

N24/ N25 letter to Minister Ryan

To: eamon.ryan@oireachtas.ie; minister@transport.gov.ie; info@tii.ie

Dear Minister Ryan,

On behalf of the South East First Citizens Forum (Mayors/ Cathaoirligh of the five County Councils of the South East Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford City and County and Wexford). I am writing to express our collective concern, dismay and anger that no funding has been provided to progress either the N25 (Waterford to Glenmore) or the N24 project (Waterford to Cahir). These projects are both in the National Development Plan and the revised NDP as important priorities for Government to deliver. Both the N24 and N25 are integral to enhancing regional connectivity, increasing road safety and improving the quality of life of people in our regional towns. The funding cuts effectively put the two projects on hold.

This is concerning for a number of reasons:

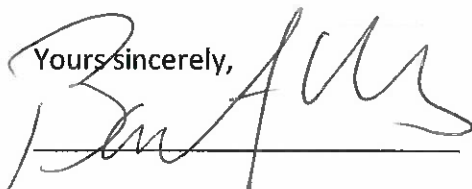
- **Continued safety risks:** There have been 33 fatalities and 72 serious injuries on the N24 Waterford to Cahir section alone over the past decade. The decision to put the project on hold means that the safety risk due to current road infrastructure continues.
- **Uncertainty to people's lives:** In the absence of clear final route selections, local development will be hindered. This will impact severely on local residents wishing to build family homes or develop their farm holdings which will be particularly disconcerting given the engagement efforts undertaken to date. Completing the preferred route selection is critical to avoid adding stress to landowners and providing property owners on the other route options certainty and allow them plan for their futures. Not to do this is grossly unfair.
- **Economic development impacts:** Delaying these road projects on significant lands over long corridors with no reasonable timeframe for conclusion of the process will have clear impacts on investment in the South East region. This creation of uncertainty for potential investors is particularly concerning given the South East's status as having the highest unemployment levels in the country. Both roads are also economically critical as they connect the South East region and our ports to the rest of the country.
- **Environmental quality of life in regional towns:** Heavy Commercial Vehicles (HCVs) represent up to 11% of daily traffic on the N24 and which pass daily through a number of regional towns and villages. This is having significant impacts in terms of air quality for local residents as well as impacting the viability of these towns as good places to live. Continuing to allow HCVs and large volumes of traffic to pass through town and villages which were never designed for will do little to deliver Government policies on Town Centre First and Placemaking.

- **Sunk costs and value for money to exchequer:** Approximately €5 million has already been spent in progressing these projects to this stage. If the projects remain on hold indefinitely, the investment on existing contracts and works to date becomes a waste of public funds as the projects will have to recommence at the first stage. Taking the projects through planning could facilitate the actual construction in Phases if that is what public purse requires.
- **Strategic approach to N24:** The proposal to progress the Cahir to Limerick Junction section of the N24 in isolation of the Cahir to Waterford project is difficult to rationalise. The N24 is the Waterford to Limerick Road, it is the economic corridor between the two cities and both sections need to be upgraded to meet modern needs and standards.

Whilst the funding may not be currently available to commit to actual construction of the projects, we would request that the Consultants be approved to complete the Stages they were procured to undertake and take both projects through planning. It will take a number of years to prepare and obtain planning consent and stalling/delaying at this time will have serious implications for the actual delivery of the project in our lifetime.

Specifically, we request that:

1. **€1.5m is allocated in 2022 for the N24 (Waterford to Cahir) to ensure that phase 2 works progress.**
2. **€2m allocation over 2022 and 2023 for the N25 (Waterford to Glenmore) to ensure that the development completes phase 4.**

Yours sincerely,


**Councillor Barbara-Anne Murphy,
Chair of South East First Citizens Forum**

Cc: Councillors Fintan Phelan (Carlow County Council); Fidelis Doherty (Kilkenny County Council); Marie Murphy (Tipperary County Council); Joe Kelly (Waterford City and County Council)