

The transformation of Ireland's national road network is becoming a reality with the opening of another national road scheme significantly ahead of schedule. The M8 Cullahill to Cashel scheme opens today 7 months ahead of schedule. All 5 national road projects completed this year have come in on time or early and within budget or as in the case of this project – under budget.

Ireland's island economy is heavily dependent on the efficient movement of goods and people and in this regard this Government will continue to afford a high priority to the development of our transport needs. The benefits delivered by the roll out of the largest roads programme in the history of the state can be seen up and down the country as more towns and villages are bypassed and long sections of motorway opened.

The major inter - urban routes which are on target for completion in two years time will improve transport links between the regions opening them up to new commercial and tourism opportunities. Towns and villages along the route will experience an enhanced quality of life while drivers will benefit from shorter and safer journey times and safer roads.

**Minister for Transport,
Noel Dempsey T.D.**



**Peter Malone, Chairman National
Roads Authority**

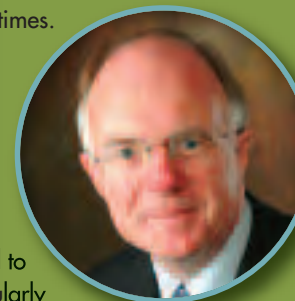


2008 has seen 80km of top class roadway open to traffic along the strategic Cork to Dublin route providing huge improvements for road users.

The opening today of the M8 Cullahill to Cashel scheme provides another vital link along this strategic corridor. This new stretch of national road complements the M8 Cashel to Mitchelstown section which opened in July of this year. I am proud to say that both schemes opened significantly ahead of schedule and within budget with the M8 Cullahill to Cashel scheme coming in under budget.

I would like to acknowledge the professionalism and hard work of my colleagues in the National Roads Authority, local authorities, the Department of Transport and construction sector for maintaining this high standard of delivery. The Irish Taxpayer can be confident that we will continue our commitment to secure value for their money.

Motorists using the busy Cork to Dublin route now have first hand experience of the improvements being made by the national roads programme - improved safety, certainty of journey times and shorter travel times. These factors will facilitate economic competitiveness in these challenging times.



**Joe Crockett
County Manager, Kilkenny
County Council**

I am very pleased that the M8 Cullahill to Cashel motorway is open. I am particularly pleased to note the project has been completed seven months ahead of schedule and under budget.

The main objectives of the motorway scheme are to contribute to the rapid development and completion of Ireland's major inter urban road network, to allow balanced regional growth and to bring about environmental and road safety improvements to many towns and communities served by the old N8 network.

This motorway will have a major beneficial impact in Laois, North Kilkenny, North Tipperary and South Tipperary by reducing journey times and improving access for goods and business.

Now more than ever it is vitally important that we, as a region and a Country, remain competitive and regain our trading edge in the European context and I am confident that this new facility will assist us in reaching these targets.

Congratulations to all involved in making this project a success.

This brochure was funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-2013 and part financed by the European Union

**Antonio Tajani
Vice President of the European
Commission with special
responsibility for Transport**



On behalf of the European Commission, I welcome the opening of this new section of the M8 Cullahill to Cashel scheme which forms part of the Trans European Road network.

This road scheme will provide numerous benefits to the national and regional economy and will facilitate the efficient movement of business and tourism traffic.

High quality infrastructure provides greater certainty of journey times improving efficiency in the movement of traffic and goods to and from mainland Europe.

It will also create safer driving conditions, in particular elimination of potential for head on collisions as a result of overtaking manoeuvres, and enhance the quality of life for the people living in the bypassed towns and villages.

The Commission is pleased to have been able to support this project by part funding its design with a grant through the Trans-European Transport Network Budget.



**Councillor Tomás Breathnach
Cathaoirleach, Kilkenny
County Council**

Le hoscailt an stráice nua mótarbhealaigh 40 ciliméadar ar fhad trí Chontae Laoise, Chontae Chill Chainnigh, Chontae Thiobraid Árann Thuaidh agus Chontae Thiobraid Árann Theas inniu fógraítear go bhfuil céim nua chun tosaigh tógtha chun an contae agus an tír a chur chun cinn.

The M8 inter urban route will contribute positively to traffic management and environmental improvement in the many by passed towns and villages along the old N8 route. Substantial benefits will be felt in reduced costs and travel time savings to businesses and members of our wider community. The new road opens up exciting prospects for business and commercial development in the region.

I would like to acknowledge the support and assistance of the National Roads Authority, my sister local authorities of Laois, North Tipperary and South Tipperary and the Minister for Transport in making this project a reality.

I also wish to thank SRB Civil Engineering Limited, Scheme Contractors, Malone O'Regan/Scott Wilson, Consulting Engineers and the full complement of design and site supervisory staff of Kilkenny County Council and Tramore House Regional Design Office, all of whom made such a huge contribution over the past number of years.

Mar fhocal scoir, molaim do thiománaithe uile a bheith cúramach ar na bóithre agus tiomáint go sábháilte ar an bpíosa bóthair is nuá i gCill Chainnigh, an mótarbhealach M8 ón gCúlchoill go Caiseal.

M8 CULLAHILL TO CASHEL ROAD IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

M8 AN CHÚLCHOILL/CAISEAL SCÉIM FHEABHSAITHE BÓTHAIR

Officially opened on Monday 8th December 2008
by Mr Noel Dempsey T.D., Minister for Transport
in the presence of Cllr. Tomás Breathnach, Cathaoirleach, Kilkenny County Council



Design & Print by Modern Printers: 056 7721739

Funding for the scheme is provided under the National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-2013 with part funding by the European Union from the Trans-European Transport Networks Budget.

INTRODUCTION

The National Development Plan 2000 to 2006 outlined the need for a high quality dual carriageway to be constructed between Dublin and Cork. The M8 Cullahill to Cashel Road Improvement Scheme forms a significant part of this major inter-urban route. The scheme passes through parts of Counties Laois, Kilkenny, North Tipperary and South Tipperary and its opening provides a continuous section of motorway some 90 km long between Cullahill and Mitchelstown.

The M8 Cullahill to Cashel scheme is 40 km long. It is a motorway with four grade separated junctions linking it to the national road network and to Cashel, Thurles, Urlingford, Johnstown and Kilkenny. The existing N8, reclassified as a regional road, provides a parallel all-purpose route.

HISTORY OF THE M8 SCHEME

In June 2000, Kilkenny County Council, the lead local authority, appointed consultant Malone O'Regan Scott Wilson Joint Venture to assist with the design of the scheme and its promotion through the statutory process. A Constraints Study and Route Selection Study led to the identification in July 2001 of a preferred route, which was presented to the public.

Following further development of the preferred route, an Environmental Impact Statement and Compulsory Purchase Order for the scheme were submitted to An Bord Pleanála in April 2004. An Oral Hearing was held in September of 2004 and An Bord Pleanála approved the scheme, subject to certain modifications and undertakings, in December 2004.

Malone O'Regan Scott Wilson's appointment was extended to assist with the preparation of tender documents and procurement of a contractor and to provide supervision of construction as Project Manager for Kilkenny County Council. The scheme was to be procured as a design and build contract, using the Engineering and Construction Contract NEC3 option C: Target cost contract with activity schedule.

In October 2006, SRB Civil Engineering Limited (a Joint Venture between John Sisk & Son Ltd and Roadbridge) was awarded the contract for the design and construction of the scheme. Their Design Consultant was a joint venture between Roughan & O'Donovan and RPS Consulting Engineers.

The initial programmed date for completion was the 12th of July 2009. The actual date of completion is the 8th of December 2008, a period of 7 months ahead of schedule.



PROTECTION OF THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Protecting the environment and providing mitigation to minimise the effects of the motorway on the surrounding countryside were important considerations in the development of the scheme. Extensive landscaping has been carried out to screen properties from the route and to help blend the scheme into the surrounding landscape. To minimise the impact of road traffic noise, a low-noise surfacing has been provided throughout and noise bunds and barriers have been erected at certain locations along the route.

All the road drainage is attenuated to green-field run off levels and the design incorporates measures to protect watercourses and aquifers from pollution.

To protect wildlife, badger and otter passes were constructed under the motorway and substantial lengths of badger and otter proof fencing were erected to guide the animals to the underpasses and prevent them getting onto the motorway. An artificial sand martin nesting site has been constructed on the banks of the River Goul to replace an existing nesting site which was on the opposite side of the new motorway to the river, an important feeding site for the birds.

BENEFITS OF THE M8 ROUTE

When the whole of the major interurban route between Dublin and Cork is completed in 2010, it will:

- Reduce travelling time between the two cities by 1 hour
- Provide a safer road and reduce the number of accidents
- Improve the quality of life for towns and villages along the route
- Allow for the proper development and expansion of the towns and villages bypassed by the Scheme.

The M8 Cullahill to Cashel Road Scheme will make an important contribution to all these improvements. The valued co-operation of the property and land owners whose lands were acquired for the construction of the M8 Cullahill to Cashel Road Scheme is hereby acknowledged.



ARCHAEOLOGY - "PRESERVING THE PAST"

Great care was taken in planning the new motorway to minimise the impact on archaeological sites and monuments. To ensure that any previously unknown archaeological remains were identified and investigated before construction, extensive test excavations were undertaken by Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd. This testing led to the subsequent detailed investigation of forty six sites by Valerie J. Keeley Ltd.

The excavated sites were diverse. They included settlements, burials and industrial remains, which ranged in date from the Bronze Age, four-thousand years ago, to the 19th century. Many archaeological artefacts were recovered including shards of pottery vessels, iron knives, medieval coins and personal belongings such as brooches, dress pins and buckles. Specialist analysis of data from the excavations is on-going and will be recorded in comprehensive reports about each site.

SRB employed Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd to monitor certain areas of the site that were not resolved prior to commencement of the Contract.

A separate information leaflet is available at www.nra.ie/Archaeology/BrochureandPosterSeries



CONSTRUCTION FACTS

Length of main carriageway: 40 km
Length of ancillary roads: 11 km

Interchanges (4 no.): Cashel
Horse & Jockey
Twomileborris
Urlingford

Structures: (78 no.) 21 road overbridges
4 road underbridges
1 Bord Na Mona rail bridge
7 river bridges
3 accommodation overbridges
9 accommodation underpasses
33 significant stream/river culverts

Earthworks:
Bulk Cut 4.3 million cubic metres
Bulk Fill 3.0 million cubic metres
CBM Sub-base and Base laid 670,000 tonnes
Bituminous Surfacing laid 470,000 tonnes
Structural concrete 20,500 cubic metres
Trees and shrubs planted 1 million

Main Sub-Contractors:
Surfacing Roadstone Ltd.
Cement Bound Macadam Roller Compacted Concrete Company Ltd.
Precast Bridge Beams Banagher Concrete Ltd.
Landscaping Shay Murtagh Ltd.
Plants and Planters Landscape Ltd.

MANAGEMENT OF THE M8 SCHEME

The project was co-ordinated through monthly steering group committee meetings and technical committee meetings, which involved the following people:

Mr John Mulholland: Director of Services, Kilkenny County Council
Mr Joe Gannon: Project Co - ordinator, Kilkenny County Council
Mr Billy McEvoy: Director of Services, South Tipperary County Council
Mr Michael O'Malley: Project Liaison Manager, South Tipperary County Council
Mr Eddie Loughnane: Liaison Officer, North Tipperary County Council
Mr Con Daly: Senior Executive Engineer, Tramore House Regional Design Office
Mr Kieran Kelly: Senior Project Manager, National Roads Authority
Mr Gerry O'Brien: Senior Project Manager, National Roads Authority
Mr Stan Johnston: Project Manager, Malone O'Regan Scott Wilson Joint Venture
Mr Dermot Donovan: Project Supervisor, Malone O'Regan Scott Wilson Joint Venture

Client's Design Consultants: Malone O'Regan Scott Wilson Joint Venture
Contractor: SRB Civil Engineering Limited
Mr John Duggan, Project Manager, SRB Civil Engineering
Ms Valerie Fox, Deputy Project Manager, SRB Civil Engineering
Contractor's Design Consultants: Roughan O'Donovan and RPS Consulting Engineers Joint Venture
Archaeology: Valerie J Keeley Ltd,
Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd.



M8 Cullahill to Cashel Road Scheme Map