

DRAFT TOLL SCHEME FOR THE M3 CLONEE to KELLS MOTORWAY

Draft opening statement

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, my name is Dom Hegarty. I am the Inspector appointed by the National Roads Authority to hold this oral hearing into objections received in relation to the Draft toll scheme for the M3 Clonee to Kells Motorway. I am a Chartered Town Planner and Civil Engineer.

I shall commence proceedings by reading out the warrant appointing me -----**READ**.

In order to assist me in the preparation of my report, stenographers are here present. Each person wishing to speak and/or give evidence should, therefore, approach and speak into one of the microphones situated around the room, identifying themselves, if they would, each time.

Description

The explanatory statement accompanying the Draft Scheme sets out the location of the road in question. Basically, the road in respect of which a system of tolls is proposed, is a stretch of motorway which will run from a location north of Clonee in county Meath, commencing at the proposed Pace interchange, and terminating at the end of the motorway just south west of Kells. The total length of road intended to be designated as a motorway and forming part of the M3/N3 national primary route, is approximately 47 km.

The Draft Toll Scheme has the following basic provisions:

- description of the proposed road to be tolled (as I have outlined above)
- The classes of vehicles and road users for whom the proposed national road is intended
- The classes of vehicles and road users who will be charged tolls for use of the proposed road
- An estimate of the amount of tolls to be charged and
- Finally, in paragraph (e), other information in relation to entering into an agreement with the Concessionaire together with a statement to the effect that the NRA may make bye-laws for the purposes and management of the proposed road.

The Draft Scheme has three Schedules attached. Schedule A is a map showing the location of the proposed road, the toll collection points and ancillary roads. (Am I correct in suggesting that, for the purposes of collecting tolls, the northern end is effectively the proposed south Kells interchange?). Schedule B indicates the classes of vehicles and road users exempt from tolls and Schedule C the estimated amounts of tolls proposed to be charged.

Objectors/submission

There are 4 statutory objectors, including the members of Meath County Council. Objections include that tolling of the road would militate against the function of the motorway as a carrier of through traffic by forcing traffic, including HGVs, back onto the existing inadequate roads, that average traffic time will be increased in order to accommodate toll collection, that they constitute a further tax on motorists and are

discriminatory in that Meath residents are bearing a disproportionate level of road tolls.

Appearances

I shall now take a list of the appearances both for the Authority and the objectors, after which I shall outline how I intend to conduct the hearing. Before I do that there are just a couple of “housekeeping” announcements. Acquaint yourself with the fire exits and please turn off all mobile phones.

Who is appearing for the

- 1 National Roads Authority
- 2 Members of Meath County Council
- 3 Mr Bernard Leonard
- 4 Ms Joyce Montgomery
- 5 Mr Ian Montgomery

Other than the parties to the Hearing, is there anyone else who wishes to be heard?
List them

Procedure

The manner in which I intend to conduct the hearing is that first of all I shall ask the proposers, the National Roads Authority, to state their case and present their evidence including such observations on the grounds of objection as they consider appropriate. Apart from any question of clarification, I would prefer that the Authority present all their evidence before more detailed questions by the other parties.

When the Authority have made their case, the other parties may put any questions arising. They can do this either directly or through me if they so prefer.

When the Authority have completed their case and been questioned, I propose to hear the other parties.

(Following the submissions of the objectors, those people who have signified a wish to be heard may make a statement and this will be taken into account).

At the end of all that, parties may make closing statements only of course if they choose to do so. I shall then close the hearing and make a report and recommendation to the Board.

That is all I intend to say at this stage. I don't propose to limit *per se* the scope of any of the parties. I might just say that there is no virtue in repetition, either by way of statement or questioning – if a point is made by one party it stays made irrespective of who made it.