

Sight Visibility at Srahmore and Aghoos Access Junctions/Advance warning signs on the R313 at Srahmore

During the course of questioning on Tuesday 14th September I undertook to provide clarification to you in respect of two items relating to the Srahmore Peat Deposition Site, namely the sight visibility at the access junction and the proposal to provide advance warning signs along the R313 on approach to the access junction.

I can confirm that we will be able to comply with the appropriate sight visibility standards by normal verge maintenance and relocation of traffic direction signs (3no. signs to be relocated).

To elaborate, the speed limit along the R313, in the vicinity of L1204 / Srahmore Access, is 80km/h. The desirable Stopping Sight Distance and junction visibility splays for this speed of road is 160m in accordance with NRA TD 9/07 'Road Link Design'.

It should be noted that the visibility standards as set out in the Mayo County Development Plan (2008 to 2014) for regional roads is a 4.5m x 145m sight line and for local roads is a 4.5m x 120m sight line (section 4.2.3a page 98).

While the appropriate Development Plan standards are met, Mayo County Council has confirmed that the NRA standard is the appropriate standard to apply. It should be noted that the NRA standard was updated in January 2009, which post-dated the publication of the current Development Plan. Mayo County Council has confirmed that it is its policy not to vary the current Development Plan to reflect updates in NRA standards. In this regard Mayo County Council has no intension of revising the current Development Plan standard to reflect the updated NRA standard.

The NRA standard NRA TD 41-42/09 'Geometric Design of Major/Minor Priority Junctions and Vehicular Access to National Roads' has a more onerous visibility distance than that of the Mayo County Development Plan; therefore it is proposed to use the NRA standard for access visibility at Aghoos and Srahmore junctions.

Srahmore Access

A visibility assessment of the Srahmore access confirms that the current available visibility splays are as follows:

- Left Hand Splay (to the west): 3.0m x 160m from an eye height of 1.05m to a target height of 0.26m.
- Right Hand Splay (to the east): 3.0m x 127m and 2.0m x 136m are available. The location of the existing L1204 traffic direction signs to the east of Srahmore junction as well as the existing overgrown verge currently restrict the visibility splay to / from the access below the desirable minimum.

We can confirm that the desirable minimum visibility to the east of 3.0m x 160m from an eye height of 1.05m to a target height of 0.26m can be achieved by relocating the traffic signs and also by regular maintenance of the verge for the duration of the peat deposition operations.

Relocation of the traffic signs has been discussed and agreed in principle with Mayo County Council and it is intended that the revised location of same will be finalised on site and undertaken prior to the commencement of the peat haulage. The required verge maintenance work has also been agreed in principle with Mayo County Council, and the work will be carried out under the Council's direction and under the supervision of the project ecologist, if necessary.

In relation to warning signage along the R313 on the approach to the Srahmore Peat Deposition Site access junction, it is proposed to erect sufficient signs to warn and advise motorists along the R313 of heavy construction traffic crossing ahead.

On the approaches to the Srahmore access junction, signs will be erected warning of 'Trucks Crossing' ahead. A number of these signs are currently erected along the R313, however these will be reviewed and the exact details and locations of the warning signs will be developed under the direction and approval of Mayo County Council. Provisional details of these warning signs are presented on drawing No. 6013-1014, Rev C, copy attached.

Aghoos Access

I would also like to take the opportunity to clarify matters in relation to both the accesses at the Aghoos Compound. We will be able to comply with the appropriate standards (both the Mayo County Development Plan standard and the more onerous NRA standard) for both Access A and B by lowering the raised road verges, normal verge maintenance and appropriate setting out of the project fencelines.

As mentioned last Tuesday the desirable Stopping Sight Distance and Junction Visibility Splays for these accesses is 160m in accordance with NRA TD9/07.

In terms of Access A, which will be used as the primary access for the duration of the construction programme, a visibility assessment confirms that the desirable 3m x 160m visibility splay is available in both directions from an eye height of 1.05m to a target height of 0.26m. To achieve these visibility splays, the existing raised verge will need to be lowered alongside the access for 160m in both directions and the verge regularly maintained for the duration of the construction works. This work has been agreed in principle with Mayo County Council and will be carried under the Council's direction and under the supervision of the project ecologist, if necessary. Also, the proposed project fencelines will be erected behind the visibility splays.

By implementing the measures outlined, we also confirm that the full standard stopping sight distance of 160m from the L1202 to Access A will be achieved at both the east and west approach.

Access B will be constructed 10 months into the construction programme and will serve as an alternative access in case of emergencies and blockages to Access A. Access B may also be used to segregate personnel access from the HCV access.

A visibility assessment of Access B, confirms that the desirable 3m x 160m visibility splay is available to the west from an eye height of 1.05m to a target height of 0.26m. There is however, a restriction to the visibility splay to and from the east at the access junction due to the dip in the road at Leenamore Bridge. Stopping sight distance visibility of Access B for vehicles travelling from the east is similarly restricted due to the same dip in the road.

In accordance with NRA TD 41-42/09 standards, a relaxation of the vertical standard for the target height is permitted on National roads (and is also applicable for regional and local roads), raising it from 0.26 to 0.6m. Using this permitted relaxation, it is confirmed that the full 3m x 160m visibility splay is available at Access B i.e. the dip in the road at the Leenamore Bridge is not a restriction to achieving acceptable standards of visibility from the junction. As noted above, the less onerous Mayo County Development Plan visibility standard is also met.

As with Access A, to achieve these visibility splays in both directions, the raised verge will need to be lowered alongside the access for 160m in both directions and the verge regularly maintained for the duration of the construction works. As detailed previously, this work has been agreed in principle with Mayo County Council, and the work will be carried out under its direction and under the supervision of the project ecologist, if necessary. Also the proposed project fencelines will be erected behind the visibility splays.

By implementing the measures outlined, we also confirm that the standard stopping sight distance of 160m from the L1202 to Access B will be achieved at both the east and west approach.

I would also note that the bellmouths of both Accesses A and B are designed so that exiting HCVs will not need to encroach over the centreline of the L1202. This is an important consideration as all HCVs exiting the site to the left, which will be normal HCV operation, will be able to carry out this manoeuvre without impacting on traffic approaching from the east.