



1 STUDY AREA CONSTRAINTS / 2 OPTION IDENTIFICATION

Introduction

Letterkenny is the healthcare, educational and retail centre of County Donegal. Current levels of development, population and traffic within the town and its environs has given rise to unacceptable climate, safety and congestion issues.

To facilitate solutions to these problems, Donegal County Council intends to deliver a multi-modal intervention in south Letterkenny which will improve connectivity between Letterkenny and West Donegal, enhance accessibility across the town for all modes and support compact growth, as part of an integrated approach which aims to promote sustainable travel.

The aim of this project will be to form a catalyst for positive physical, environmental, social and economic change in Letterkenny and support progression to city status. This Project is the Letterkenny Southern Network Project (LSNP).

The LSNP is supported by European, National, Regional and Local Policies. Current and proposed future Letterkenny Plans identify the LSNP as an important strategic route for the town, having been supported in policy since identification in 2009.

ROD-AECOM, the appointed consultant, has scoped a study area, identified constraints within same and subsequently developed options for assessment in accordance with the TII Project Management Guidelines.



WE ARE HERE



Donegal County Council now invites comments on the developed options. Your feedback is important and will help inform this assessment process. This non-statutory public consultation will run from 18 May 2023 - 15 June 2023 with an exhibition on display at the Letterkenny Public Services Centre.



Need for the Project

Letterkenny is recognised as the key economic engine of the Donegal economy, and a strategic regional centre for the North-West, inclusive of its broader function as a key component of the cross-border North-West City Region (the fourth largest urban agglomeration on the island of Ireland) along with Derry City, Strabane and their intervening hinterlands. Letterkenny's growth and strengthening as a major centre of critical mass together with its wider hinterland is critical in the context of National, Regional, Local and Cross-Border importance.

The spatial pattern of land use development over the past 20 years has resulted in significant sprawl of suburban housing and road infrastructure to the extreme edges of the town primarily to the north, north-west and north-east of the town. Current and proposed future Letterkenny Plans aim to rectify this.

Currently the town can be described as a motorized vehicle-dominated town, there is a need for a targeted and effective suite of sustainable mode schemes to encourage and incentivise the use of sustainable modes of transport as an alternative to the car (tailored to the specific needs of Letterkenny);

- The need for a complementary roads-based strategy primarily designed to address long standing strategic traffic issues that impact on the proper functioning of the town and, thereby, the experience of those living, working, visiting and doing business in the town, as well as those passing through;
- The need to provide for the safety of all transport users in the town
- To integrate land use and transport planning to ensure the appropriate development of all lands within the Local Plan boundary having adequately assessed the anticipated transport impacts and future transport demand requirements.
- To maximise opportunities to remove congestion in the town with a particular focus on the town centre providing a more sustainable future.
- To aid the delivery of a Regional multi modal transport Hub.





Strategic Objectives

The Strategic Objectives developed for the Letterkenny Southern Network Project are:

- To provide suitable infrastructure to cater for increased traffic volumes as result of implementation of the Ten-T improvements, whilst improving connectivity major centres to the West of Donegal;
- To promote and enhance sustainable and economic growth of Letterkenny by improving network capacity and journey times;
- To reduce the risk of collisions by removing traffic from heavily congested sections of the network;
- To promote a modal shift, increase permeability and connectivity, reducing the car dominance that currently resides in Letterkenny;
- To improve social inclusion and enhance regional accessibility to centres of employment, healthcare and education from peripheral settlements in Letterkenny and also those commuting from the West of Donegal;
- To reduce negative impacts on the environment.

These objectives are based on 6 multiple criteria headings required by the Department of Transport “Common Appraisal Framework” (CAF) criteria as follows:

Physical Activity



Economy



Safety



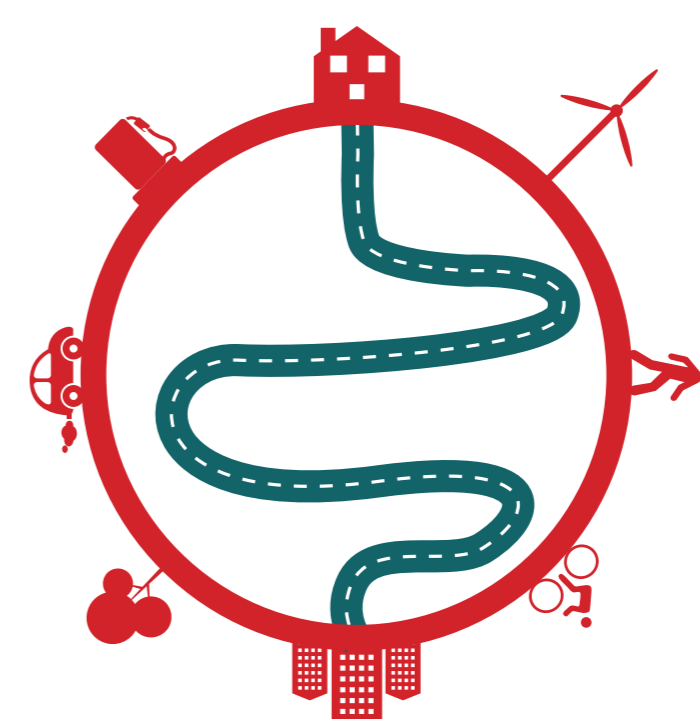
Integration



Accessibility & Social Inclusion



Environment





Multi-Modal Solution

The Letterkenny Southern Networks Project aims to provide a robust all-encompassing solution which will address the current issues experienced within the town, and will cater for its regeneration and future expansion underpinning its strategic growth ambitions.

The solution will be multifaceted and will cater for pedestrians and cyclists, public transport and private vehicles to safely move around, and pass through Letterkenny.

Potential Multi-modal solutions may include the following:

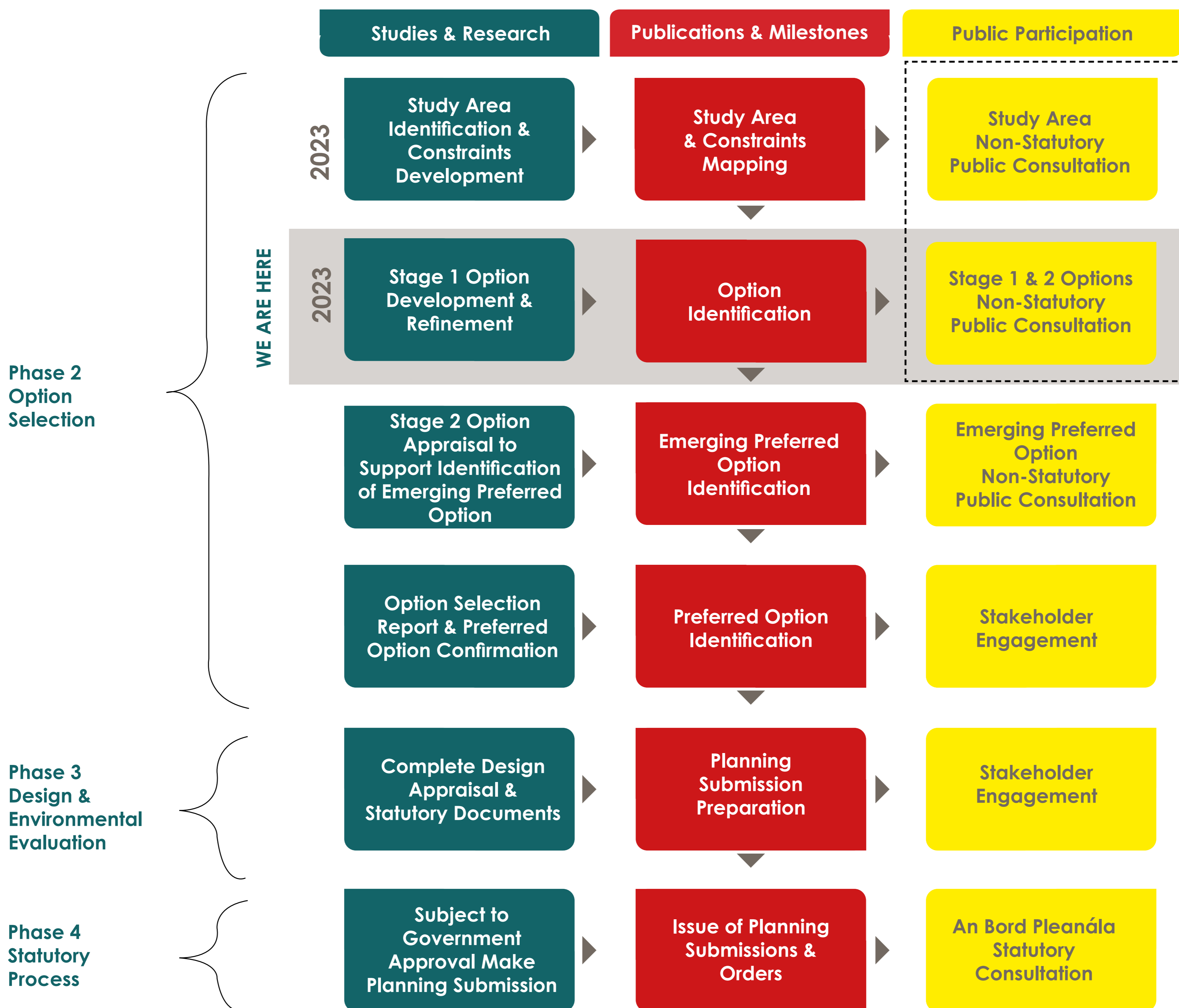
Mode	Issue	Potential Solution
Pedestrians & Cyclists (Active Travel)	Severance caused by the River Swilly	New pedestrian/cycling river crossings
	Infrastructure deficit	Upgrade facilities and provide new safe crossing points of roads within the Study Area along desire lines
	Park & Walk Facilities	Consider provision of park and walk facilities at key locations within the Study Area with safe pedestrian and cycling facilities linking into the town centre
	Increased safety for vulnerable road users	Improved active travel infrastructure across the network by providing walking and cycling facilities
Public Transport	Limited bus coverage within Study Area	New infrastructure to facilitate enhanced bus services to developed areas, including potential river crossings
	Distances to Schools	New facilities to prioritise public transport and school bus services
	Access to Bus Stops	Improved pedestrian facilities linking to bus stops.
Private Vehicles	Congestion due to lack of alternative routes	New river crossings
	Mixing of Regional and Local Traffic	Alternative route for Regional traffic, whilst taking into consideration future growth demands to the south of Letterkenny
	Collisions	Consideration of improved infrastructure, manage traffic volumes at network hot spots
	Parking Facilities	Consider provision of park and walk facilities at key locations within the Study Area



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Project Roadmap

The following Project Roadmap outlines each stage of the design development and associated public consultation including both the non-statutory and the statutory consultation stages. We are currently in Stage 1 Option Development and Refinement which involves the identification of Options that will proceed to the Stage 2 appraisal process





Option Selection

The project is currently in Phase 2: Options Selection, which is a 3-stage process. The three stages to select the preferred option are outlined below

Phase 2 option selection	Stage 1 - Preliminary options assessment
	Stage 2 - project appraisal matrix
	Stage 3 - Preferred option

During the initial phase of the Stage 1 Preliminary Options Assessment, we identified feasible Route Corridor Options within the Study Area, whilst taking account of the identified constraints.

Initially 16 options were developed covering a range of potential scenarios, including a Do-Minimum scenario. The Do-Minimum scenario is similar to a “do-nothing option” (i.e. just maintain the existing network), but allows for implementation of any transportation related infrastructure or services that are already committed within the Study Area.

These 16 options were subjected to the Stage 1 Preliminary Options Assessment In accordance with the TII Project Management Guidelines and Project Appraisal Guidelines under the headings of: Engineering, Environment and Economy.

Engineering



Environment



Economy



The Stage 1 Preliminary Options Assessment has now been completed and has resulted in 6 improvement options and the Do-Minimum Option being taken forward to the Stage 2 Project Appraisal Matrix.

These options are shown as 200m wide corridors on the adjacent plans. These corridors do not represent the actual width of the proposed road development or the lands to be acquired. The corridors simply indicate the lands within which a road alignment could feasibly be developed.

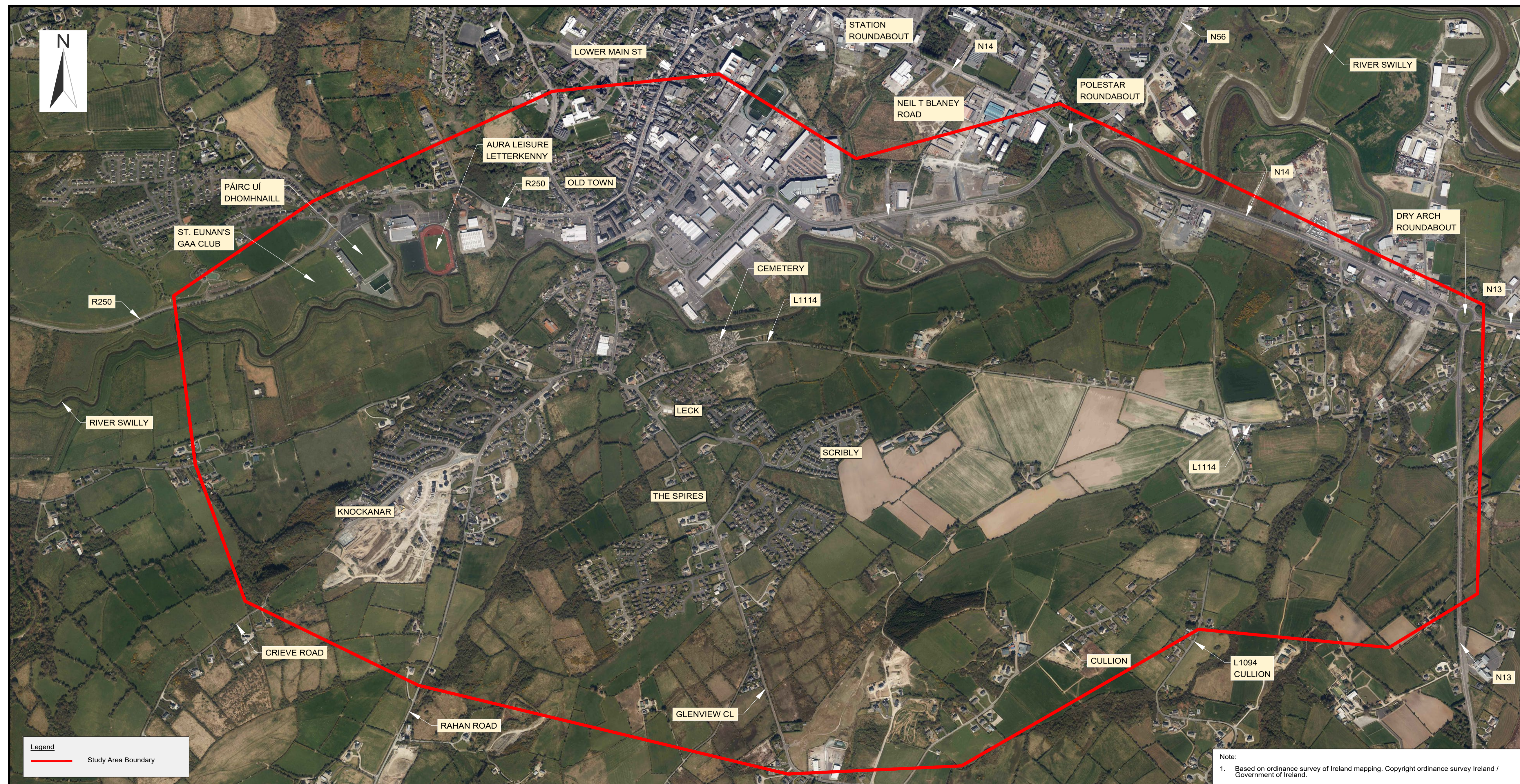
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Study Area Boundary



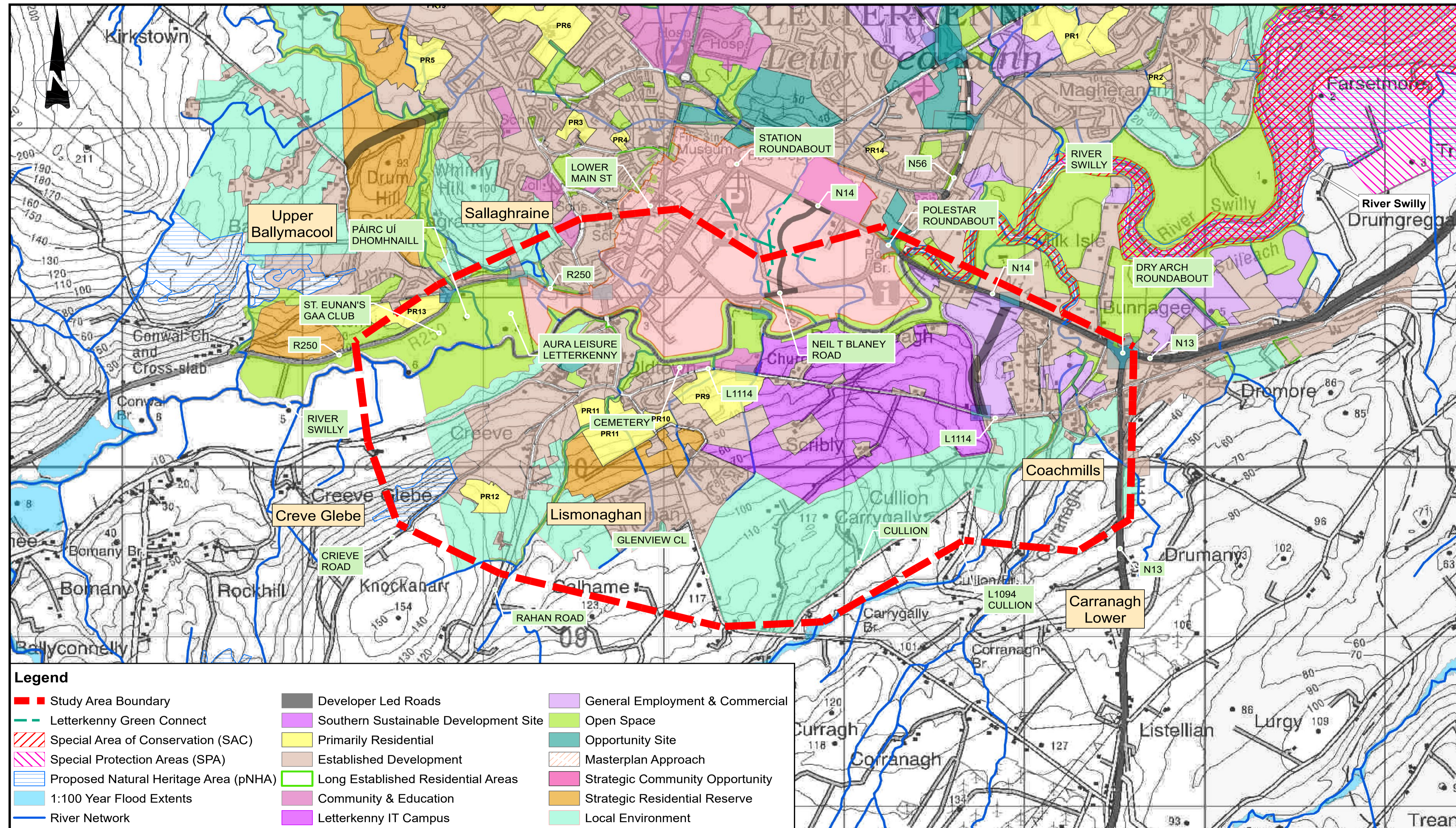
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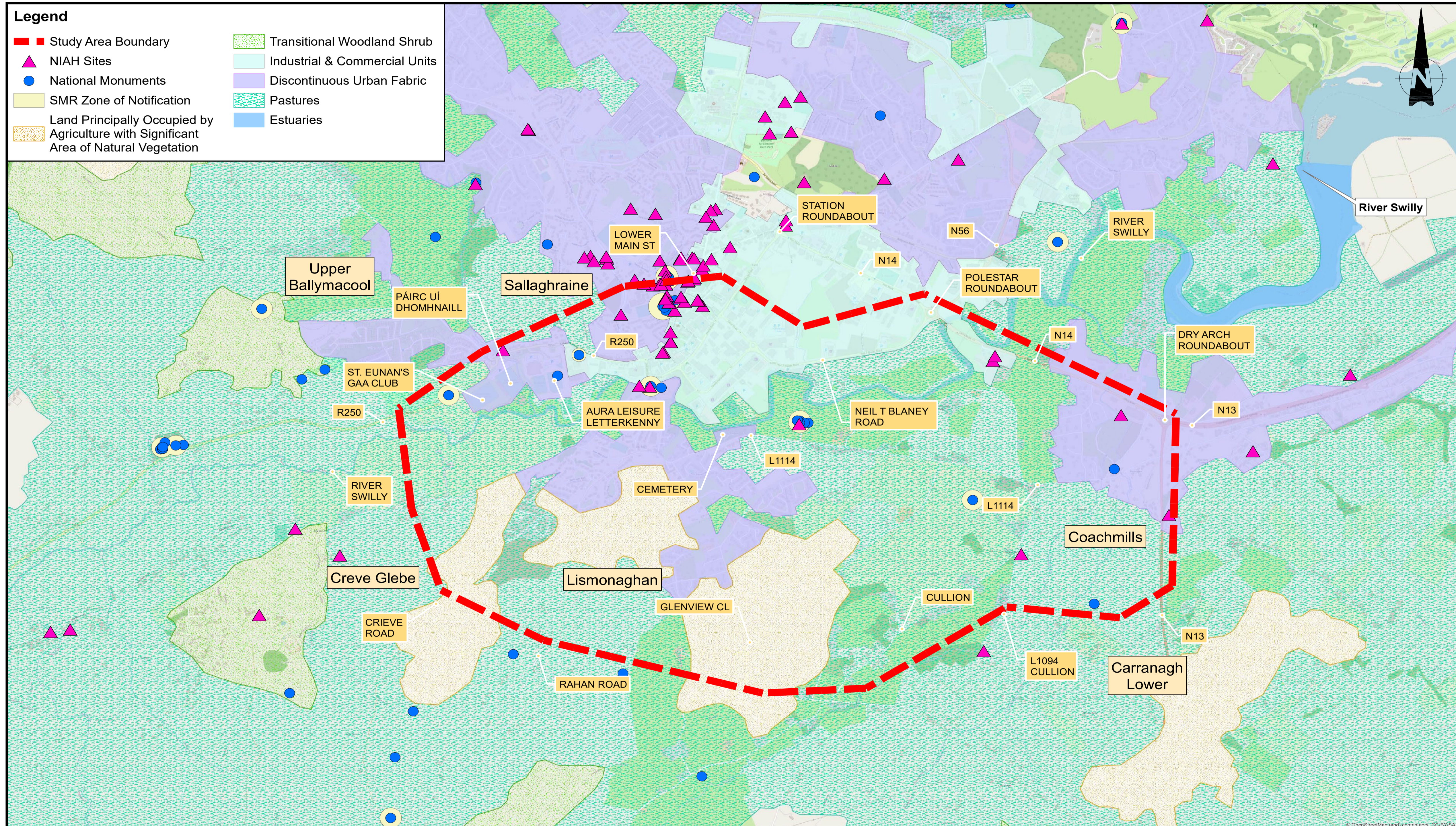
Natural Constraints - Environmental





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Artificial Constraints - Engineering



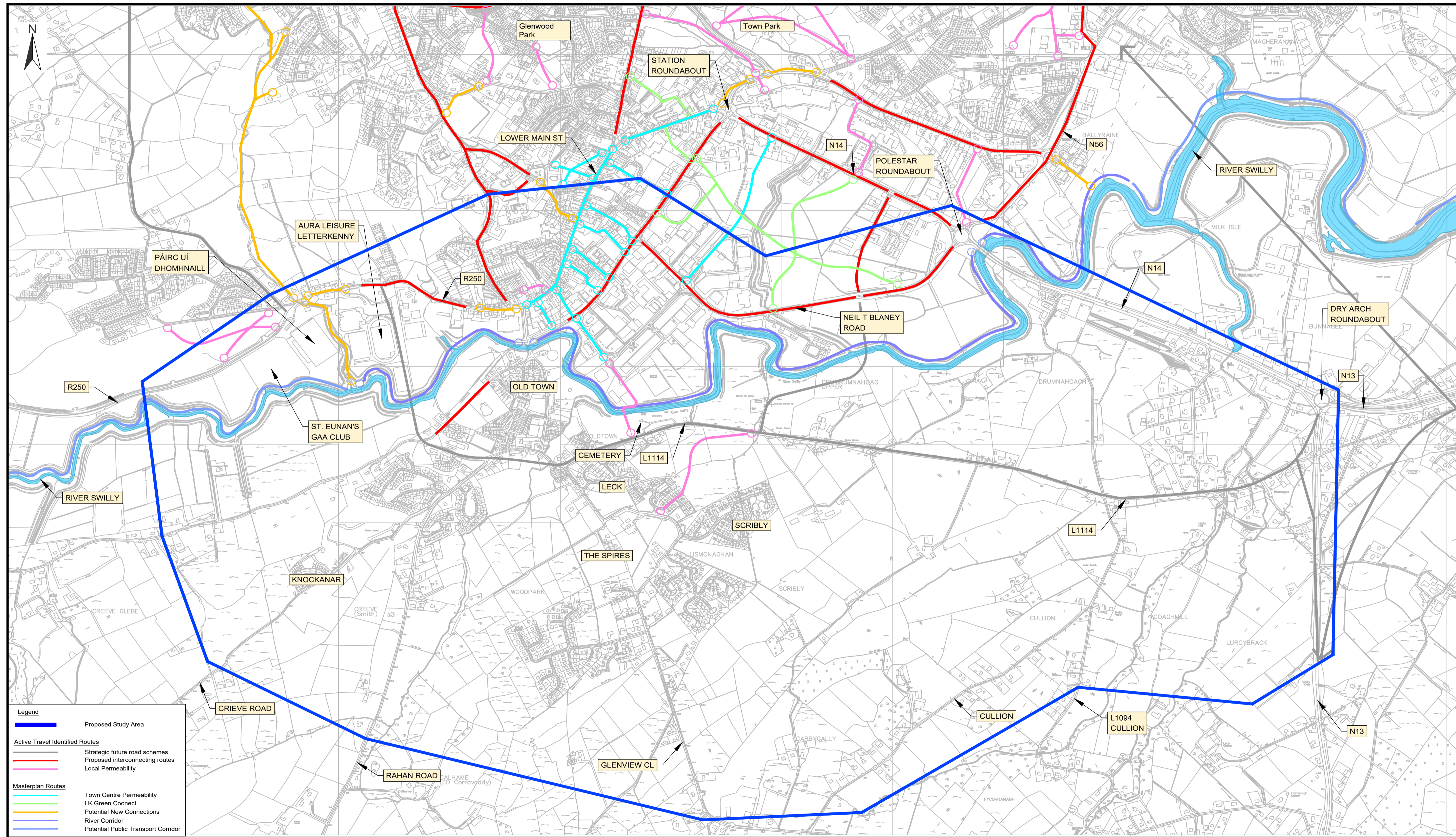
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Improvements currently under Consideration



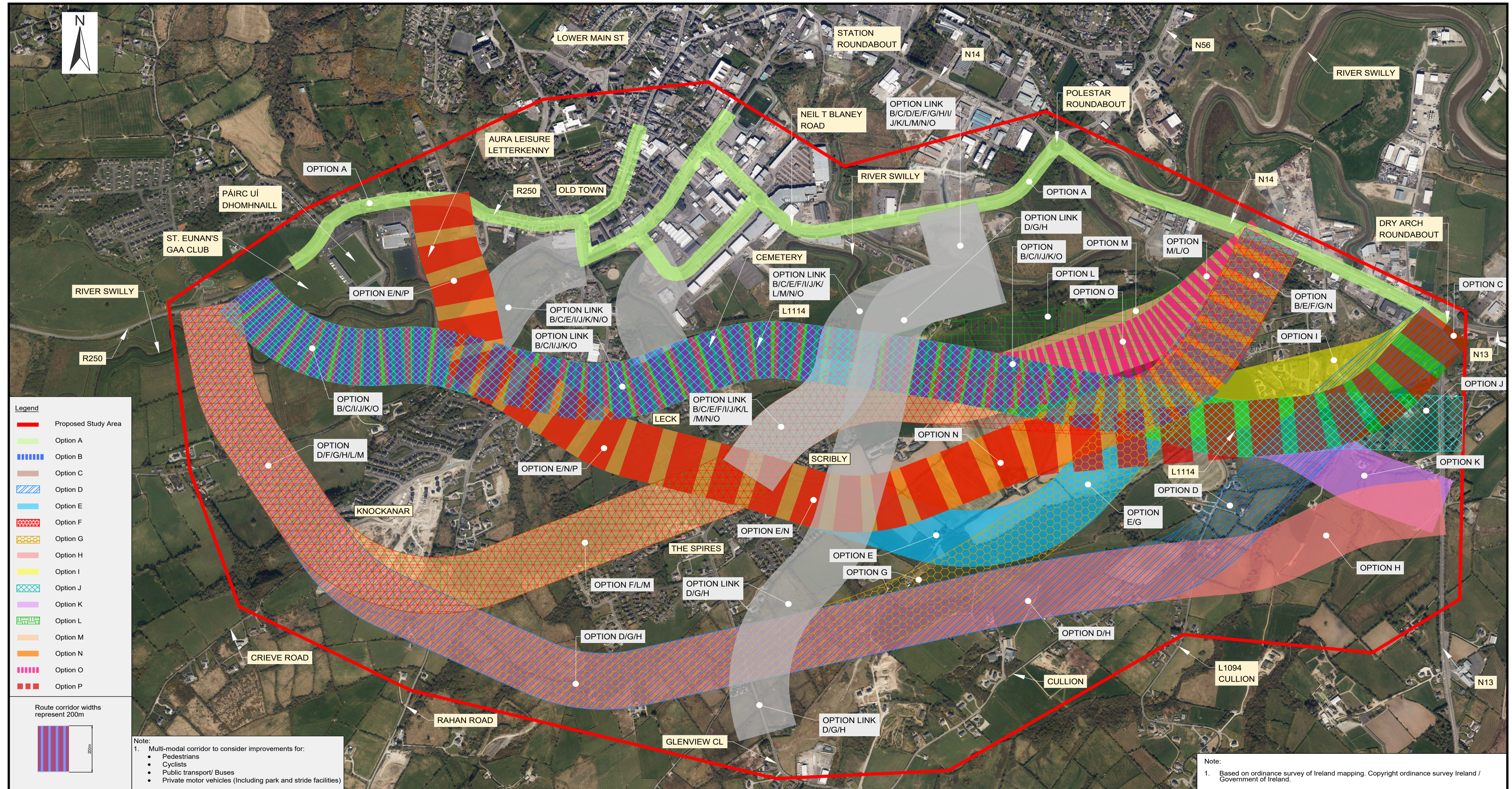
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Preliminary Options Considered



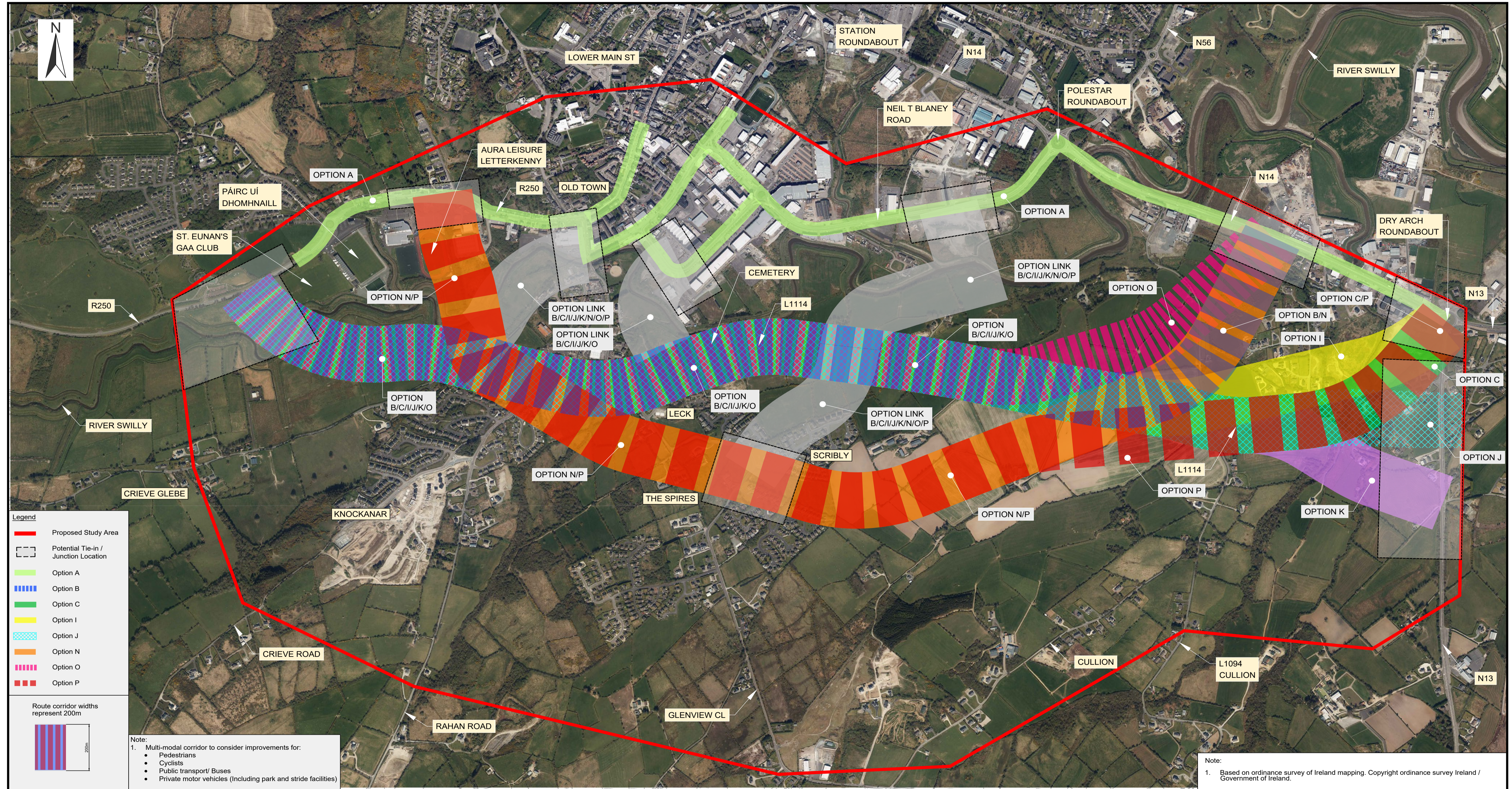
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Proposed Corridor Options identified for further consideration





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What Happens Next?

The feedback and submissions received through this public consultation will be considered by the project team as part of the Options Selection process.

Over the next few months, the next stage will involve the analysis of the options. Each of the Options that have progressed to Stage 2 of the Option Selection process will be subject to the assessment criteria in accordance with the Six Common Appraisal Framework (CAF) Criteria headings, Economy, Safety, Accessibility & Social Inclusion, Physical Activity, Environment, Integration. This will result in an Emerging Preferred Route Corridor.

Economy	Safety	Accessibility and Social Inclusion	
Efficiency and Effectiveness.	Collision reduction.	Deprived geographical areas.	
Wider economic impacts.	Security of vulnerable road users.	Access to facilities and reduction in severance	
Transport Quality and reliability - road/rail interface.	Stage F1 road safety audit.	Impacts for vulnerable groups.	
Funding impacts.			

Physical Activity	Integration	Environment	
Health benefits of a greater number of pedestrian and cycle journeys	Transport integration for all modes.	Air quality and climate.	Architectural heritage.
Absenteeism benefits.	Land use integration.	Noise.	Archaeological and cultural heritage.
Journey ambience benefits.	Geographical integration.	Landscape and visual. Biodiversity - flora and fauna.	Agriculture.
	Other government policy integration.	Land and soils.	Non-agricultural properties.
		Waste.	Socio-Economic.
		Hydrology.	Population.

Any comments received at this Public Consultation (May-June 2023) will be taken on board as part of the Stage 2 assessment process, when refining the options and selecting the Emerging Preferred Route Corridor. A further public consultation shall be held displaying the Emerging Preferred route corridor prior to finalising the option selection process.