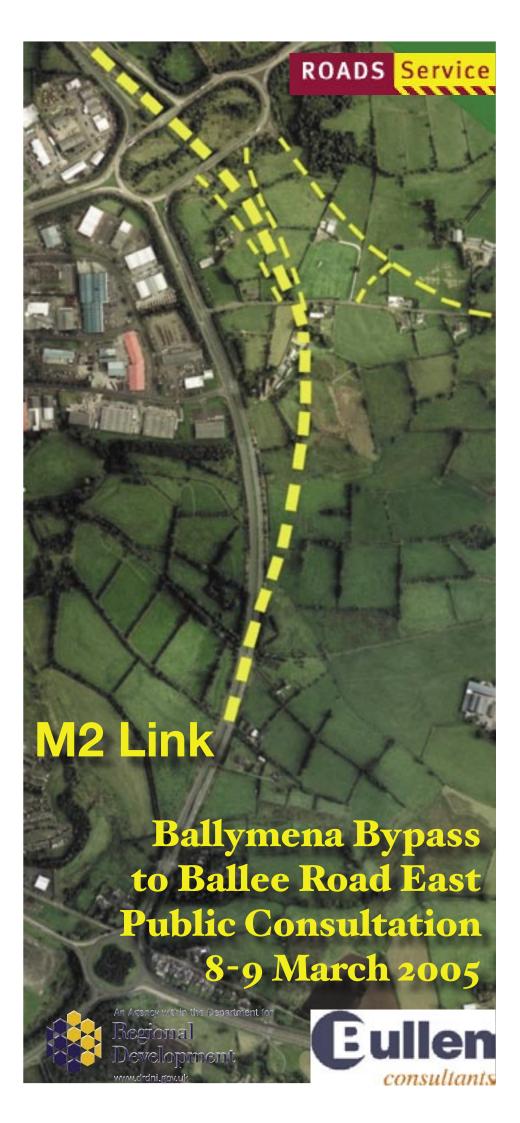
Roads Service would like to hear you views. A questionnaire will be available for completion at the exhibition. Alternatively you may send your comments by e-mail to roads.northern@drdni.gov.uk or by post to the Strategic Road Improvement Manager, Roads Service – Northern Division, County Hall, Castlerock Road, Coleraine BT51 3HS to reach Roads Service before 21 March 2005.

What Happens Next?

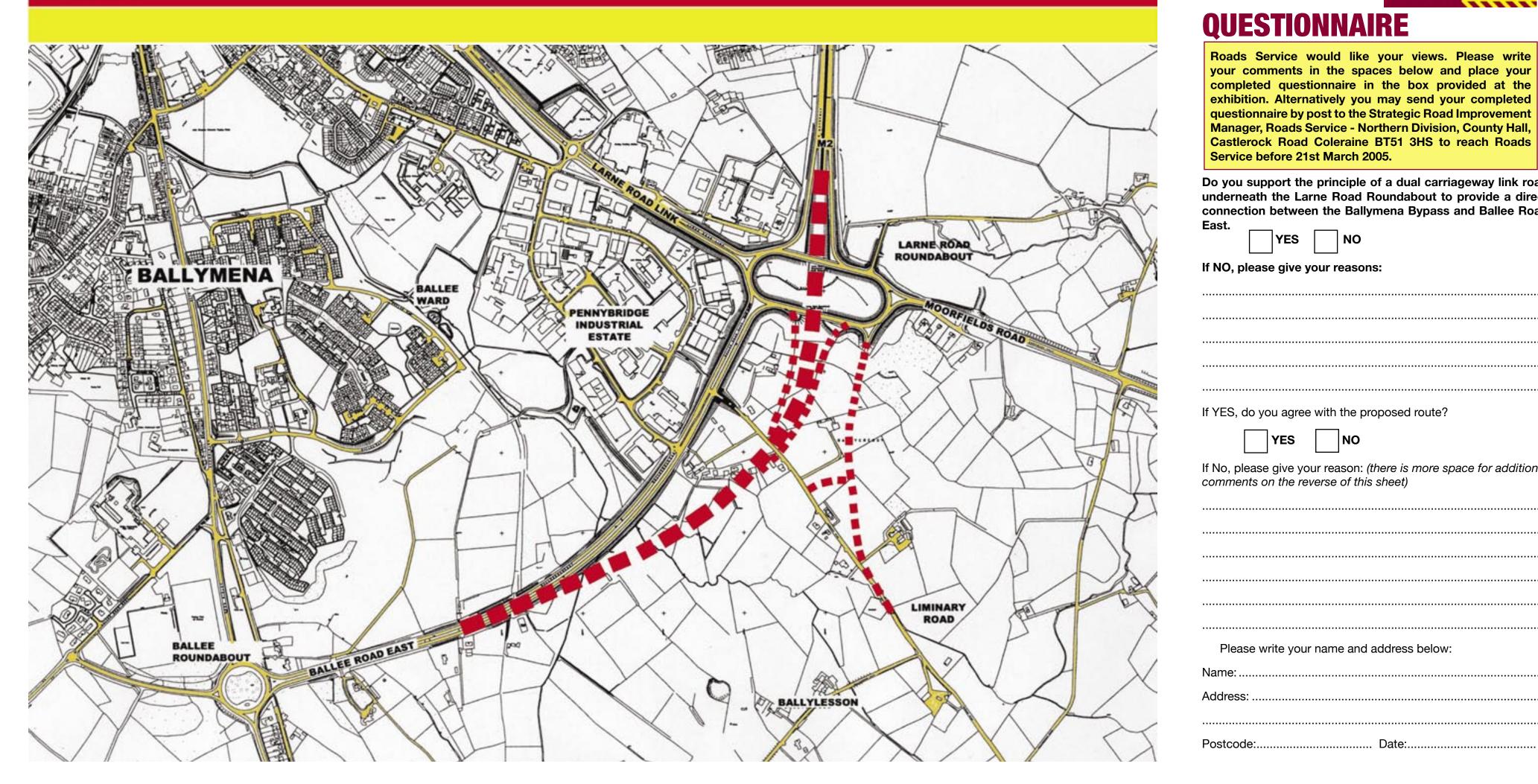
Before construction of the scheme can begin Roads Service is required to complete a number of statutory procedures, which will include opportunity for further public consultation and comment. Notices published in the local press will include:

- Where the statutory procedures may be inspected; and
- Where written comment may be submitted.

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Route Option





QUESTIONNAIRE

Roads Service would like your views. Please write your comments in the spaces below and place your completed questionnaire in the box provided at the exhibition. Alternatively you may send your completed questionnaire by post to the Strategic Road Improvement Manager, Roads Service - Northern Division, County Hall, Castlerock Road Coleraine BT51 3HS to reach Roads Service before 21st March 2005.

Do you support the principle of a dual carriageway link road underneath the Larne Road Roundabout to provide a direct connection between the Ballymena Bypass and Ballee Road East.
YES NO
If NO, please give your reasons:
If YES, do you agree with the proposed route?
YES NO
If No, please give your reason: (there is more space for additional comments on the reverse of this sheet)
Please write your name and address below:
Name:
Address: