

CURRAGHINALT 33KV CONNECTION PROJECT

STATEMENT OF CASE TECHNICAL REPORT

TRAFFIC

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Statement of Case
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October 2024

REPORT

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Conor O'Hara

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1 INTRODUCTION

This Technical Report sets out the following summary of the assessment and outcomes:

- The methodology used in the assessment.
- Impacts without mitigation.
- Proposed mitigation measures.
- Residual impacts.
- Cumulative impacts / interactions / transboundary impacts.
- Consideration of consultation replies from statutory agencies and relevant third party representations.
- Consideration of any changes to the baseline data, relevant policy, guidance and legislation since the completion of the EIA in May 2021.
- Conclusions.

This Technical Report has been prepared by Conor O'Hara. Conor is a Technical Director with RPS and was responsible for preparing, drafting and delivering the Traffic analysis contained in Chapter 15 Traffic of the Environmental Statement ('the ES) for the NIE Networks Curraghinalt 33kV Connection Project.

Conor holds a MSc in Transport Planning and Engineering and a BSc (Hons) in Transportation. Conor is a Chartered Member of the Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport (CIMLT) and a Member of the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation.

Conor is a transport planner with more than 20 years' experience in the field of Transport Planning and has acted as expert witness at various public inquiries and has provided specialist input into planning appeals and oral hearings.

This Technical Report should be read alongside Chapter 15 Traffic and associated Appendices of the ES, previously submitted to the Department for Infrastructure ('DfI') on 1st June 2021.

Where the review of baseline data or any other relevant change in legislation, policy or guidance results in a need to update environmental information this is clearly identified in this technical report.

2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed to inform Chapter 15 of the ES and this Technical Report is set out below.

2.1.1 Assessment Methodology

Traffic and transport assessments are undertaken in accordance with the following guidance:

- Guidelines for Traffic Impact Assessments, Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation, 1994;
- Guidelines for the Environmental Assessment of Road Traffic, Institute of Environmental Assessment, 1993;
- Transport Assessment Guidelines for Development Proposals in Northern Ireland, Department for Regional Development (DRD), 2006.

2.1.2 Consultation

Chapter 3 of the ES includes details of the DFI screening response (extract below). Matters arising in relation to Transport are as follows:

- *Will the construction, operation or decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances into the air?*
 - *YES, Potential for impacts on local air quality at construction phase due to use of machinery/plant, dust from excavation and construction traffic,*
- *Is this likely to result in a significant effect? (Yes/No/N/A) Include measures envisaged to avoid or prevent significant adverse impacts on the environment.*
 - *NO, It is not considered that the nature of any of the construction excavation works would give rise to release of any hazardous, toxic or noxious airborne substances or be likely to have a significant effect upon air quality. **It is considered that in line with best practice for construction phase, traffic management and dust control measures could be secured, as necessary, by condition in consultation with Environmental Health Departments.***
- *Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the Proposed Development? Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the development?*
 - *YES, the development has potential to have an impact in terms of increased traffic movements and volume of vehicles on the road network, mostly during the construction phase. Potential impact on laying of underground cables along parts of road network*
- *Is this likely to result in a significant effect? (Yes/No/N/A) Include measures envisaged to avoid or prevent significant adverse impacts on the environment*
 - *NO, Impacts will be concentrated at the construction phase for a period circa 12- 18 months and therefore, not long term. With the projected vehicle trip numbers (Table 4.2 of the OCEMP) and using mostly the existing road network during the construction phase (Appendix C of the OCEMP), it is not considered to be a likely significant effect.*

DFI Roads were consulted by DFI on application LA10/2019/1386/F on the 9th April 2020 and responded on the 13th May 2020. Their response indicated that transport should be included if an Environmental Impact Assessment is required. DFI Roads requested that the following should be considered:

- Predicted Construction Traffic;
- Access Arrangements; and

- Transport Impacts.

DFI Roads also provided a response in respect of planning application LA11/2019/1000/F on the 2nd June 2020 with the following matters arising:

- The 'Guidelines for the Environmental Assessment of Road Traffic' indicate two triggers to screen and limit the scale and extent of an assessment. These triggers are as follows:
 - 1. Include highway links where traffic flows will increase by more than 30 percent; and
 - 2. Include any other specifically sensitive areas where traffic flows have increased by 10 percent or more.
- It is for the Applicant/Agent to demonstrate that the transport impact of this application will or will not require inclusion in an Environmental Statement. This may be done through completion and submission/inclusion of a Transport Assessment Form and consequent Transport Assessment, if then required.
- The location of proposed services by the Applicant adjacent to, over and within the public road network and provision of any passing bays (if necessary) will require to be submitted for assessment by the Department, along with any other road infrastructure improvements required to facilitate the delivery of materials and/or abnormal loads.
- As noted, and prior to commencement of any works, DfI Roads will require to be consulted on the Traffic Management Plan and agree an inspection scheme to establish the condition of the road network. If damage is caused to the road network and repairs are necessary, agreement will be required on how repairs will be undertaken by the Developer.

3 BASELINE ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Traffic Surveys - May 2021

As set out in Chapter 15 of the ES, a suite of traffic surveys were undertaken on Thursday 13th May 2021 at the locations indicated in Figures 15.1 – 15.8 of Chapter 15 of the ES.

During this survey, a number of cameras (locations 11,32,33,34,35,36,37 & 38, as indicated in the figures below) were subject to unauthorised removal by third parties during the time period of the survey. These cameras were not recovered, therefore, no traffic survey data for these locations was obtained.

As indicated in Chapter 15 of the ES, traffic data was obtained for the general area where the cameras were removed from the Curraghinalt Mine planning application and this data was considered in the original baseline assessment.

3.2 Traffic Surveys – April / May 2024

NIE Networks commissioned the collection of additional / supplementary traffic data via the laying of 21no. Automatic Traffic Counter (ATC) Loops located at strategic locations across the extent of the project length. The surveys were undertaken over a period of 7no. days (24-hour data collected each day) between Sunday 28th April and Saturday 4th May 2024. The survey period was selected as it is a neutral time period and is reflective of the month when surveys were undertaken in 2021. The locations of the ATC loops, as well as the May 2021 traffic survey locations, are indicated in Figures 3.1 – 3.8.

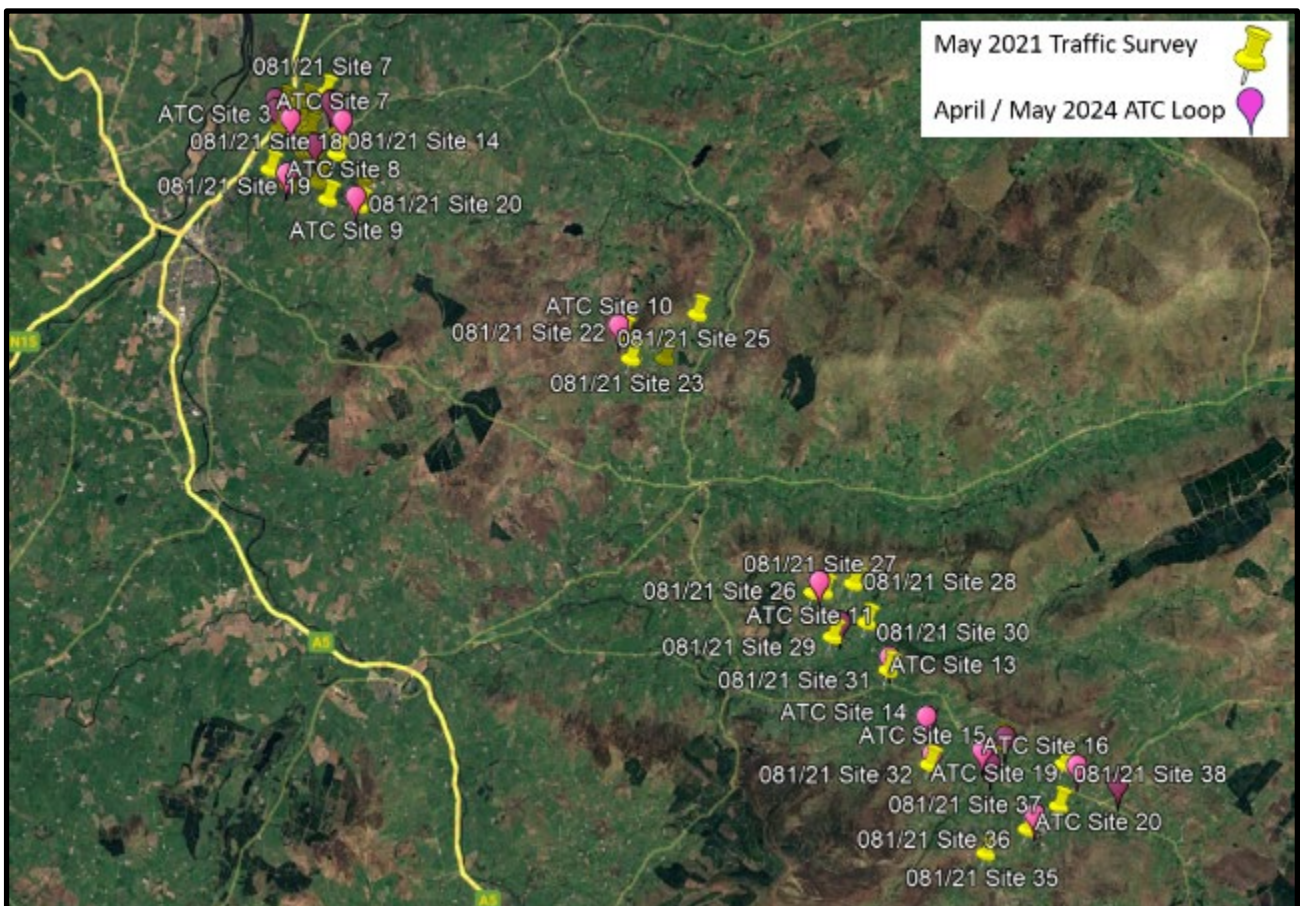


Figure 3.1 – Traffic Survey & ATC Loop Locations (Overall Scheme)

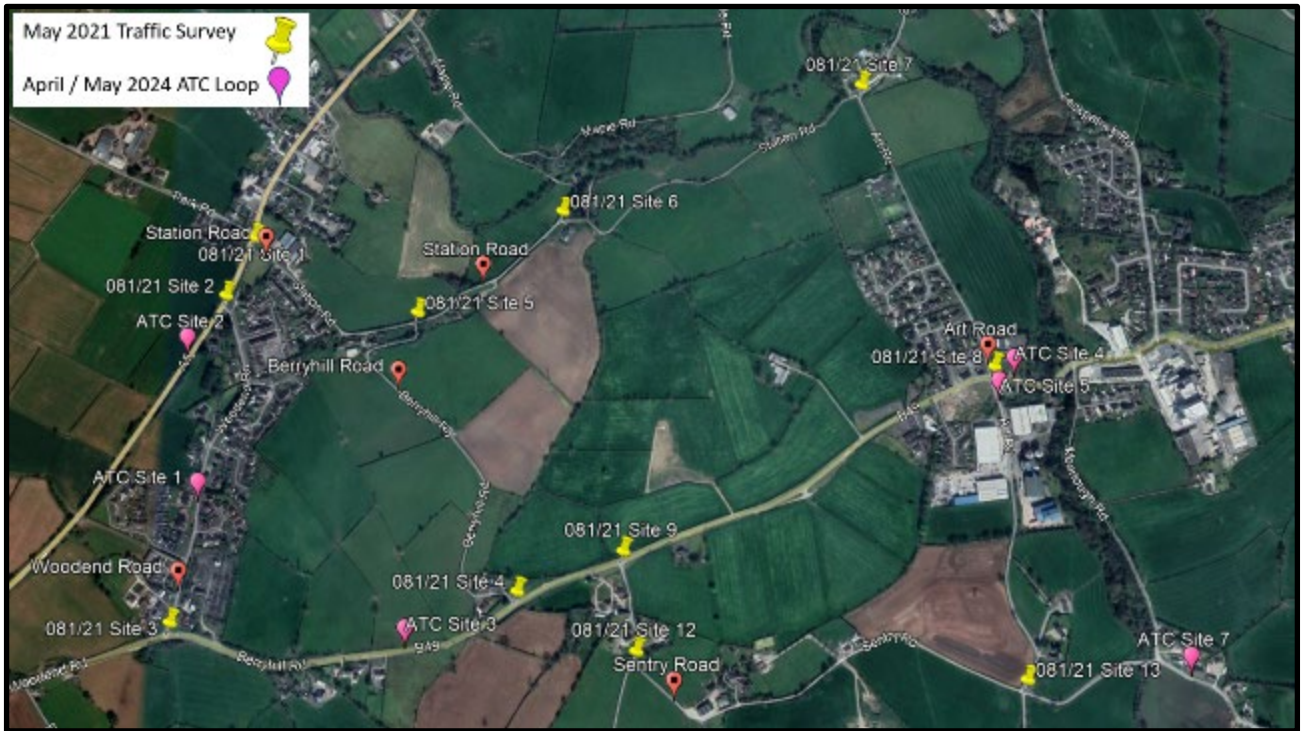


Figure 3.2 – Traffic Survey Locations (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,12 and 13) & ATC Loop Locations (1,2,3,4,5 and 7)

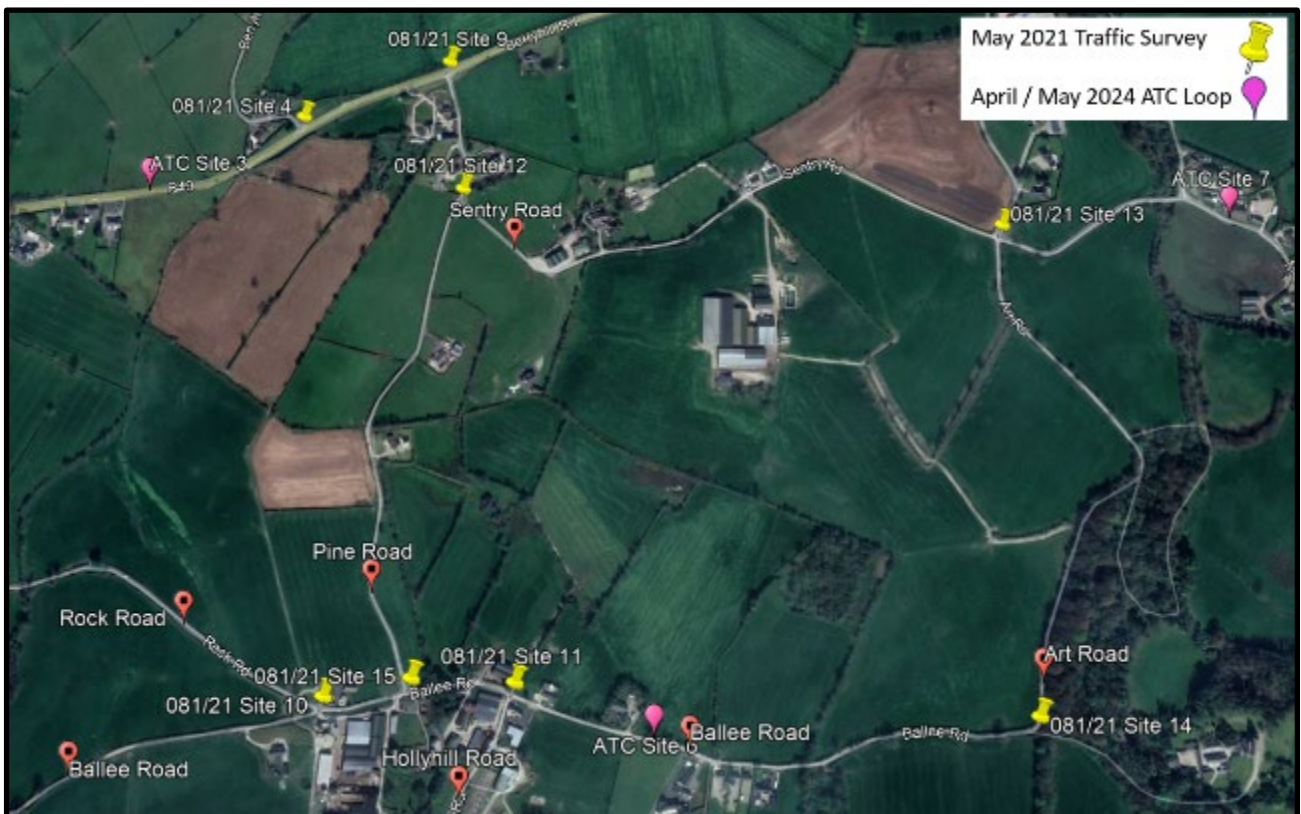


Figure 3.3 – Traffic Survey Locations (4,9,10,11,12,13,14 and 15) & ATC Loop Locations (3,6 and 7)

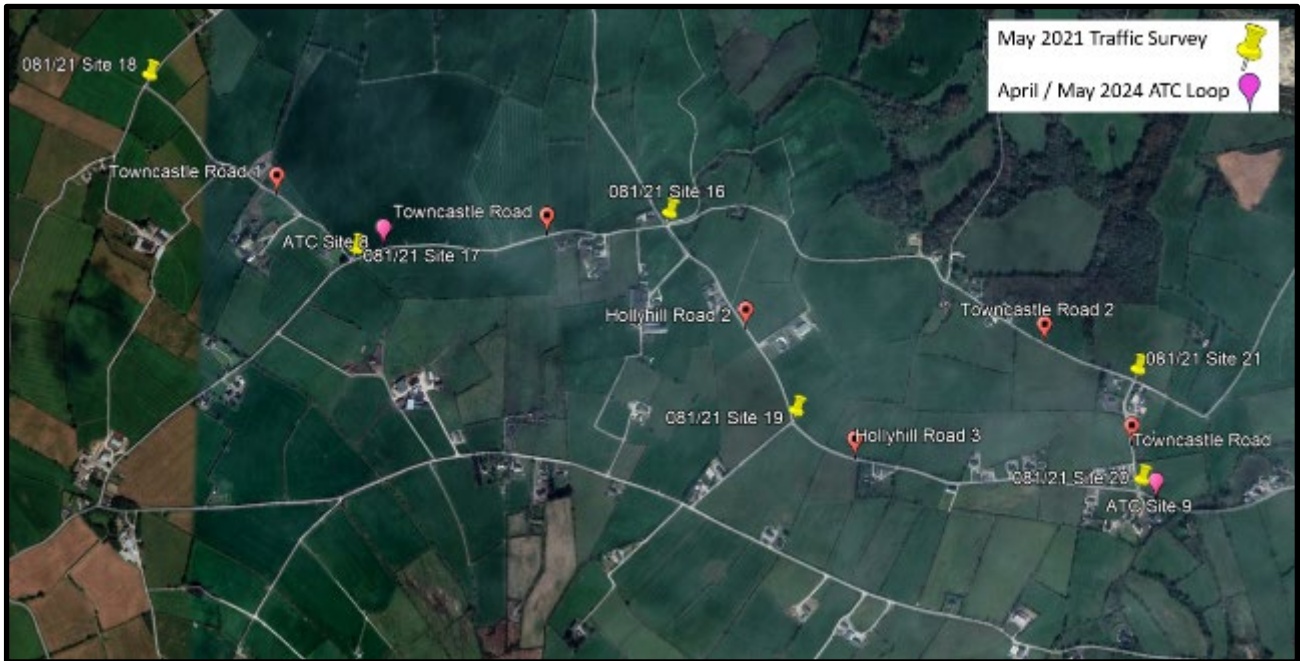


Figure 3.4 – Traffic Survey Locations (16,17,18,19,20 and 21) & ATC Loop Locations (8 and 9)

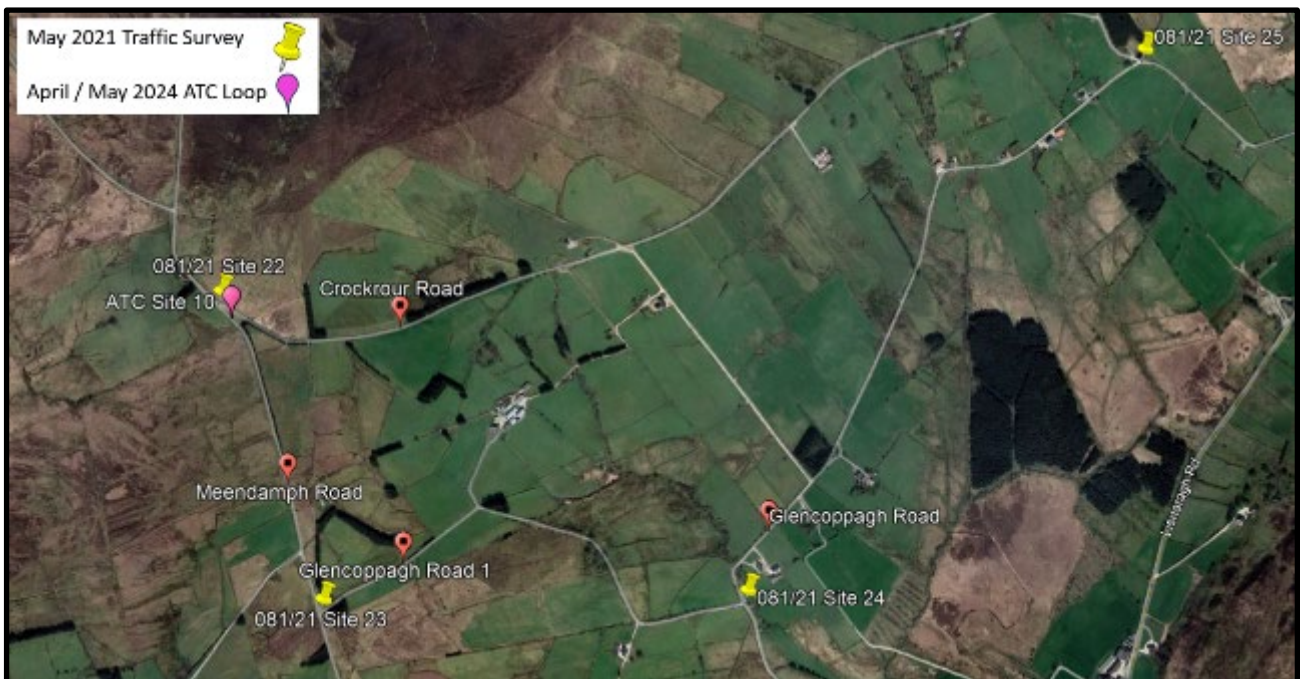


Figure 3.5 – Traffic Survey Locations (22,23,24 and 25) & ATC Loop Locations (10)



Figure 3.6 – Traffic Survey Locations (26,27,28,29,30 and 31) & ATC Loop Locations (11,12 and 13)

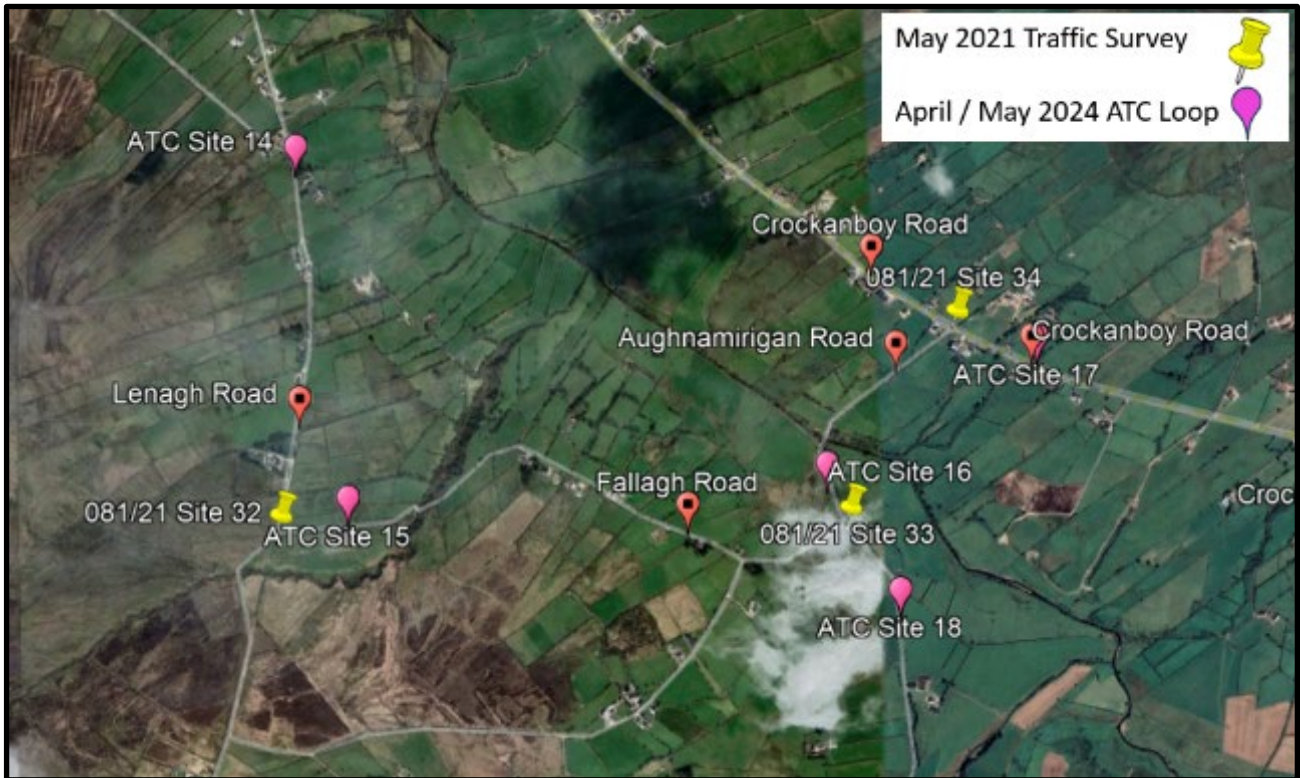


Figure 3.7 – Traffic Survey Locations (32,33 and 34) & ATC Loop Locations (14,15,16,17 and 18)



Figure 3.8 – Traffic Survey Locations (33,35,36,37 and 38) & ATC Loop Locations (16,18,19,20 and 21)

Table 1 below indicates the following comparable data between the 2021 and 2024 datasets.

- 12no. hour flow (0700 – 1900 hours)
- Average Hourly Flow (12no. hourly flow / 12)
- AM Peak Hour (0800 – 0900)
- PM Peak Hour (1700 – 1800)

Table 1 below indicates the baseline traffic volumes for both May 2021 (as presented in Chapter 15 of the ES) and the 2024 traffic volumes for comparison purposes.

Table 1: Baseline Traffic Volumes (Figures 3.1 – 3.8)

| Baseline Traffic Conditions | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|---|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Site | Junction Arm | May 2021 Dataset | | | | | April / May 2024 Dataset | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | 12no. Hour Flow | Average Hourly Flow | AM Peak Hour (0800 – 0900) | PM Peak Hour (1700 – 1800) | ATC Link | ATC Loop No. | 12no. Hour Flow | Average Hourly Flow | Hourly AM Peak Hour (0800 – 0900) | Hourly PM Peak Hour (1700 – 1800) | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | A5 Victoria Road N | 11060 | 921.7 | 1149 | 1218 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Station Road | 189 | 15.8 | 17 | 22 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | A5 Victoria Road S | 11087 | 923.9 | 1152 | 1224 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | A5 Victoria Road N | 11087 | 923.9 | 1150 | 1223 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Woodend Road | 1132 | 94.3 | 103 | 122 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | A5 Victoria Road S | 10647 | 887.3 | 1129 | 1161 | A5 Victoria Road S | 2 | 11188 | 932.4 | 1167 | 1112 | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | B49 W | 4211 | 350.9 | 458 | 472 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Woodend Road | 759 | 63.3 | 75 | 89 | Woodend Road | 1 | 853 | 71.1 | 75 | 70 | | | | | | | | |
| | B49 E | 4166 | 347.2 | 453 | 451 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | B49 W | 4153 | 346.1 | 453 | 447 | B49 W | 3 | 4384 | 365.3 | 458 | 472 | | | | | | | | |
| | Berryhill Road | 29 | 2.4 | 3 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | B49 E | 4150 | 345.8 | 452 | 445 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Station Road E | 88 | 7.3 | 8 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Berryhill Road | 21 | 1.8 | 2 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Station Road W | 103 | 8.6 | 10 | 13 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Maple Road | 3 | 0.3 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Station Road E | 69 | 5.8 | 7 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Station Road S | 72 | 6.0 | 7 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Station Road E | 385 | 32.1 | 52 | 35 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Art Road | 408 | 34.0 | 57 | 38 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Station Road W | 51 | 4.3 | 7 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | B49 E | 3505 | 292.1 | 410 | 360 | B49 E | 4 | 4188 | 349 | 458 | 472 | | | | | | | | |
| | Art Road S | 1376 | 114.7 | 128 | 150 | Art Road S | 5 | 1397 | 116.4 | 140 | 132 | | | | | | | | |
| | B49 W | 4442 | 370.2 | 494 | 459 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Art Road N | 485 | 40.4 | 74 | 67 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | B49 E | 4073 | 339.4 | 440 | 431 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Pine Road | 194 | 16.2 | 22 | 17 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | B49 W | 4147 | 345.6 | 456 | 444 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Rock Road E | 192 | 16.0 | 15 | 22 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Ballee Road S | 119 | 9.9 | 6 | 9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Rock Road W | 185 | 15.4 | 11 | 19 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Ballee Road E | | | | | Ballee Road E | 6 | 146 | 12.2 | 13 | 11 | | | | | | | | |
| | Hollyhill Road | Camera subject of unauthorised removal by third parties | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Ballee Road W | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | Pine Road N | 194 | 16.2 | 28 | 16 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Sentry Road | 130 | 10.8 | 21 | 9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Pine Road S | 140 | 11.7 | 15 | 11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 | Art Road N | 975 | 81.3 | 90 | 108 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Sentry Road E | 895 | 74.6 | 90 | 97 | Sentry Road E | 7 | 889 | 74.1 | 98.8 | 95.4 | | | | | | | | |
| | Art Road S | 116 | 9.7 | 9 | 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Sentry Road W | 94 | 7.8 | 11 | 9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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Baseline Traffic Conditions

| | | May 2021 Dataset | | | April / May 2024 Dataset | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------|------------------|------|----|--------------------------|-------------------|----|-----|------|----|----|
| 14 | Ballee Road N | 116 | 9.7 | 9 | 11 | | | | | | |
| | Access | 25 | 2.1 | 1 | 0 | | | | | | |
| | Ballee Road W | 113 | 9.4 | 10 | 11 | | | | | | |
| 15 | Ballee Road W | 196 | 16.3 | 14 | 22 | | | | | | |
| | Pine Road | 98 | 8.2 | 8 | 12 | | | | | | |
| | Ballee Road E | 224 | 18.7 | 16 | 26 | | | | | | |
| 16 | Hollyhill Road N | 177 | 14.8 | 11 | 22 | | | | | | |
| | Towncastle Road E | 76 | 6.3 | 5 | 10 | | | | | | |
| | Hollyhill Road S | 160 | 13.3 | 11 | 16 | | | | | | |
| | Towncastle Road W | 93 | 7.8 | 3 | 10 | | | | | | |
| 17 | Towncastle Road W | 136 | 11.3 | 9 | 16 | | | | | | |
| | Towncastle Road N | 64 | 5.3 | 4 | 8 | | | | | | |
| | Towncastle Road E | 104 | 8.7 | 5 | 8 | Towncastle Road E | 8 | 111 | 9.2 | 9 | 11 |
| 18 | Ballee Road N | 107 | 8.9 | 7 | 10 | | | | | | |
| | Towncastle Road | 34 | 2.8 | 0 | 4 | | | | | | |
| | Ballee Road S | 105 | 8.8 | 7 | 14 | | | | | | |
| 19 | Hollyhill Road S | 370 | 30.8 | 36 | 46 | | | | | | |
| | Hollyhill Road W | 383 | 31.9 | 36 | 40 | | | | | | |
| | Hollyhill Road N | 157 | 13.1 | 8 | 16 | | | | | | |
| 20 | Hollyhill Road W | 327 | 27.3 | 33 | 44 | | | | | | |
| | Towncastle Road | 83 | 6.9 | 11 | 10 | | | | | | |
| | Hollyhill Road E | 250 | 20.8 | 26 | 36 | Hollyhill Road E | 9 | 126 | 10.5 | 16 | 11 |
| | Access | 28 | 2.3 | 2 | 2 | | | | | | |
| 21 | Keenaghan Road | 31 | 2.6 | 3 | 3 | | | | | | |
| | Towncastle Road S | 65 | 5.4 | 9 | 6 | | | | | | |
| | Towncastle Road W | 43 | 3.6 | 6 | 3 | | | | | | |
| 22 | Meendamp Road N | 97 | 8.1 | 8 | 12 | | | | | | |
| | Crockrour Road | 25 | 2.1 | 0 | 2 | | | | | | |
| | Meendamp Road S | 90 | 7.5 | 8 | 10 | Meendamp Road S | 10 | 106 | 8.9 | 12 | 14 |
| 23 | Meendamp Road N | 98 | 8.2 | 11 | 11 | | | | | | |
| | Glencoppagh Road | 14 | 1.2 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| | Meendamp Road S | 92 | 7.7 | 12 | 10 | | | | | | |
| 24 | Glencoppagh Road S | 53 | 4.4 | 3 | 5 | | | | | | |
| | Glencoppagh Road W | 32 | 2.7 | 2 | 3 | | | | | | |
| | Glencoppagh Road N | 43 | 3.6 | 3 | 4 | | | | | | |
| 25 | Crockrour Road E | 49 | 4.1 | 3 | 4 | | | | | | |
| | Glencoppagh Road | 35 | 2.9 | 1 | 4 | | | | | | |
| | Crockrour Road W | 40 | 3.3 | 2 | 6 | | | | | | |
| 26 | Meenadoo Road W | 11 | 0.9 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | |
| | Glenforan Road | 14 | 1.2 | 3 | 0 | | | | | | |
| | Meenadoo Road E | 15 | 1.3 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 27 | Meenadoo Road E | 7 | 0.6 | 1 | 1 | Meedadoo Road E | 11 | 13 | 1.1 | 0 | 2 |
| | Access | 7 | 0.6 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | |
| | Meenadoo Road W | 12 | 1.0 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 28 | Glenforan Road N | 6 | 0.5 | 0 | 4 | | | | | | |
| | Meenadoo Road E | 2 | 0.2 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | |

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Baseline Traffic Conditions

| | | May 2021 Dataset | | | | April / May 2024 Dataset | | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|-------|-----|-----|--------------------------|----|------|-------|-----|-----|
| | Glenforan Road S | 13 | 1.1 | 0 | 5 | | | | | | |
| | Meenadoo Road W | 5 | 0.4 | 0 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 29 | Gorticashel Road W | 87 | 7.3 | 7 | 9 | | | | | | |
| | Local Road N | 24 | 2.0 | 2 | 3 | | | | | | |
| | Gorticashel Road E | 99 | 8.3 | 7 | 10 | | | | | | |
| | Local Access | 12 | 1.0 | 0 | 2 | | | | | | |
| | Gorticashel Road W | 97 | 8.1 | 4 | 9 | | | | | | |
| 30 | Glenforan Road | 42 | 3.5 | 2 | 4 | | | | | | |
| | Gorticashel Road E | 93 | 7.8 | 2 | 9 | Gorticashel Road E | 12 | 91 | 7.6 | 5 | 11 |
| 31 | Crockanboy Road E | 1524 | 127.0 | 116 | 165 | Crockanboy Road E | 13 | 1230 | 102.5 | 109 | 159 |
| | Lenagh Road | 238 | 19.8 | 11 | 15 | | | | | | |
| | Crockanboy Road W | 1498 | 124.8 | 117 | 172 | | | | | | |
| 32 | Lenagh Road / Fallagh Road | | | | | Lenagh Road | 14 | 187 | 15.6 | 21 | 22 |
| | | | | | | Fallagh Road | 15 | 24 | 2.0 | 2 | 11 |
| 33 | Aughnamirigan Road / Fallagh Road | | | | | Aughnamirigan Road N | 16 | 150 | 12.5 | 17 | 20 |
| | | | | | | Aughnamirigan Road S | 18 | 152 | 12.6 | 17 | 17 |
| 34 | Crockanboy Road / Aughnamirigan Road | Camera subject of unauthorised removal by third parties | | | | Crockanboy Road E | 17 | 1144 | 95.4 | 111 | 152 |
| 35 | Greencastle Road / Aughnamirigan Road | | | | | | | | | | |
| 36 | Greencastle Road / Aghaboy Road | | | | | Greencastle Road E | 20 | 1012 | 84.3 | 121 | 124 |
| 37 | Greencastle Road / Pollanroe Road | | | | | | | | | | |
| 38 | Crockanboy Road / Pollanroe Road | | | | | Crockanboy Road E | 19 | 1159 | 96.6 | 116 | 157 |
| | | | | | | Crockanboy Road E | 21 | 1140 | 95.0 | 122 | 153 |

Table Note

The information presented in Table 1 above indicates the existing traffic volumes undertaken on the road network during both 2021 and 2024. As indicated in the Guidelines for Traffic Impact Assessments, daily traffic flows can vary by 10% day to day. Therefore, any change in 12no. hour flow (between 2021 and 2024) which is less than 10% is considered to be within this daily variance. The information below indicates the locations where the 12no. hour flow variance is greater than 10%.

- Woodend Road (Site 2 / ATC Loop 2)
 - 12no. Hour Flow 12.41% higher in 2024¹
 - AM Peak hour 0.27% higher in 2024
 - PM Peak hour 20.90% lower in 2024.
- B49 E (Site 8 / ATC Loop 4)
 - 12no. Hour Flow 19.49% higher in 2024
 - AM Peak hour 11.71% higher in 2024
 - PM Peak hour 31% lower in 2024.
- Hollyhill Road E (Site 20 / ATC Loop 9)
 - 12no. Hour Flow 49.44% lower in 2024 (250no. vehicle in 2021 v 126.4no. vehicles in 2024)
 - AM Peak hour 37.69% lower in 2024 (26no. vehicle in 2021 v 16.2no. vehicles in 2024)
 - PM Peak hour 70% lower in 2024. (36no. vehicle in 2021 v 10.8no. vehicles in 2024)
- Meendamp Road S (Site 22 / ATC Loop 10)
 - 12no. Hour Flow 18.22% higher in 2024 (90no. vehicle in 2021 v 106.4no. vehicles in 2024)
 - AM Peak hour 45% higher in 2024 (8no. vehicle in 2021 v 11.6no. vehicles in 2024)
 - PM Peak hour 40% higher in 2024 (10no. vehicle in 2021 v 14no. vehicles in 2024).
- Meenadoo Road E (Site 27 / ATC Loop 11)
 - 12no. Hour Flow 88.57% higher in 2024 (7no. vehicle in 2021 v 13.2no. vehicles in 2024)
 - AM Peak hour 100% lower in 2024 (1no. vehicle in 2021 v 0no. vehicles in 2024)
 - PM Peak hour 120% higher in 2024. (1no. vehicle in 2021 v 2.2no. vehicles in 2024)
- Crockanboy Road E (Site 31 / ATC Loop 13)
 - 12no. Hour Flow 19.29% lower in 2024
 - AM Peak hour 5.86% lower in 2024
 - PM Peak hour 3.64% lower in 2024.

It should be noted that the links indicated above (Hollyhill Road, Meendamp Road and Meenadoo Road) have a low baseline of traffic in 2021 and therefore, even a small change in the volume of traffic can result in a significant percentage change.

3.3 Existing Road Network

The existing road network was clearly identified within Section 15.3.2 of Chapter 15 of the ES and this has not changed since the original submission.

¹ 2024 figure based on the average of 5no. working days surveyed (Monday – Friday)

4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

As part of the scheme, there are sections of overhead lines and sections of underground cabling to be installed, both of which have a different impact upon the surrounding road network.

4.1 Overhead Line

There is c.26.9km of overhead line associated with the scheme and this is supported by single and double wooden pole sets. Access to the pole structures for construction, maintenance and decommissioning will be via the public road network or existing accesses. There are no additional works or modifications required to the accesses to accommodate construction vehicles. The size of vehicles used during construction and decommissioning will be no larger than the type of vehicles which currently use these accesses, as set out in the OCEMP.

Therefore, the overhead line will have an insignificant effect on the surrounding highway network due to the low volume of traffic associated with the construction, operational and decommissioning phases and the low volumes of background traffic.

4.2 Underground Cabling

As set out in Section 15.4.2 of Chapter 15 of the EIA, there is c.11km of underground cabling associated with the scheme, split across 7no. sections of the Proposed Development. Access to these areas of underground cabling will be via the public road network / existing accesses. The construction vehicles (set out in the OCEMP) to be used are as follows:

- Agricultural tractors
- 13T tracked or wheeled excavators
- 8 wheeled grab lorries or road tractor units with low loader.

The majority of underground cabling will be installed on the public highway and the linear distance of an Active Work Location for underground cabling is approximately 100m.

All efforts will be made to try and avoid full road closures when this underground cabling is ongoing. The impact of any works will be reduced to the minimum achievable, in terms of impact upon movement of vehicles and other road users.

Should any road closures be required, these will be agreed with DFI Roads in advance and all statutory advertisements will be adhered to. Appropriate diversion routes will also be identified as part of this agreement, whilst ensuring full access is retained for local residential access and emergency vehicles at all times through the use of steel plates which will be held on site. The following should also be noted;

- length of working area to be subject to closure i.e. the underground cable section may be 3.60km (for example) in length but the closure will be restricted to the length of carriageway located within the identified diversionary routes. Within this closure zone, the working area will be localised to c.100m progressing daily, based upon standard open cut trenching detail, relative to the section of road being worked upon;
- maintaining access for emergency vehicles, agricultural and residential properties. At any entrances where open cut trench is being carried out, or where the trenching crosses the road, steel plates will be held on site and can be laid across the trench to maintain access for emergency, agricultural and residential properties.
- typical duration of closures in a working day – i.e. will full access be available outside proposed construction working hours. For a single lane closures, access will be maintained with portable vehicular traffic signals which will be automatic sensor based. For full road closures, full local and emergency access will be available throughout, including outside of working hours, by provision of steel plates across accesses where required, and chicane barriers to allow passage for local/emergency vehicles. Should road closures be required on B Class roads, restricted working hours from 9am to 4pm will apply, with the road remaining open to all traffic outside these hours.

Should road closures be required, then the following durations have been identified whilst taking account of the notes above. Proposed diversion routes have been considered for each of these sections as follows and they will apply at both construction and decommissioning stage:

4.2.1 Underground Cable Section A

c 3.60 km from Strabane Main Substation to terminal pole number 2001 located in field adjacent to Hollyhill Road: Estimated road closure duration of up to 4 months.

This cable Section A has been split into a number of different sections to consider the proposed diversion routes should a road closure on any section be necessary. Figure 3.9 below indicates the first section of underground cabling associated with Section A and the proposed diversion road. The proposed diversion route, should this be necessary, would be Woodend Road, A5, Station Road and Berryhill Road. The information in Figure 3.9 below includes the original 2021 traffic volumes as well as the updated 2024 traffic volume dataset.

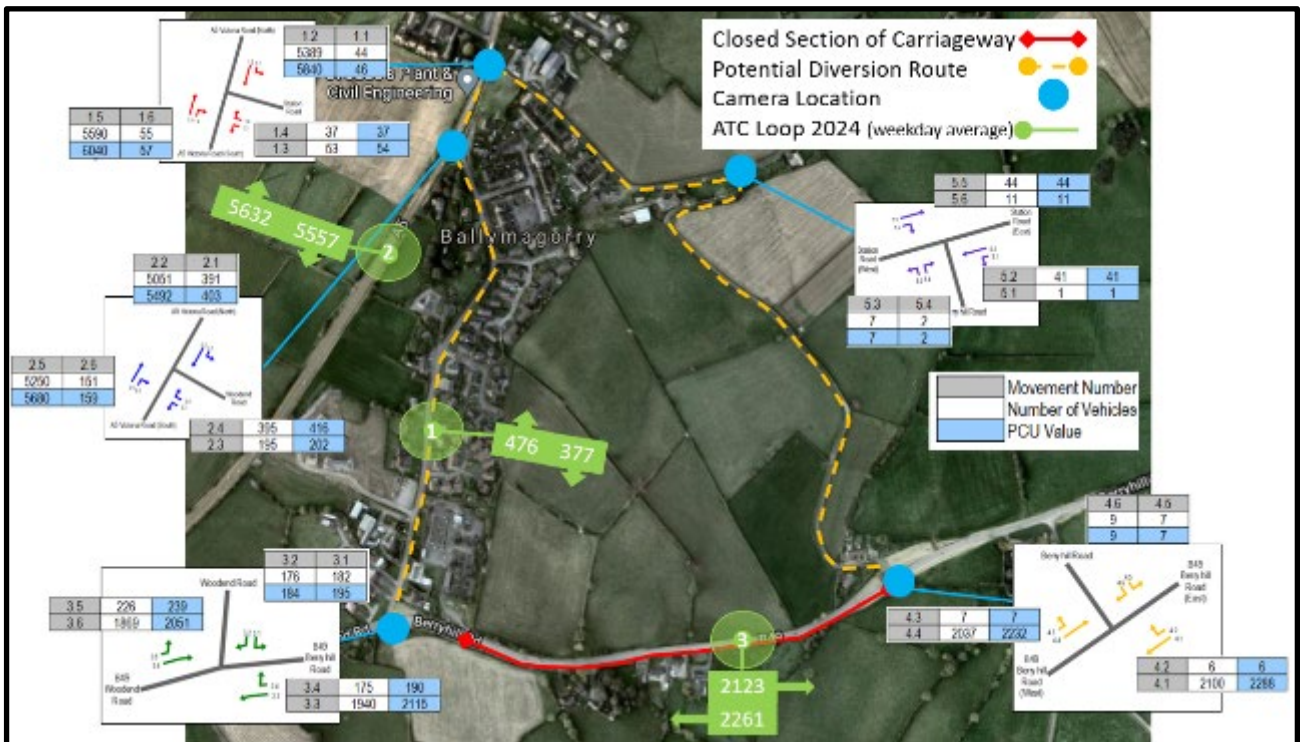


Figure 3.9 – Underground Cabling Section A – Part 1 – Proposed Road Closures & Diversion Route

As indicated in Figure 3.9 above, the B49 Berryhill Road carries ~4,000 vehicles two-way (0700 – 1900 hours) and therefore, the proposed diversion of this volume of traffic onto the identified route above will result in a significant increase in traffic volumes on Woodend Road, Station Road and Berryhill Road. Should a road closure be required at this location, this would result in a moderate adverse, but short-term impact in respect of increased traffic on the diversion route.

Figure 3.10 below indicates the second section of underground cabling associated with Section A (between Berryhill Road and Pine Road) and the proposed diversion route. The proposed diversion route, should this be necessary, would be Art Road, Station Road and Berryhill Road.

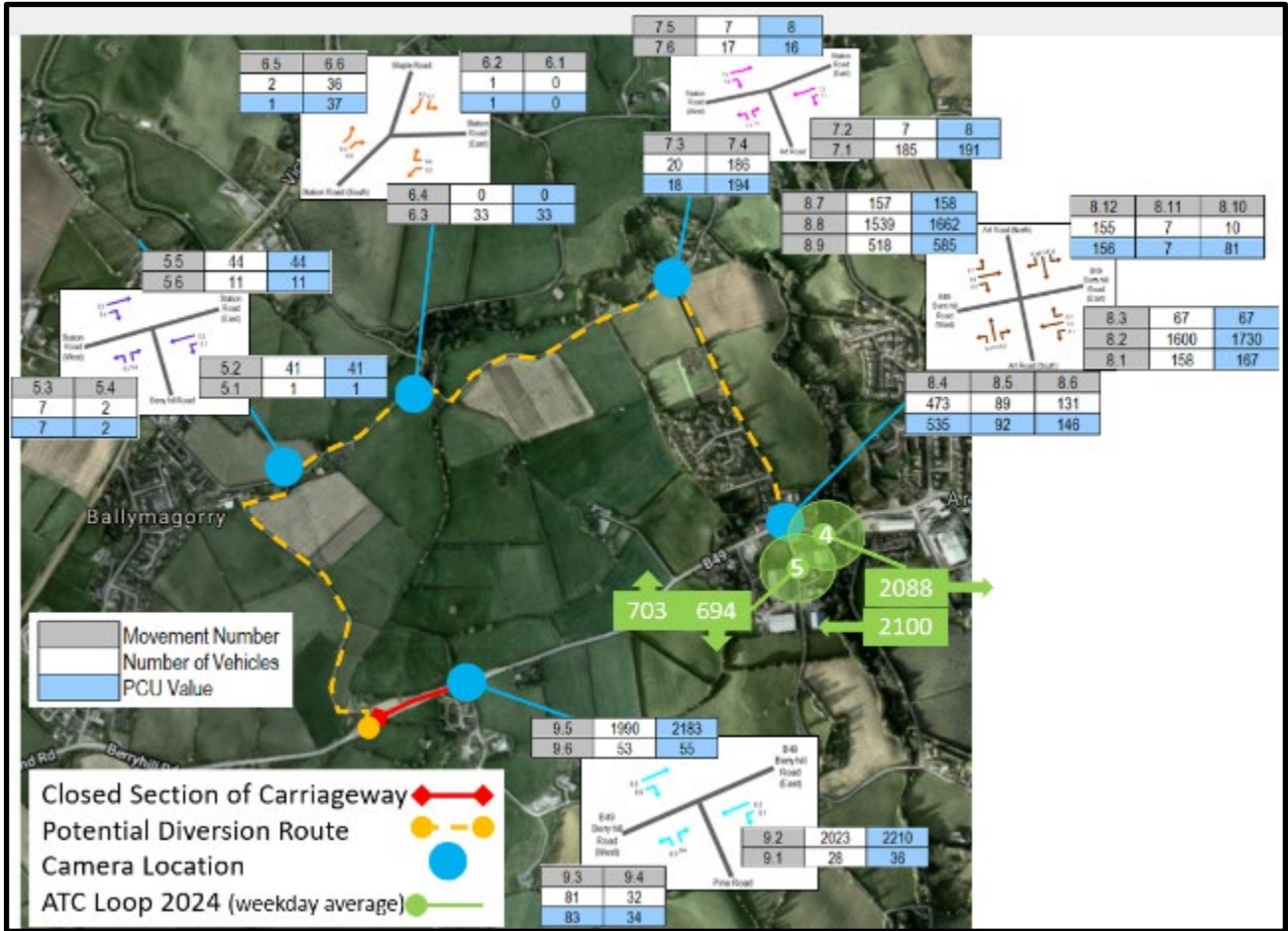


Figure 3.10 – Underground Cabling Section A – Part 2 – Proposed Road Closures & Diversion Route

As indicated in Figure 3.10 above, the B49 Berryhill Road carries ~4,000 vehicles two-way (0700 – 1900 hours) and therefore, the proposed diversion of this volume of traffic onto the identified route above will result in a significant increase in traffic volumes on Art Road, Station Road and Berryhill Road. Should a road closure be required at this location, this would result in moderate adverse, but short-term impact in respect of increased traffic on the diversion route.

Figure 3.11 below indicates the third section of underground cabling associated with Section A, the proposed closure of the Pine Road and the proposed diversion route. The proposed diversion route, should this be necessary, would be Rock Road.

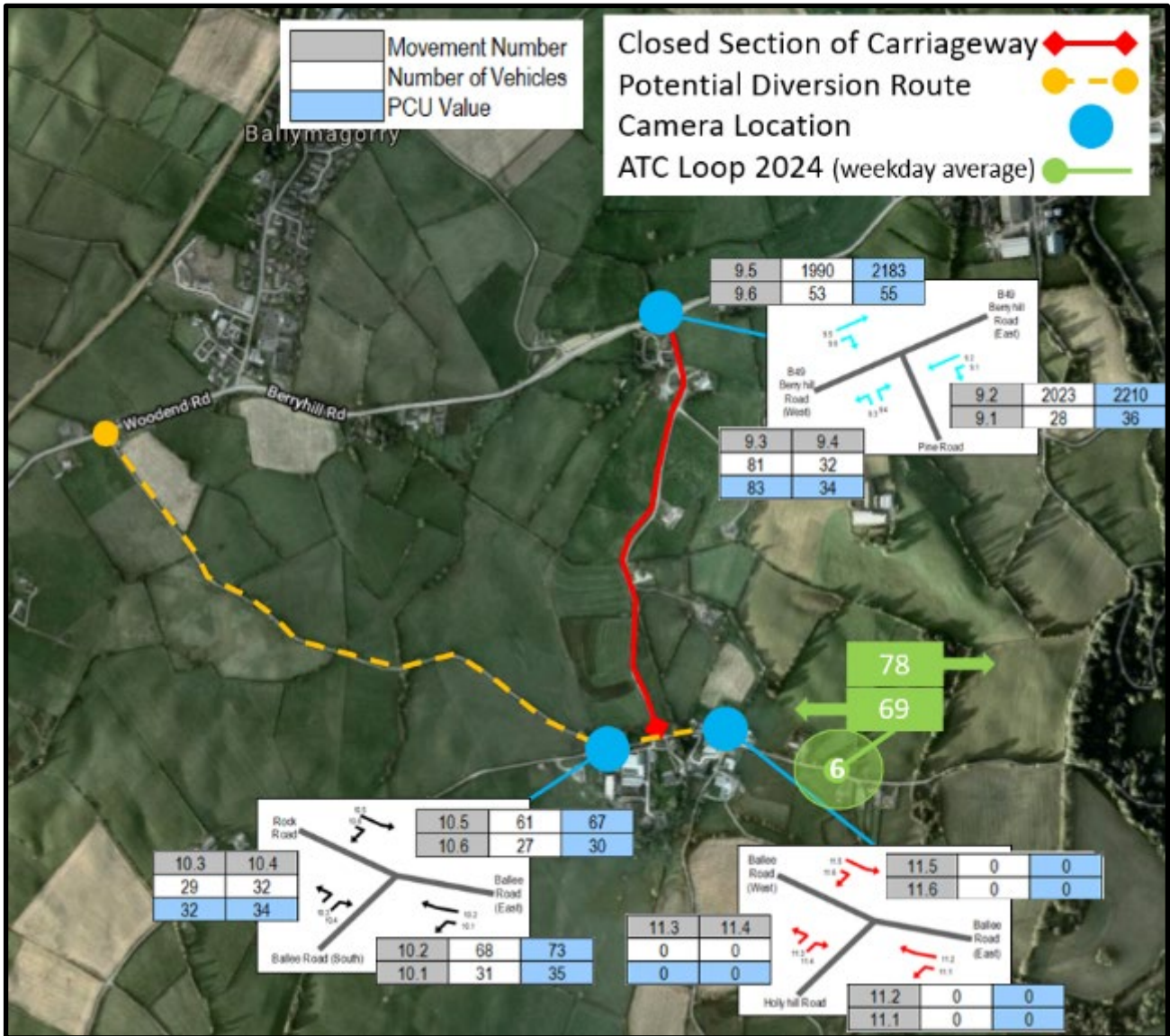


Figure 3.11 – Underground Cabling Section A – Part 3 – Proposed Road Closures & Diversion Route

As indicated in Figure 3.11 above, the Pine Road carries ~98no. vehicles two-way (0700 – 1900 hours) and therefore, the proposed diversion of this volume of traffic onto Rock Road is unlikely to result in any significant impact upon the surrounding highway network.

Figure 3.12 below indicates the fourth section of underground cabling associated with Section A, the proposed closure of the Ballee Road (between Pine Road and Hollyhill Road) and the proposed diversion route. The proposed diversion route, should this be necessary, would be the Pine Road, Sentry Road and Art Road.

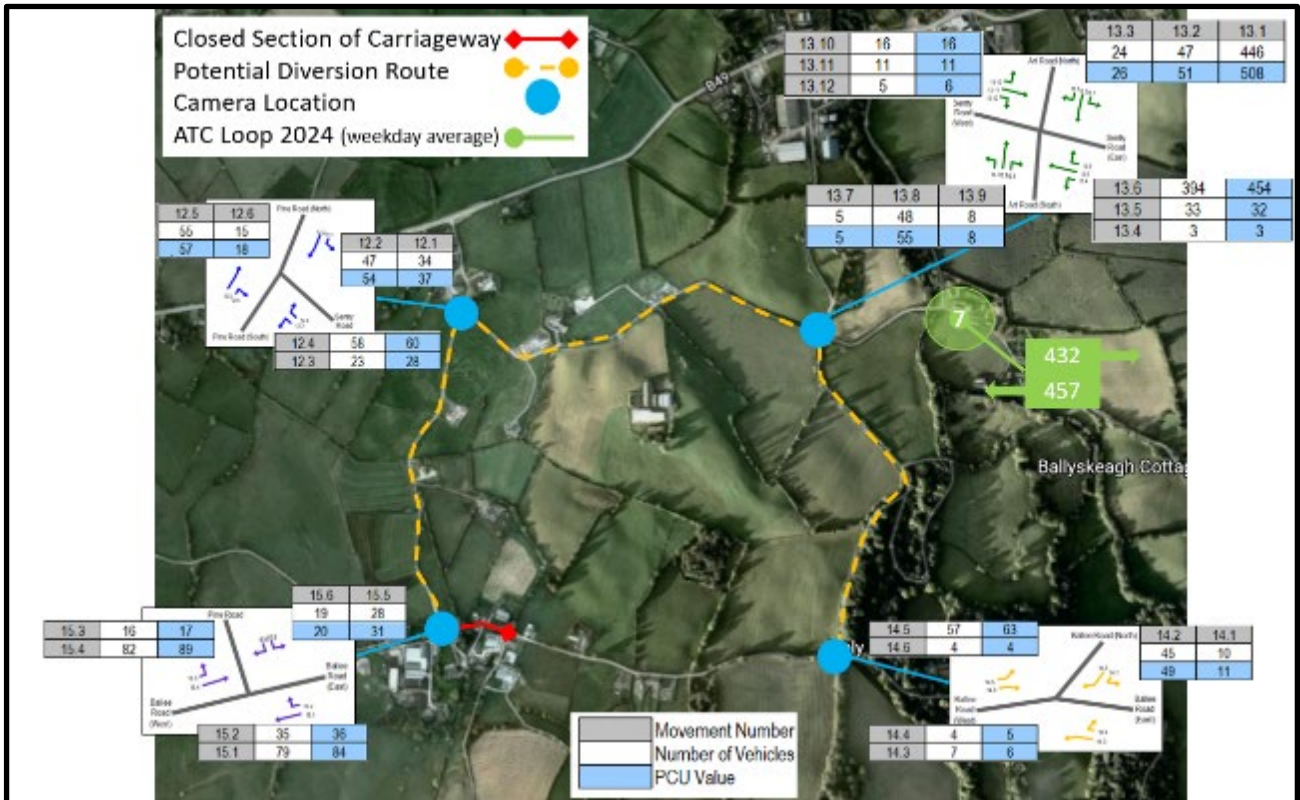


Figure 3.12 – Underground Cabling Section A – Part 4 – Proposed Road Closures & Diversion Route

As indicated in Figure 3.12 above, the Ballee Road (at this location) carries ~224no. vehicles two-way (0700 – 1900 hours) and therefore the proposed diversion of this volume of traffic onto Art Road, Sentry Road and Pine Road is unlikely to result in any significant impact upon the surrounding highway network.

Figure 3.13 below indicates the fifth section of underground cabling associated with Section A, the proposed closure of the Hollyhill Road and the proposed diversion route. The proposed diversion route, should this be necessary, would be the Towncastle Road and Ballee Road.



Figure 3.13 – Underground Cabling Section A – Part 5 – Proposed Road Closures & Diversion Route

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As indicated in Figure 3.13 above, the Hollyhill Road carries ~177no. vehicles two-way (0700 – 1900 hours) and therefore, the proposed diversion of this volume of traffic onto the Towncastle Road and Ballee Road is unlikely to result in any significant impact upon the surrounding highway network.

Figure 3.14 below indicates the sixth section of underground cabling associated with Section A, the proposed closure of the Hollyhill Road South and the proposed diversion route. The proposed diversion route, should this be necessary, would be Towncastle Road.

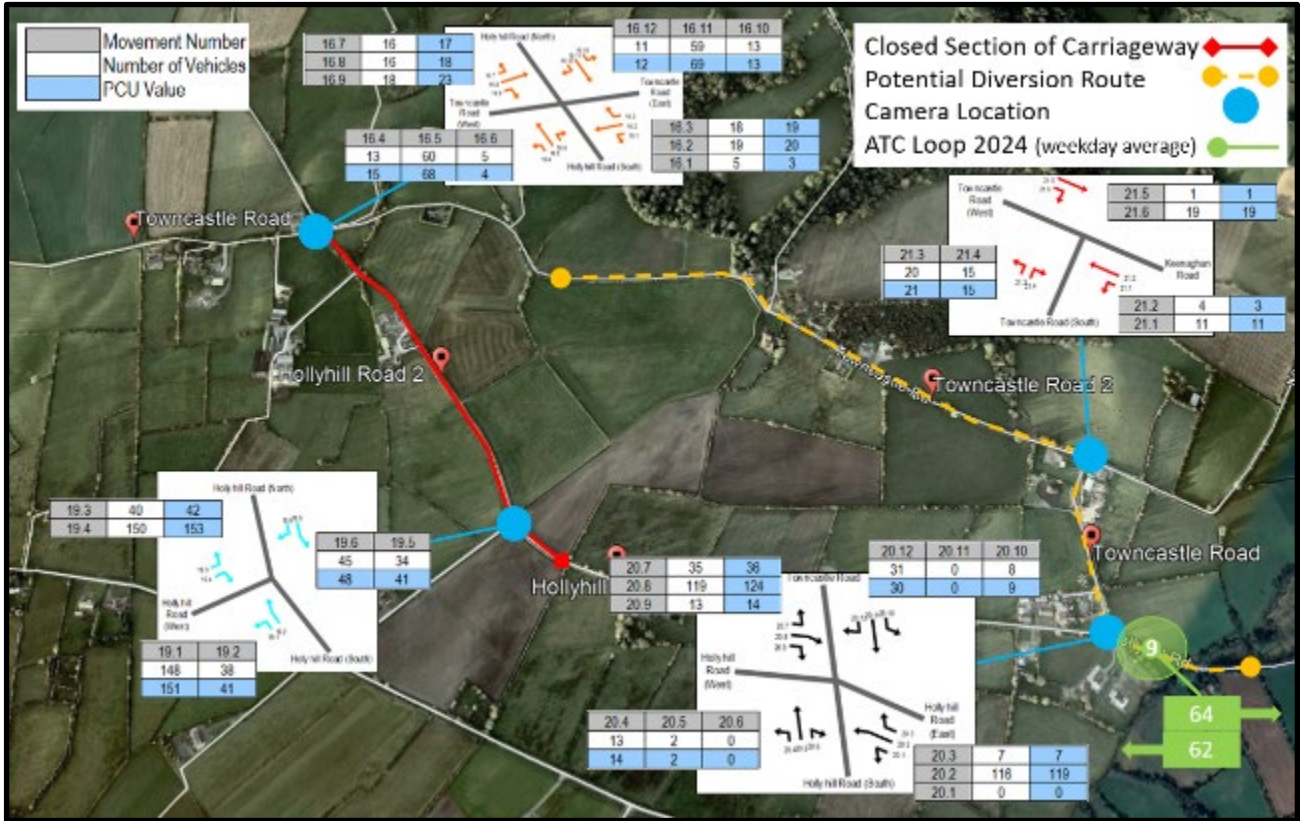


Figure 3.14 – Underground Cabling Section A – Part 6 – Proposed Road Closures & Diversion Route

As indicated in Figure 3.14 above, this section of the Hollyhill Road carries ~160no. vehicles two-way (0700 – 1900 hours) and therefore the proposed diversion of this volume of traffic onto the Towncastle Road is unlikely to result in any significant impact upon the surrounding highway network.

4.2.2 Underground Cable Section B

c 0.342km from terminal pole number 2137, located in the field adjacent to the Meendamp Road, to terminal pole number 2138, also located in the field adjacent to the Meendamp Road. Estimated road closure duration of up to 2 weeks.

Figure 3.15 below indicates the section of underground cabling associated with Section B, the proposed closure of the Meendamp Road and the proposed diversion route. The proposed diversion route, should this be necessary, would be Crockrour Road and Glencoppagh Road.

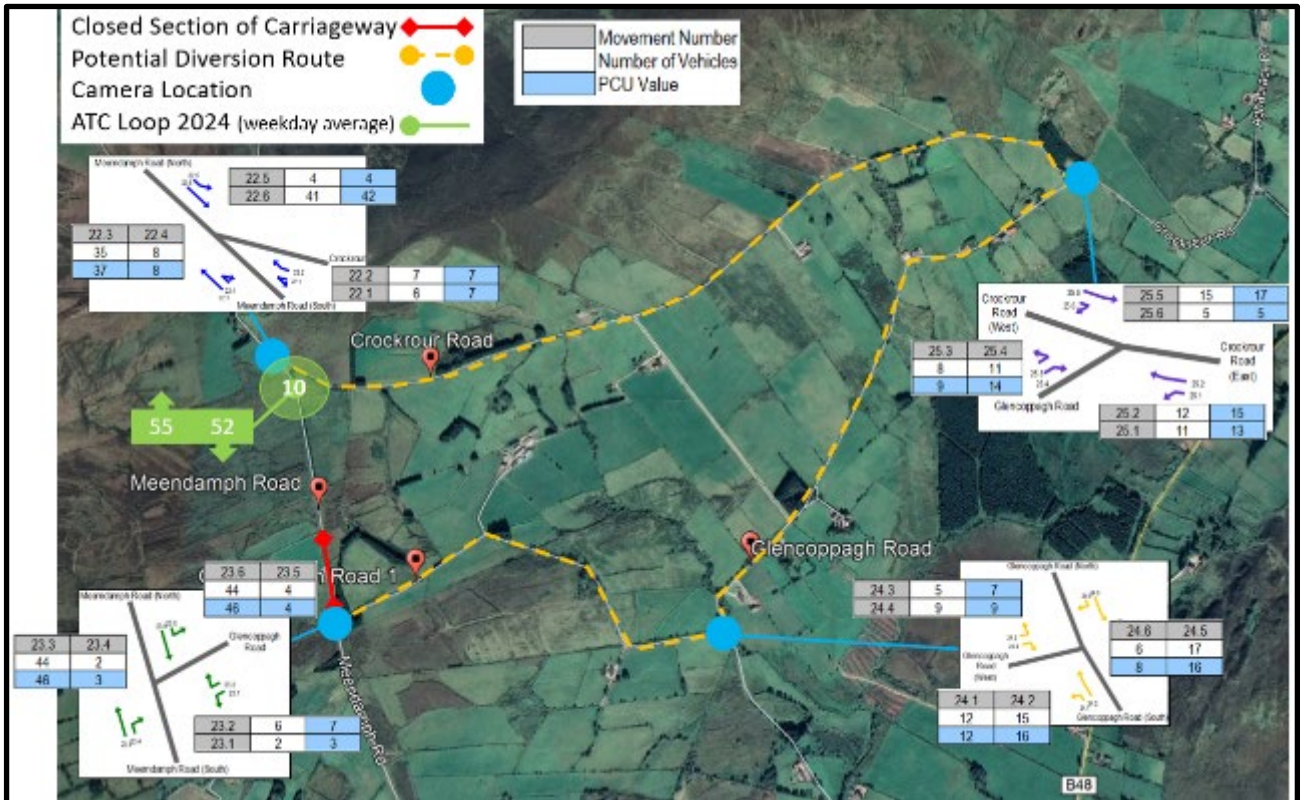


Figure 3.15 – Underground Cabling Section B – Proposed Road Closures & Diversion Route

As indicated in Figure 3.15 above, the Meendamp Road carries ~98no. vehicles two-way (0700 – 1900 hours) and therefore, the proposed diversion of this volume of traffic onto the Crockour Road and Glencoppagh Road (both of which carry very low volumes of traffic) is unlikely to result in any significant impact upon the surrounding highway network.

4.2.3 Underground Cable Section C

c 0.103km crossing underneath the Landahussy Road between terminal poles 2201 and 2202. It is anticipated that a full road closure will not be required at this location as access will be maintained at all times.

4.2.4 Underground Cable Section D

c 1.6km from terminal pole 2248 adjacent to Glenforan Road, to terminal pole number 2251, located in lands adjacent to Meenadoo Road. Estimated road closure duration of up to 2 months.

Figure 3.16 below indicates the section of underground cabling associated with Section D, the proposed closure of the Glenforan Road and the proposed diversion route. The proposed diversion route, should this be necessary, would be the Meenadoo Road and Glenforan Road.

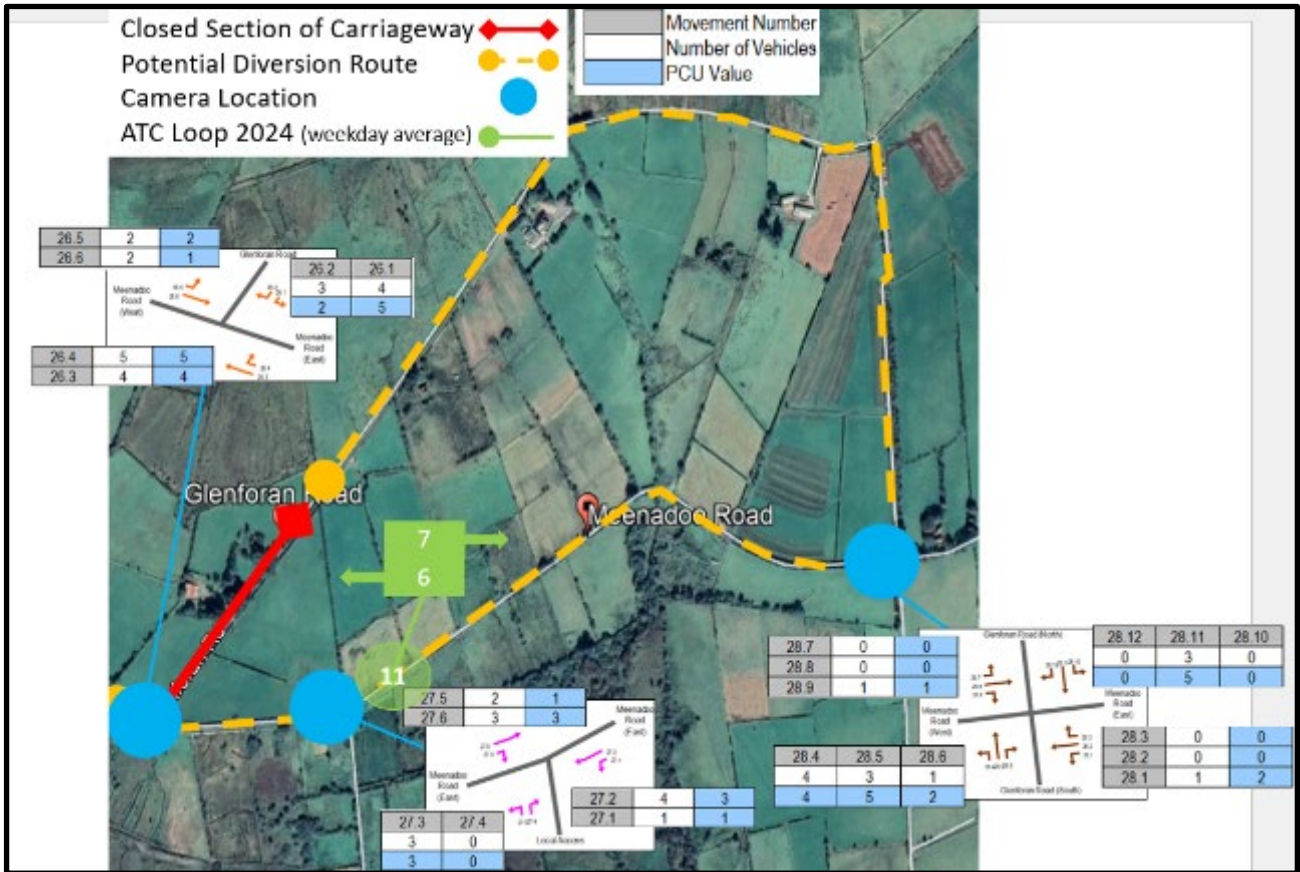


Figure 3.16 – Underground Cabling Section D – Proposed Road Closures & Diversion Route

As indicated in Figure 3.16 above, the Glenforan Road carries ~14no. vehicles two-way (0700 – 1900 hours) and therefore, the proposed diversion of this volume of traffic onto the Meenadoo Road and Glenforan Road (both of which carry very low volumes of traffic) is unlikely to result in any significant impact upon the surrounding highway network.

4.2.5 Underground Cable Section E

c 0.993km from terminal pole number 2261, located in agricultural lands accessed from Glenforan Road, to terminal pole number 2262, located in lands adjacent to Gorticashel Road. Estimated road closure duration of up to 2 weeks.

Figure 3.17 below indicates the section of underground cabling associated with Section E, the proposed closure of the Gorticashel Road and the proposed diversion route. The proposed diversion route, should this be necessary, would be the Meenadoo Road and Glenforan Road.

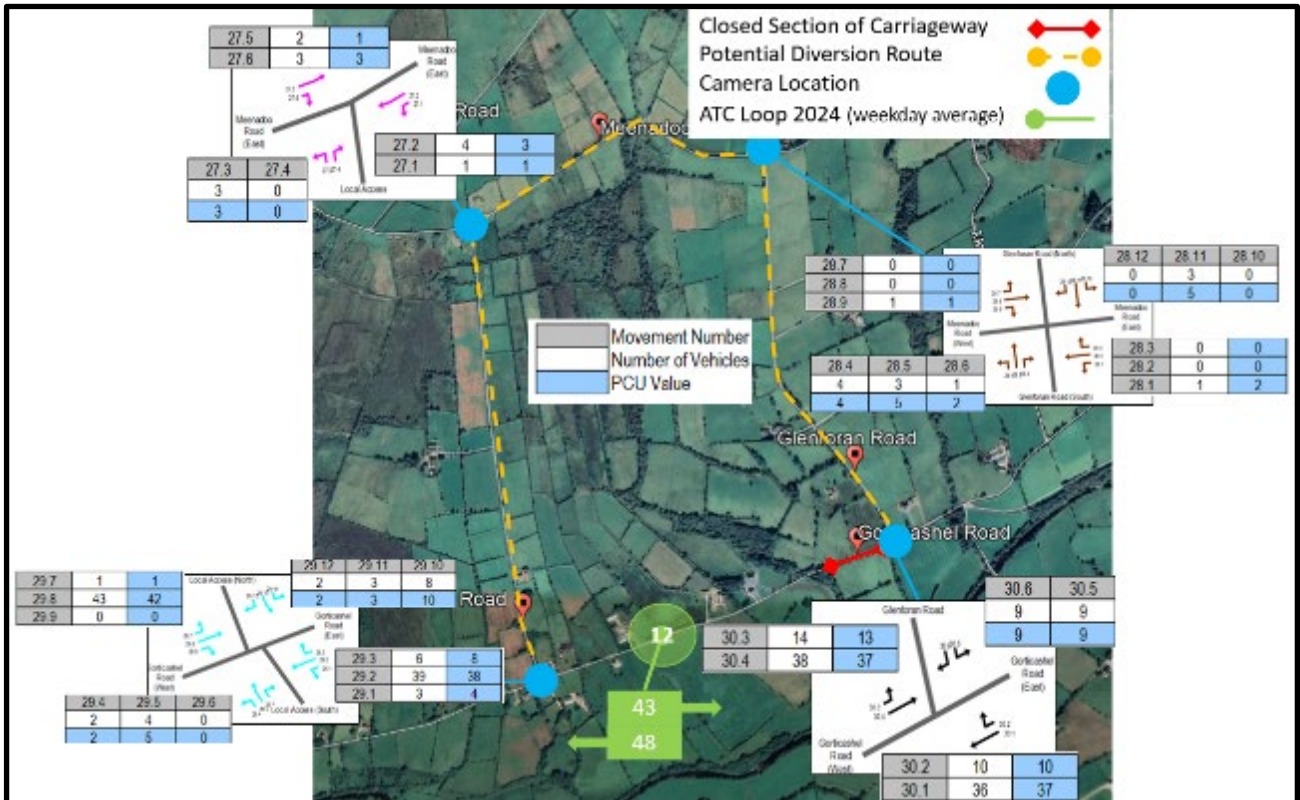


Figure 3.17 – Underground Cabling Section E – Proposed Road Closures & Diversion Route

As indicated in Figure 3.17 above, the Gorticashel Road carries ~97no. vehicles two-way (0700 – 1900 hours) and therefore, the proposed diversion of this volume of traffic onto the Meenadoo Road and Glenforan Road (both of which also carry very low volumes of traffic) is unlikely to result in any significant impact upon the surrounding highway network.

4.2.6 Underground Cable Section F

c 1.9km (of 4.23km) from terminal pole number 2322, located in agricultural lands adjacent to the Crockanboy Road to the entrance to the proposed Curraghinalt mine. Estimated road closure duration of up to 2.5 months.

Section F has been split into 2no. parts. Figure 3.18 below indicates the first section of underground cabling associated with Section F, the proposed closure of the Crockanboy Road (to Aughnamirigan Road) and the proposed diversion route. The proposed diversion route, should this be necessary, would be the Aughnamirigan Road, Fallagh Road and Lenagh Road. As indicated in the Baseline Environment section, a number of junctions were surveyed in this location, however, the cameras were the subject of unauthorised removal by third parties and no data was obtained (this is indicated in Figure 3.18).

However, the additional environmental information (traffic dataset) which was collected in 2024 does provide information in the form of traffic volumes in this area and this updated information is also presented in Figure 3.18.

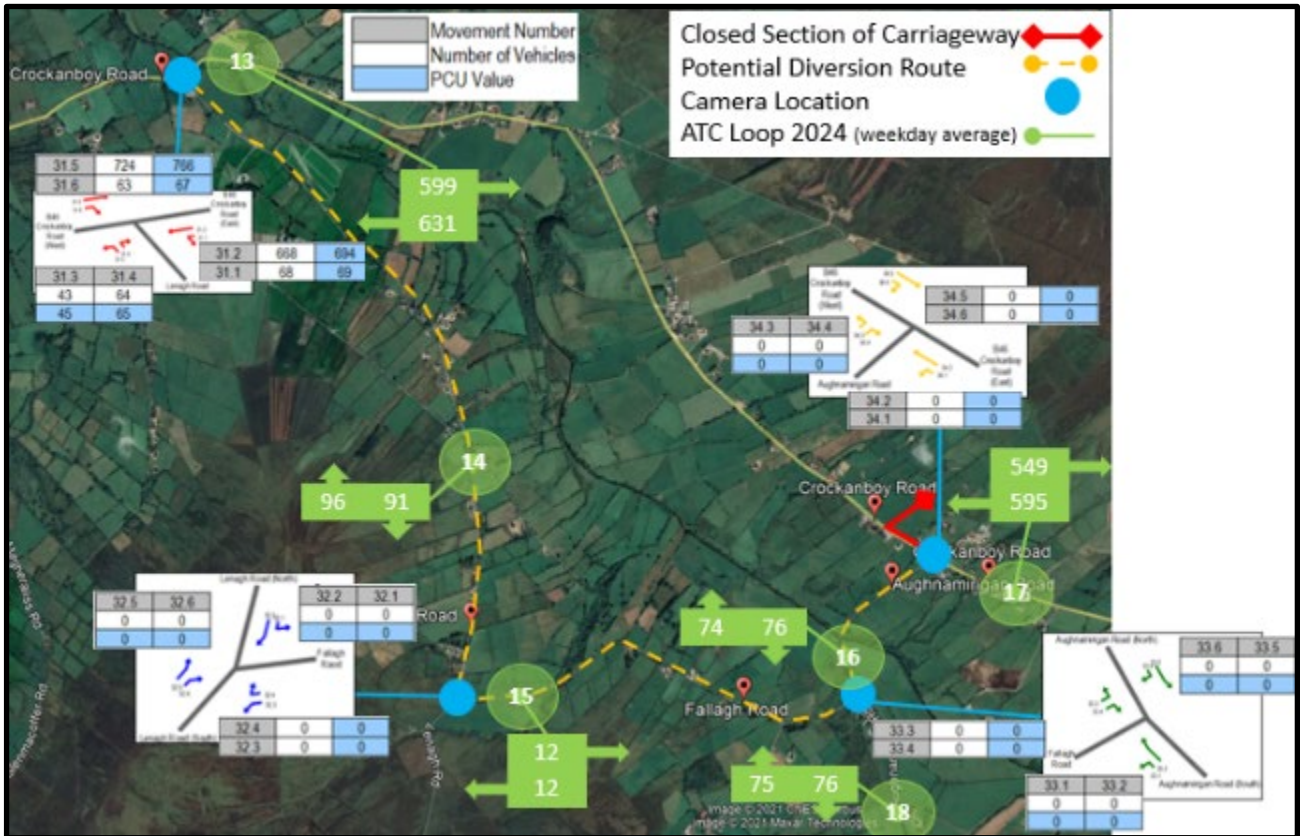


Figure 3.18 – Underground Cabling Section F – Part 1 – Proposed Road Closures & Diversion Route

As indicated in Figure 3.18 above, the Crockanboy Road carries ~1,524no. vehicles two-way (0700 – 1900 hours), although it is noted that the two-way flow in 2024 on Crockanboy Road is 1,230 (0700 – 1900 hours), which represents a significant reduction in traffic volumes.

Lenagh Road (one of the proposed diversion routes) carries 238no. vehicles two-way (0700 – 1900 hours), which has also reduced to 187no. vehicles (0700 – 1900 hours) in 2024. The 2024 dataset indicates that the Fallagh Road (Counter 15) carries 24no.vehicles (0700 – 1900 hours) and the Aughnamirigan Road carries 150no. vehicles (0700 – 1900 hours), indicating that these diversion routes are lightly trafficked and whilst traffic data on the other routes was not obtained in 2021, information is available for 2024. Therefore, should a road closure be required at this location, this would result in a moderate adverse, but short term impact in respect of increased traffic on the diversion route.

Figure 3.19 below indicates the second section of underground cabling associated with Section F, the proposed closure of the Crockanboy Road (between Aughnamirigan Road and Pollanroe Road) and the proposed diversion route. The proposed diversion route, should this be necessary, would be the Pollanroe Road, Greencastle Road and Aughnamirigan Road. As indicated in the Baseline Environment section, a number of junctions were surveyed in this location, however, the cameras were removed without authorisation by persons unknown and no data was obtained (this is indicated in Figure 3.19).

However, the additional environmental information (traffic dataset) which was collected in 2024 does provide information in the form of traffic volumes in this area and this updated information is also presented in Figure 3.19.

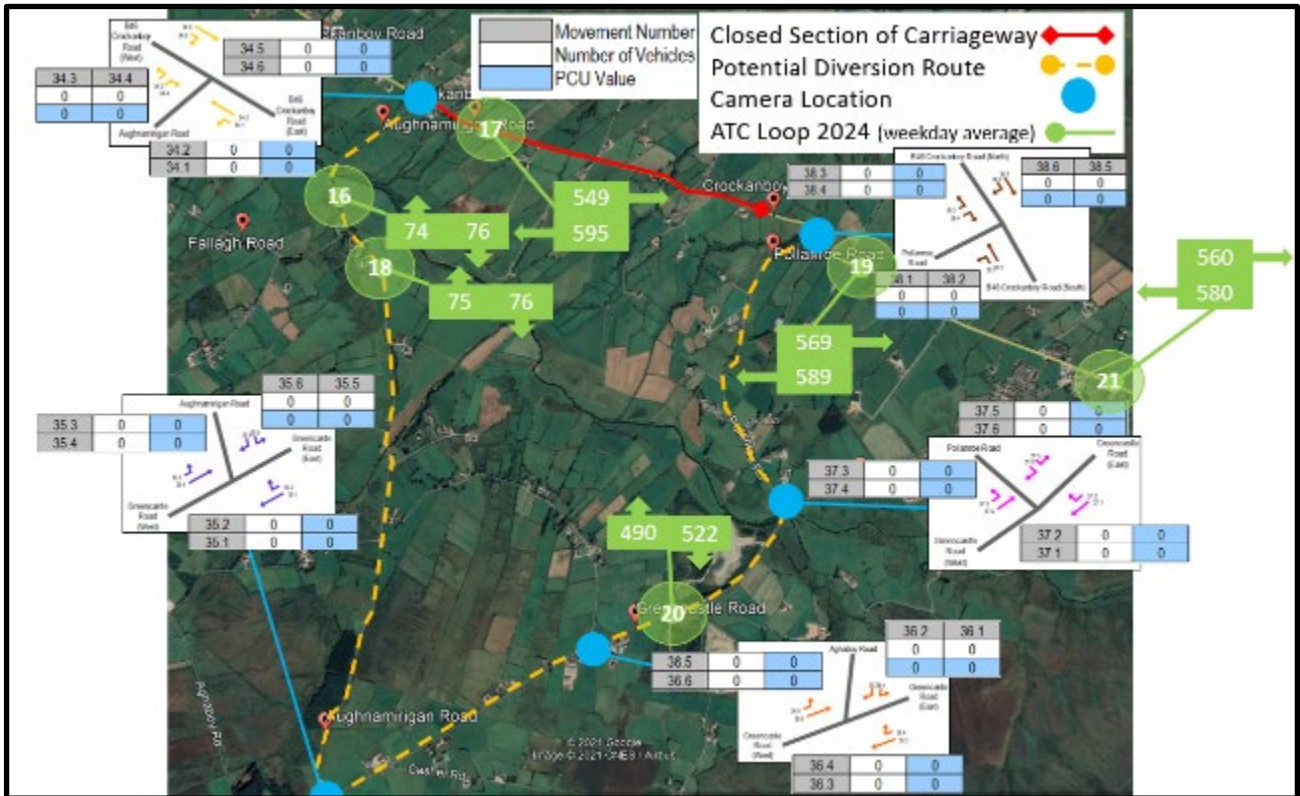


Figure 3.19 – Underground Cabling Section F – Part 2 – Proposed Road Closures & Diversion Route

As indicated in Figure 3.19 above, no traffic data was obtained for this area due to the removal of the traffic cameras during the survey period. From Figure 3.18 above, the Crockanboy Road carries ~1,524no. vehicles (0700 – 1900 hours) in 2021, the 2024 dataset indicates that this volume of traffic has reduced to ~1,164no. vehicles (0700 – 1900 hours). Therefore, should a road closure be required at this location, this would result in a moderate adverse, but short-term impact in respect of increased traffic on the diversion route.

It should be noted that the remainder of the 4.23km of underground cable is within the proposed Curraghinalt mine development or on agricultural lands i.e. outside of the public carriageway. Also, the underground cable section between poles 2154 and 2155 is located within agricultural land and does not require any road works.

4.2.7 Underground Cabling Summary

In summary and as set out in Section 4.2 above;

- All efforts will be made to try and avoid full road closures during underground cabling and to ensure that impacts are reduced to the minimum achievable.
- Should road closures occur, full access will be retained for local residential access, agricultural and emergency vehicles at all times.
- On 'B' class roads working hours will be restricted from 9am to 4pm with the road remaining open to all traffic outside of these hours.

4.3 Construction Traffic Volumes

For the construction phase of the project, 'worst case' estimations of cumulative traffic are provided in Table 15.2 of Chapter 15 of the ES, Table 4.2 of the CEMP and recreated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Construction Traffic – Worst Case Analysis

| Construction Traffic | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Location | Vehicle Type | Estimate of Maximum Total Number of trips through duration of construction phase | Estimate of Average trips per week (construction phase 12-18 months) | Estimate of Average trips per day (construction phase 12-18 months) |
| Public Carriageways | Light Commercial (4x4 or Van) | 7120 | 148 – 99 | 27 – 22 |
| | Heavy Goods Vehicles (16T grab lorry, road tractor with low loader, 14T-26T flatbed lorry with crane arm) | 2440 | 51 - 34 | 9 - 6 |
| Agricultural Access Way | Light Commercial (4x4 or Van) | 3000 | 63 – 42 | 11 – 8 |
| | Agricultural Tractor | 150 | 3 – 2 | <1 |
| | Tracked Excavator | 640 | 13 - 9 | 3 - 2 |

As indicated in Table 2 above, most vehicles associated with the construction phase are light commercial vehicles (4x4 / van) which equates to 27no. trips per day (average of 2.25no. vehicles per hour), with 9no. HGV trips per day (average of 0.75no. vehicles per hour). Therefore, a total of **3no. vehicles per hour** on the public carriageway. Construction vehicles are likely to stay on the main road network (A and B roads) and will only make use of minor roads on the final approach to the work site.

Table 3 below indicates the impact of the 3no. trips per hour on the average hourly trips on the surrounding road network (based on the 2024 surveyed dataset). Table 3 below also considers the change in average flows / minute associated with the construction phase of the Proposed Development.

Table 3: Percentage Impact Analysis – Surveyed Road Network

| Percentage Impact Analysis | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------|
| ATC Location | Road Link | Existing Hourly Average Flow | Existing Vehicles Minute | Construction / Traffic | Proposed Hourly Average Flow | Proposed Vehicles / Minute | % Impact |
| 1 | Woodend Road | 71.1 | 1.19 | 3 | 74.1 | 1.24 | 4.22% |
| 2 | A5 Victoria Road S | 932 | 15.53 | 3 | 935 | 15.58 | 0.32% |
| 3 | B49 W | 365 | 6.08 | 3 | 368 | 6.13 | 0.82% |
| 4 | B49 E | 349 | 5.82 | 3 | 352 | 5.87 | 0.86% |
| 5 | Art Road S | 116.4 | 1.94 | 3 | 119.4 | 1.99 | 2.58% |
| 6 | Ballee Road E | 12.2 | 0.20 | 3 | 15.2 | 0.25 | 24.62% |
| 7 | Sentry Road E | 74.1 | 1.24 | 3 | 77.1 | 1.29 | 4.05% |
| 8 | Towncastle Road E | 9.2 | 0.15 | 3 | 12.2 | 0.20 | 32.55% |
| 9 | Hollyhill Road E | 10.5 | 0.18 | 3 | 13.5 | 0.23 | 28.48% |
| 10 | Meendamp Road S | 8.9 | 0.15 | 3 | 11.9 | 0.20 | 33.83% |
| 11 | Meenadoo Road E | 1.1 | 0.02 | 3 | 4.1 | 0.07 | 272.73% |
| 12 | Gorticashel Road E | 7.6 | 0.13 | 3 | 10.6 | 0.18 | 39.65% |
| 13 | Crockanboy Road E | 102.5 | 1.71 | 3 | 105.5 | 1.76 | 2.93% |
| 14 | Lenagh Road | 15.6 | 0.26 | 3 | 18.6 | 0.31 | 19.21 |
| 15 | Fallagh Road | 2.0 | 0.03 | 3 | 5.00 | 0.08 | 147.54 |
| 16 | Aughnamirigan Road N | 12.5 | 0.21 | 3 | 15.5 | 0.26 | 24.06% |
| 17 | Crockanboy Road E | 95.4 | 1.59 | 3 | 98.4 | 1.64 | 3.15% |
| 18 | Aughnamirigan Road S | 12.6 | 0.21 | 3 | 15.6 | 0.24 | 23.75 |
| 19 | Crockanboy Road E | 96.6 | 1.61 | 3 | 99.6 | 1.66 | 3.11% |

| Percentage Impact Analysis | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|------|------|---|------|------|-------|
| 20 | Greencastle Road E | 84.3 | 1.41 | 3 | 87.3 | 1.46 | 3.56 |
| 21 | Crockanboy Road E | 95.0 | 1.58 | 3 | 98.0 | 1.63 | 3.16% |

As indicated in Table 3 above, the percentage impact of the predicted volumes of construction traffic upon the main roads (Crockanboy Road, Greencastle Road, Sentry Road, Art Road, B49, Woodend Road and A5 Victoria Road) is significantly lower than 10%² and therefore, does not represent any significant impact upon the surrounding road network.

In relation to the minor roads listed in Table 3 above, the percentage impact of the 3no. trips per hour does exceed 10%. However, the existing baseline volume of traffic must be considered in this scenario, for example Fallagh Road currently accommodates an average of 2no. vehicles per hour, so an additional 3no. trips associated with construction traffic will not result in a significant impact upon these minor roads.

Therefore, on the basis of the information presented above the Proposed Development will have an insignificant impact upon the surrounding road network.

² Threshold on Uncongested Road Networks

5 SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

5.1 Construction Phase

During the construction phase, there are sections of overhead lines and sections of underground cabling to be installed, both of which have a different impact upon the surrounding road network.

The volume of traffic associated with the construction phase is low, with the majority of trips being made by 4x4 vehicles or vans, with small volumes of HGV's (all normal road vehicles, there are no abnormal loads associated with this proposal) as indicated in Section 4 above.

5.1.1 Overhead Line

Construction vehicles will make use of the public highway or existing accesses and therefore, no modification or mitigation works will be required to the public road network or utilised accesses.

The impact of the Overhead Line will have an insignificant effect on the surrounding highway network due to the low volume of traffic associated with the construction phase and the low volume of background traffic.

5.1.2 Underground Cabling

The underground cabling is split over 7no. sections and as with the overhead line, access will be via the public road or existing accesses.

There may be road closures associated with underground cabling, however, all efforts will be made to avoid this and minimise any impact on existing road users. Road closures, if required, will be agreed with DfI Roads in advance and follow all statutory procedures.

Appropriate diversion routes will be agreed whilst ensuring full access is retained for local residential access and emergency vehicles via the use of steel plates which will be held on site.

The majority of traffic links considered within this assessment carry low levels of traffic and therefore any associated diversion is unlikely to have a significant impact upon the surrounding road network.

5.2 Operational Phase

The operational phase will have an insignificant impact upon the surrounding highway network as operational traffic volumes are very low and limited to maintenance vehicles infrequently.

5.3 Mitigation

There are no proposed modifications or mitigation measures as part of this project as construction vehicles will make use of the existing public road network and existing accesses.

5.4 Residual Impacts

There are no residual transport impacts associated with the Proposed Development as the construction, operational and decommissioning stages all make use of the existing public road network and existing accesses.

5.5 Transboundary Impacts

Given the low levels of hourly traffic associated with the Proposed Development there are unlikely to be any transport transboundary impacts, the predicted construction traffic fits within the standard deviation of daily traffic flows (10% day to day).

5.6 Cumulative Impacts

The Proposed Development generates a very low volume of average hourly traffic on the surrounding road network (during construction, operational and decommissioning phases) and therefore, is unlikely to result in any significant cumulative assessment with other Proposed Developments utilising the same road network.

6 CONSULTATION RESPONSES AND SUBMISSIONS

6.1 Statutory Body Consultation Responses

The consultation responses from DfI Roads were considered fully in Section 15.2.2 of Chapter 15 Traffic of the submitted ES (June 2021).

Since the submission of the ES, further consultation responses have been received from DfI Roads and these are summarised as follows.

- LA11/2019/1000/F (dated 9th July 2021) – DfI Roads Western Division confirms that the content of the Agent's chapter 15 – Traffic and Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) is noted. No comments are offered on Chapter 15 as it is acknowledged that the Applicant, NIE Networks, is a statutory undertaker and would be entitled to pursue this works under the Street Works (Northern Ireland) Order with appropriate notice and traffic management agreed with the Department in advance. DfI Roads provided informatives for the planning authorities consideration.
- LA10/2019/1386/F (dated 9th July 2021) – DfI Roads Western Division confirms that the content of the Agent's Chapter 15 – Traffic and Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) is noted. No comments are offered on Chapter 15 as it is acknowledged that the Applicant, NIE Networks, is a statutory undertaker and would be entitled to pursue this works under the Street Works (Northern Ireland) Order with appropriate notice and traffic management agreed with the Department in advance. DfI Roads provided informatives for the planning authorities consideration.
- LA10/2019/1386/F & LA11/2019/1000/F (dated 10th August 2021) – DfI Roads reiterates that NIE are statutory undertaker and can, under the Streets Works (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, place its services on adopted roads with the agreement of the Department. They have proven expertise in undertaking this type of work. In terms of the ES, the potential methods set out within it are sufficient for DfI Roads to be content with impacts on the public road network being sufficiently analysed and described. The final agreed method, traffic management and timelines will be discussed and agreed prior to the works commencing.

6.2 Relevant Third Party Representations

A number of objections have been raised in relation to the scheme, only 1no. objection referenced traffic, Objection 28 dated 13th February 2020 and states '*Narrow road and connection highways to farms and workplaces will be disrupted on a highly unsocial level and may even be dangerous.*'

The hourly traffic volumes associated with the Proposed Development, as set out above, are small with an average of 3no. vehicles per hour, the majority of which will be 4x4 / vans and therefore, the impact upon the surrounding road network will not be significant, access to private residences will be retained at all times and hence there will be no disruption on any level or associated danger.

7 REVIEW OF NEED FOR ADDITIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION – BASELINE DATA

A new suite of traffic surveys via Automatic Traffic Counter (ATC) loops at strategic locations along the length of the route has been commissioned to provide an updated dataset on the traffic surveys collected in 2021 and presented within the ES. This updated suite of surveys constitutes additional environmental information and provides a comparable dataset to ensure the originally collected data remains valid and also provided information in the area where the 2021 survey cameras were removed. This dataset has been provided and considered within this Technical Report.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 15 of the ES considered the traffic impacts of the construction phase of the Proposed Development with the operational phase generating small insignificant volumes of traffic. During the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development the existing public road network and existing accesses will be utilised, there are no modifications or mitigation measures proposed.

The impacts during the construction phase of the Proposed Development are considered to be insignificant, with low volumes of daily traffic assessed, the majority of traffic associated with the Proposed Development during the construction phase is 4x4 / vans with a small number of HGV's. All vehicles are standard road vehicles and no abnormal loads are associated with this Proposed Development.

There is the possibility of diversions associated with the underground cabling of the Proposed Development and these diversion routes have been considered within Chapter 15 of the ES. An updated suite of traffic survey data has been commissioned to ensure the originally collected data remains valid and this has been considered within this Technical Report.

The Proposed Development does not conflict with national or local policies and there are no constraints to the Proposed Development in the context of traffic.