

N26 Foxford to Mount Falcon Project

INFORMATION BROCHURE



ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTIONS PUBLIC CONSULTATION 2

30th APRIL – 16th MAY 2025

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Mayo County Council in partnership with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the Department of Transport are developing the N26 Foxford to Mount Falcon Project. Mayo County Council has appointed RPS Consulting Engineers as Technical Advisors to progress the Planning and Design for the Project.

The N26 national primary road is a strategic corridor which provides important access to North Mayo, linking Ballina, the second largest town in County Mayo, with Foxford and Swinford towns and the N5 corridor.

The section of the N26 under consideration in this project, the **N26 Foxford to Mount Falcon Project**, is located immediately south of a previous improvement of the N26 within the townland of Drumrevagh at Mount Falcon and extends south to Foxford. The Study Area is approximately 8km long.

This section of the existing N26 traverses rural countryside. The existing road has restricted capacity due to its limited width and partially sub-standard alignment. There are no existing facilities for non-motorised users along this section of the N26. Vehicles travelling at high speeds, combined with the lack of hard shoulders or suitable verge widths make the road unsuitable for pedestrian and cyclist use.

When these elements are considered in conjunction with the high number of junctions and private accesses located on the existing road, the result is that there are limited overtaking opportunities and unstable traffic flow regimes along the existing N26. It is considered that the existing N26 is economically inefficient and detracts from the development and growth of the region.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

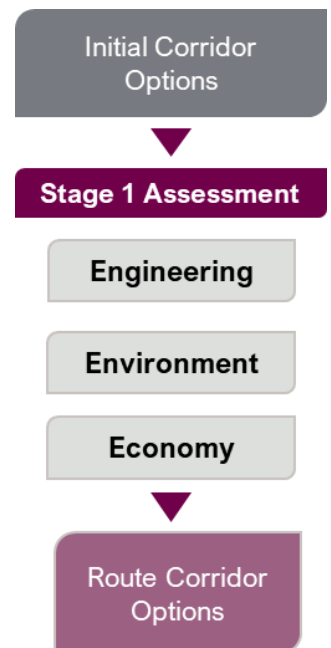
The **N26 Foxford to Mount Falcon Project** has completed Stage 1 of Phase 2 'Options Selection' of the TII Project Management Guidelines.

Stage 1 of the Options Selection considers identified constraints and the feedback received following Public Consultation 1 (held in November 2024) to develop a range of preliminary corridor options within the Study Area. The preliminary corridor options were assessed under three criteria; Engineering, Environment and Economy, and a shortlist identified to proceed to Stage 2 of the Options Selection process. This shortlist comprises several 'Route Corridor Options' shown on the map in this brochure.

Mayo County Council now invite residents, locals, stakeholders, the public and interested parties to participate in this second non-statutory public consultation running between Wednesday 30th April to Friday 16th May 2025. The aim is to receive your feedback and views on the Route Corridor Options.

Your participation in this consultation is important and we value any feedback given to the project team that may assist and help inform the project.

We request that your feedback be submitted by **Friday 16th May 2025** and we have provided feedback forms for this purpose.



An in person public consultation exhibition will be held on **Wednesday 30th April 2025 at the Great National Hotel Ballina, Co. Mayo from 2pm to 7pm**. Members of the project team will be available to answer questions on the Project and to assist you with providing your feedback.

ROUTE CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

During Stage 1 of the Options Selection process, several preliminary corridor options were examined within the Study Area. The preliminary corridor options consider key constraints identified; feedback received during Public Consultation 1 and desirable minimum geometric parameters outlined in the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) design guidance. In total, nine preliminary corridor options were examined.

In line with the TII Project Management Guidelines, a Do-Nothing / Do-Minimum scenario was also considered. This option retains the existing N26 without any improvements and serves as a baseline for assessing corridor options during the Options Selection process.

Divided Road Cross-section

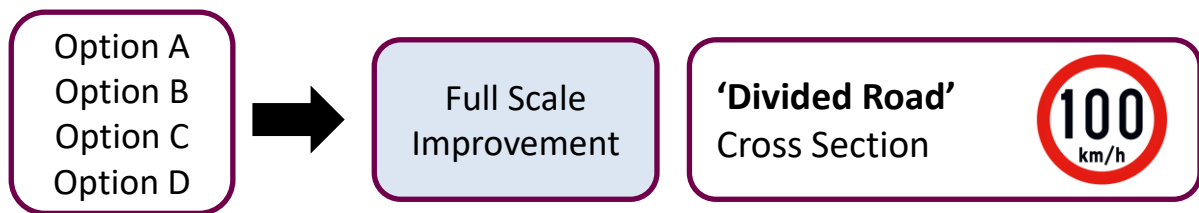
At this early stage of options development, a review of cross-section types for an improved N26 has been considered. On 14th September 2023, the Department of Transport published the findings of a National Speed Limit Review, which is part of a commitment outlined in the Programme for Government and is also an action within the Government’s Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030. The primary aim of the Speed Limit Review is to enhance road safety while addressing vehicle carbon emissions and ensuring driver compliance.

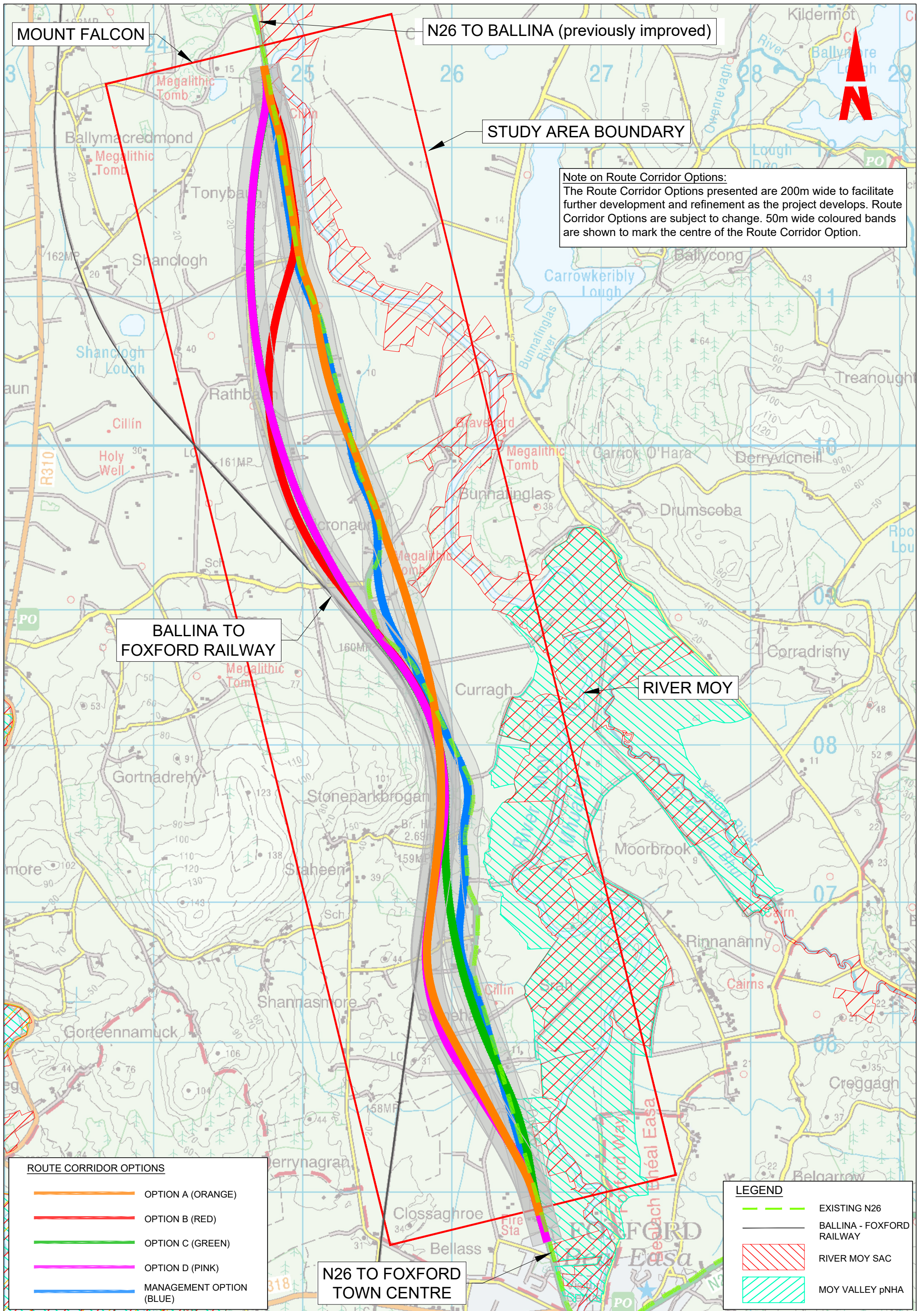
This review made several recommendations regarding speed limits across the Irish road network. A key recommendation relevant to the N26 Foxford to Mount Falcon project states that *“All new sections of the rural road network that are to have a speed limit of over 80 km/h, which have not yet entered the planning process, should be designed as divided roads and include appropriate segregated provisions for pedestrians and cyclists.”*

As a result of this recommendation, all corridor options that propose a speed limit of 100 km/h have been developed based on a ‘divided’ road cross-section. This cross-section includes a median divide of opposing traffic flows to prioritise road safety. This cross-section type represents a shift from the existing N26 single carriageway arrangement and introduces certain restrictions, including:

- **Junctions:** Junction types are limited which may have impacts for local access (left-in/left-out arrangements, roundabouts, and grade-separated junctions will be permitted).
- **Crossing Opportunities:** The presence of a median divide restricts crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists. Residents and businesses may also experience limitations in accessing the road directly, as right turns will not be allowed.
- **Land Acquisition:** The wider cross-section requires more land acquisition, which may impact surrounding properties and land use.

Despite these restrictions, the divided road cross-section facilitates a posted speed limit of 100 km/h. In total, four of the five Route Corridor Options presented as part of this Public Consultation are based on a divided road cross-section, as outlined below:





MOUNT FALCON

N26 TO BALLINA (previously improved)

STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

Note on Route Corridor Options:
 The Route Corridor Options presented are 200m wide to facilitate further development and refinement as the project develops. Route Corridor Options are subject to change. 50m wide coloured bands are shown to mark the centre of the Route Corridor Option.

BALLINA TO FOXFORD RAILWAY

RIVER MOY

N26 TO FOXFORD TOWN CENTRE

ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTIONS

- OPTION A (ORANGE)
- OPTION B (RED)
- OPTION C (GREEN)
- OPTION D (PINK)
- MANAGEMENT OPTION (BLUE)

LEGEND

- EXISTING N26
- BALLINA - FOXFORD RAILWAY
- RIVER MOY SAC
- MOY VALLEY pNHA

OVERVIEW OF CROSS-SECTION ASSESSMENT (Continued)

Undivided Road Cross-Section

In addition to the Divided Road cross-section, an undivided road cross-section has also been considered. This route corridor option is referred to as ‘a Management Option’. The Management Option focuses on localised ‘online’ improvements to the existing N26 rather than large scale improvements. The Management Option utilises the existing N26 and proposes localised sections of ‘offline’ realignment to address horizontal geometry deficiencies. The Management Option maintains the existing single carriageway (undivided) cross-section and consequently, in line with the recommendations of the Speed Limit Review 2023, this option introduces a reduced posted speed limit of 80 km/h. This undivided road cross-section introduces certain restrictions, including:

- **Access:** The absence of a median divide facilitates right turns and road crossing manoeuvres but may introduce delays for vehicles travelling straight on. It is likely that the number of existing direct accesses would still need to be minimised.
- **Land Acquisition:** Using significant sections of the existing N26 represents an ‘online’ improvement project rather than new ‘offline’ construction. However, the existing N26 cross-section will be widened to meet current design standards and therefore property frontage along the N26 will be impacted.
- **Speed Limit:** The Management Option is un-divided and will require a reduction in the posted speed limit to 80 km/h, in accordance with the Speed Limit Review 2023 recommendations.
- **Safety:** To improve the existing N26 the design would seek to reduce the frequency of existing junctions and direct accesses. This would likely be achieved by stopping up and/or combining existing access points. Reducing the frequency of existing junctions and direct accesses will improve the safety and resilience of the N26.



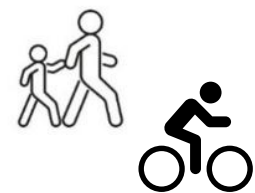
ACTIVE TRAVEL

The N26 Foxford to Mount Falcon project will incorporate active travel facilities to enhance mobility and accessibility in the area. Active travel, which includes walking and cycling, is essential for creating sustainable communities.

The National Development Plan (NDP) aims to invest in high-quality sustainable mobility solutions that improve quality of life, support a low-carbon society, and enhance economic competitiveness. By integrating pedestrian and cycleway facilities, the project will foster greater connectivity and accessibility in the area.

Active travel offers numerous advantages:

- **Boosts Tourism:** Attracts visitors to local attractions.
- **Supports Local Businesses:** Increases foot traffic to shops and services.
- **Improves Air Quality:** Reduces vehicle emissions for a healthier environment.
- **Enhances Public Health:** Promotes physical fitness and reduces health issues.
- **Saves Money:** Lowers transportation costs by reducing car reliance.
- **Reduces Congestion:** Alleviates traffic, making roads safer and more efficient.
- **Aligns with sustainability goals and contributes to a more vibrant community.**



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Over the coming months, the project team will review the submissions received as part of Stage 2 of the Option Selection Phase. Further and more detailed environmental studies will be carried out including walkover surveys and ground investigation over the next months. These studies will be used to progress the Scheme through the Option Selection Phase, which involves a detailed assessment of the Route Corridor Options under the following criteria in accordance with the TII Project Management Guidelines and the Department of Transport’s Transport Appraisal Framework.

- Accessibility
- Social
- Land Use
- Safety
- Climate Change
- Local Environment

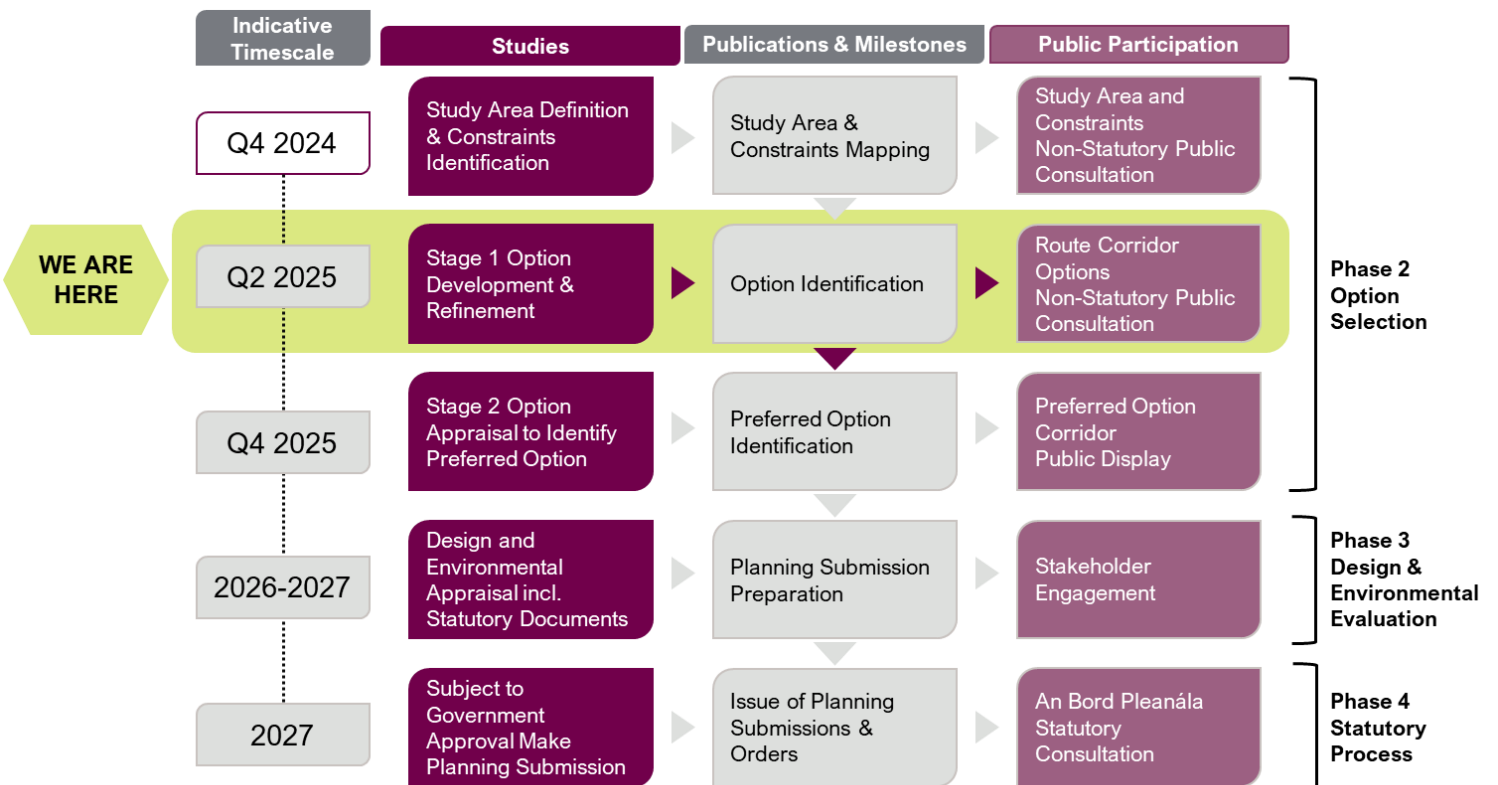
Stage 2 of the Option Selection process will identify a Preferred Option which will be displayed at a future Public Consultation. The Project Team then develop the design in more detail, undertaking additional environmental and technical surveys to continuously avoid, reduce and mitigate any potential impacts on the receiving environment.

The process will culminate in the publication of the Statutory Orders and the applicable Environmental Reports in accordance with the relevant legislation for the development consent process.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ROADMAP

This is the second non-statutory public consultation of the project and focuses on the shortlisted Route Corridor Options. Further non statutory Public Consultations are expected in late 2025 on the Preferred Option Corridor as shown within the roadmap below.

Your participation in this consultation is important and we would value any feedback which you think should be reviewed by the project team to help inform the development of the project.

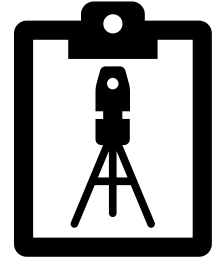


LANDOWNER ENGAGEMENT AND SURVEYS

Mayo County Council and the Project Team are committed to engaging with all stakeholders, particularly those living or who own/lease land and property within the Study Area.

To inform our continuing assessments of the Route Corridor Options, the Project Team will seek to undertake a range of engineering and environmental onsite surveys and investigations over the coming months.

Where required, landowners will be contacted in advance to arrange access for these surveys. All specialist survey teams will be responsible for their own Health and Safety, hold Employer's Liability and Public Liability Insurances and are required to work within all guidance and regulations associated with their areas of expertise.



HAVE YOUR SAY

Mayo County Council and the Project Team want to hear your views on the Route Corridor Options.

Your feedback is important as it can provide valuable information to the project team as they undertake a detailed assessment of the Route Corridor Options and identify the Preferred Option for the project.

This second non-statutory public consultation for the project is running between Wednesday 30th April and Friday 16th May 2025.

An in-person event will be held on Wednesday 30th April 2025 at the Great National Hotel, Ballina, Co. Mayo from 2pm to 7pm.

Once you have reviewed the project information and the mapping of the Route Corridor Options, please complete and return the consultation feedback form to the Project Team by **11pm on Friday 16th May 2025** by:



Feedback Form



Post: Project Engineer, N26 Foxford to Mount Falcon, Mayo National Roads Office, Glenpark House, The Mall, Castlebar, Co. Mayo, F23 XF40



Digitally: Using the digital feedback form provided in the public consultation information room (www.n26foxfordtomountfalcon.ie) and also accessible using the QR code to the right.



Public Consultation Information Room



Phone: (094) 906 4321 (Weekdays 9am-5pm)



Email: nro@mayococo.ie



Refer to the **Public Consultation Information Room** above for a digital map of each individual Route Corridor Option