



COMHAIRLE CONTAE
CHEATHARLACH

CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

in conjunction with



**Queen of the Universe Safe Routes to School
Scheme, Bagenalstown**

**Proposal Summary to Accompany Part 8 Public
Consultation**

February 2025

Carlow County Council,
County Buildings,
Athy Road,
Carlow,
R93 E7R7.

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The following report has been prepared in accordance with Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) and provides information in relation to the provision of a Safe Routes to School scheme at Long Range / Royal Oak Road, Moneybeg, Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow

1. Description of the Proposed Development

Carlow County Council, in conjunction with the National Transport Authority (NTA) and An Taisce, are proposing to carry out a Safe Routes to School scheme at Queen of the Universe National School, Bagenalstown.

The proposed development will consist of various safety improvement measures to improve pedestrian access to the Queen of the Universe National School. The works will consist of 'front of school' interventions in the form of a School Zone to increase road users awareness of the presence of vulnerable road users. The School Zone will use identifiable features, such as pencil shaped bollards and colourful road markings to highlight the presence of the school and encourage traffic to slow down, prevent parking on pavements and encourage drivers to make legal and safe drop-offs outside of the School Zone area. It is also proposed to introduce a one-way traffic system, southbound only, on Long Range (L-3020) from its junction with Regent Street (L-3024) to its junction with Royal Oak Road (R-724). The works will also include the provision of a new pedestrian crossing on Royal Oak Road.

The scheme will include the following features:

- The introduction of a one-way traffic system, southbound only, on Long Range
- Footpath widening to provide additional public realm space
- Provision of rain gardens
- School Zone gateway road markings to communicate to all road users that they are entering a space where vulnerable road users should be prioritised
- Coloured roundel road markings within the School Zone
- Pencil shaped bollards to protect vulnerable road users spaces from driver intrusion
- Provision of public seating
- New road signage and road markings
- Provision of a new pedestrian crossing on Royal Oak Road close to it's junction with Hurley's Lane

The scheme has been designed to comply with the principles, approaches and standards as appropriate in the Design Manual for Urban Road and Streets (DMURS), which is the principal design manual for urban roads and streets and is mandatory when providing new or modifying existing urban roads and streets within the 60 km/h urban speed limit zone.

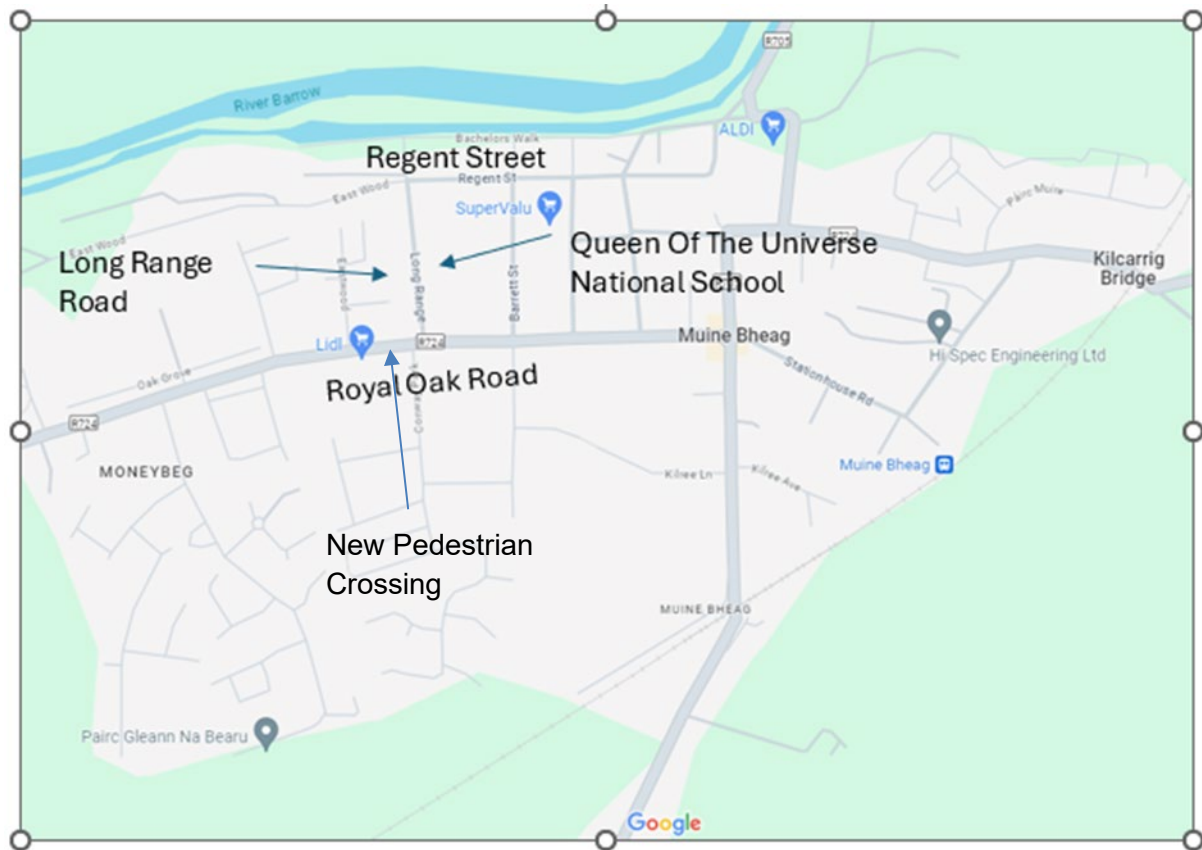


Figure 1 - Site Location

2. Consistency with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and the County Development Plan

Bagenalstown is a District Town of County Carlow. It is an inland town sited on low-lying land, is located in the south of the County and is an important urban centre, which services a large agricultural hinterland. The town provides a range of residential, community, educational, commercial and employment functions.

The Town is located approximately 20km from Carlow town and approximately 23km from Kilkenny on the R705 Leighlinbridge / Carlow to Borris / New Ross regional road. The town is also located on the R724 regional road to Kildavin and Bunclody. It is also served by a railway station and is strategically located proximate to the R448 and the M9 Dublin to Waterford motorway

The recently adopted Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 identifies Bagenalstown as a District Town in the Settlement Hierarchy. This tier corresponds to “Well-developed serviced settlements with a moderate level of jobs supporting services and community facilities with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining.”

The proposed development is in compliance with the policies and objectives of the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Muine Bheag/ Royal Oak Local Area Plan 2017 - 2023. In particular the following policies and objectives, which are set out in the following sections of those plans:

Carlow County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, Ch.5: Sustainable Travel & Transportation

5.3 Sustainable Mobility / Modal Shift

It is the policy of the Council to:

MS.P1: Seek investment in sustainable transport solutions, improved walking and cycling connectivity routes, the provision of a public bus service in Carlow Town and the expansion of rural transport initiatives throughout the county.

It is an objective of the Council to:

MS. O1: Support a modal shift from private vehicles to access work / school / college from circa 23% (2016) to 28% (2028).

5.4 Walking and Cycling

It is the policy of the Council to:

WC. P1: Prioritise and promote more sustainable and convenient modes of travel by the development of high quality walking and cycling infrastructure including greenways within a safe environment.

WC. P2: Work with the National Trails Office, Coillte, relevant Government Departments, and other relevant stakeholders, to improve on the existing level of infrastructure and facilities for walking and cycling.

WC. P3: Ensure that connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists is maximised in new communities and improved within existing areas particularly towns and villages throughout the county including associated infrastructure, to maximise access to local shops, educational facilities, public transport services, employment locations and other amenities.

WC. P4: Provide for safer routes to schools within the County and promote walking and cycling as suitable modes of transport as part of the Green Schools Programme and other local traffic management improvements.

It is the objective of the Council to:

WC. O2: Ensure that all streets and street networks seek to facilitate permeability, are designed in accordance with best practice standards including the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and the National Cycle Manual which seek to prioritise the movement of pedestrians and cyclists within a safe and comfortable environment for a wide range of ages, abilities and journey types.

WC. O4: Prioritise where required the upgrade and maintenance of footpaths, cycleways, public lighting, traffic management and public realm works and supporting signage on public roads / paths

WC. O6: Improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity to rail station locations and other public transport interchanges within the county.

5.8.5 Urban Roads and Street

It is the policy of the Council to:

UR. P1: Ensure that all urban roads and streets in our towns and villages, including residential streets in housing estates are designed in accordance with the principles, approaches and standards set out in the 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets' (2013/2019) and any further update to the Manual during the life of this Plan and to implement TII Publication Standard DN-GEO-03084 'The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads' as appropriate.

5.13 Street Lighting

It is the policy of the Council to:

SL. P1: Ensure that public lighting is provided in accordance with relevant EU Norms, National Standards or best guidance documents as appropriate, including any forthcoming Council Public Lighting Specifications and Policy documents.

It is the objective of the Council to:

SL. O1: Improve the efficiency of public lighting assets in order to minimise electricity usage.

5.17 Accessibility

It is the policy of the Council to:

AC. P1: Support suitable access for people with disabilities, including improvements to buildings, streets and public spaces.

MUINE BHEAG / ROYAL OAK LOCAL AREA PLAN 2017-2023, Ch.7: Transportation & Movement

7.4 Smarter Travel

It is the policy of the Council to:

TP1: To continue to promote a modal shift from private car use towards increased use of more sustainable modes of transport such as cycling, walking and public transport and to implement the initiatives contained in Government's "Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020".

- TP2: To improve the pedestrian environment and promote the development of a network of pedestrian routes which link residential areas with recreational, educational, employment and tourist destinations to create a pedestrian environment that is safe and accessible by all.
- TP 5 To ensure that the road and street network of Muine Bheag / Royal Oak is safe and convenient, that it has adequate capacity to accommodate motorised traffic and non motorised movements, that it has a high environmental quality with appropriate adjacent development and built form, particularly in the case of urban streets and streetscapes, and that adequate parking facilities are provided to serve the needs of the town. In this regard, the principles, approaches and standards as set out in relevant national policy shall inform future transport infrastructure and urban development. This shall include the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines 2012, the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 and accompanying Urban Design Manual 2009, the Traffic Management Guidelines 2003, the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines 2007, the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013), the NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (as appropriate to the regional road network outside areas subject to a reduced urban speed limit) and any updates or forthcoming guidelines in relation to street design and walking / cycling facilities
- TP 6: To promote road and traffic safety measures in conjunction with relevant Government Departments and other agencies through the provision of appropriate signage, minimising or removing existing traffic hazards and preventing the creation of additional or new traffic hazards.

It is an objective of the Council to:

- TO1: To provide appropriate facilities for pedestrians and for people with special mobility needs in line with the aims of the European Charter of Pedestrian Rights.

Conclusion

The proposed development is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, in that:

- Supports a modal shift from private vehicles to access work / school / college,
- Provides traffic management arrangements that makes the sustainable transport modes of walking and cycling safe, practicable and feasible alternatives to the private car and reduce traffic congestion and associated emissions,
- Prioritises the movements of pedestrians and cyclists within the public realm by measures including the redistribution of car space to non-car modes of transport, retrofitting road junctions to make them more cycle and pedestrian friendly,
- Takes advantage of investment sought through the NTA Active Travel Investment Programme, for improved walking and cycling connectivity routes,
- It is designed in accordance with best practice standards including the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and the National Cycle Manual which seek to prioritise the movement of pedestrians and cyclists within a safe and comfortable environment for a wide range of ages, abilities and journey types.

3 Scheme Justification

An Taisce's Infrastructure Officer for Safe Routes to School conducted a Safety Audit for Queen of the Universe National School, where they identified safety issues to the front of the school. This audit was further expanded to a consultation process with parents whose dependants are attending the school.

On behalf of An Taisce the school issued a Safe Routes to School Parent Survey to all families of Queen of the Universe National School. This parent survey had a 55.5% response rate. (this survey had a 5.4% Margin of Error at 95% Confidence level).

Of the responses received 73.5% of parents surveyed agreed that road safety is a problem around the school, 95% of parents would support works at the front of school that improve student safety, putting pedestrians and cyclists first, 97.4% of parents would support works that would improve the walking and cycling routes to school.

Parents also selected the following, when asked, what improvements would support them walking, cycling or scooting to school:-

Safer crossing points	70.9% of parents surveyed
Reduced traffic speed	59.0% of parents surveyed
Fewer cars at the school gate	49.6% of parents surveyed
New or improved cycle paths	38.5% of parents surveyed
Cycle parking at the school	38.5% of parents surveyed
New or improved footpaths	37.6% of parents surveyed

Based on the outcome of the Safety Audit and the results of the consultation undertaken for the school the Active Travel Department of Carlow County Council undertook a design to address the safety issues identified in front of the school and the findings raised during the parent survey.

4 Impact of the Proposed Scheme

Impact on traffic

It is envisaged that this scheme will have a moderate impact on traffic during construction, as the road will be closed to vehicular traffic at times to enable the installation of new kerbs, widened footpaths and rain gardens.

The proposed School Zone along Long Range includes the installation of pencil shaped bollards to prevent parking on pavements and encourage drivers to make legal and safe drop-offs outside of the School Zone area. To facilitate this, agreement has been reached with Lidl Ireland Ltd. to use their car park on Royal Oak Road as part of a park and stride facility. The provision of a new pedestrian crossing on Royal Oak Road will also form part of the park and stride route.

The scheme also proposes the introduction a one-way traffic system, southbound only, on Long Range (L-3020) from its junction with Regent Street (L-3024) to its junction with Royal Oak Road (R-724).

Overall the scheme will allow sustainable transport in a safe environment allowing school users and residents to make journeys by walking or cycling which they previously would

of made by car. This will result in fewer car journeys and result in a long-term positive impact on traffic.

Impact on pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable road users

The proposed works will have a significantly positive impact on pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable road users seeking to access educational facilities. The scheme will provide improved connectivity in a safe and comfortable environment.

Impact during construction

The following impacts during construction will be temporary:

- Site mobilisation and operations
- Temporary traffic management including road closures
- Construction traffic and materials deliveries
- Construction dust and noise
- Temporary hoarding/fencing/barriers/traffic cones
- Temporary site lighting, if deemed necessary

Impact on landscape and visual amenity

The works will take place primarily within an existing road corridor. It is envisaged that this scheme will have a minor impact on landscape and visual amenity during construction, however no long-term negative impacts are expected. The provision of new rain gardens along Long Range will have a positive impact on the landscape and visual amenity of the area.

Impact on ecology

The proposed works do not lie within or affect any existing ecologically sensitive areas. The provision of new rain gardens along Long Range will have a positive impact on ecology in the area.

Impact on built and cultural heritage

The following information sources were checked as part of a desktop exercise to check for possible impact on built and cultural heritage:

- The National Monuments Service Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) – Nothing recorded in the vicinity of the proposed works.
- The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) – Nothing recorded in the vicinity of the proposed works.
- The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) - Nothing recorded in the vicinity of the proposed works.
- The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for County Carlow – Appendix 2, Chapter VIII of the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 – One structure is recorded in the vicinity of the proposed works. Protected Structure CW386 -- a house, is located at the northeast corner of Long Range. Road surfacing works are

Part 8 – Queen of the Universe Safe Routes to School Scheme

proposed to part of the front and along the entire side of the of the curtilage of this protected structure. During construction, mitigation measures will be incorporated to ensure the boundaries of the curtilage of the protected structure are safeguarded.

It was determined that the works will not impinge on or affect any built and cultural heritage.

Conclusion

It is expected that the proposed development will have some short-term negative impacts during construction but that longer-term impacts requiring mitigation are expected to arise.

5 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

Stage 1 Screening was carried out in accordance with Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora).

This is transposed in Ireland primarily by the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011* (S.I. No. 477/2011) (hereafter the Birds and Habitats Regulations) and the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010 as amended.

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required if likely significant effects on European Sites arising from the proposed development cannot be ruled out at the screening stage, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Following an examination and evaluation of the relevant information, including in particular, the fact that the proposed works will not impinge or impact on any European Sites, it is possible to rule out likely significant effects on all European Sites.

The AA screening process has identified that no European Sites are within the potential zone of influence of surface water discharges from the proposed development either during construction or upon completion of the works.

On the basis of the AA screening process, planning permission for the proposed development under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) does **not** require an Appropriate Assessment with no requirement to proceed to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

6 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The scheme does not fall within any of the categories requiring a mandatory EIA under Schedule 5 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). It can be considered not to comprise 'sub-threshold development' and it can be 'screened out' for Environmental Impact Assessment purposes on this basis. However, for the avoidance of doubt, the scheme has been screened for the need for a sub-threshold EIA as per the criteria listed under Schedule 7 of the Regulations.

Having considered the nature, scale and location of the proposal; having regard to the characteristics and location of the proposed development and having regard to the characteristics of potential impacts it is considered that the project is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental impacts.

It is considered that the proposed scheme does **not** need to be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and no Environmental Impact Assessment Report is required for it.

7 Flood Risk Assessment

No flooding or surface water management issues have been identified for the site. The site is located outside of the Office of Public Works (OPW) 1/100 and 1/1000 flood risk zones identified for Muine Bheag under the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme. There is no requirement for a site-specific flood risk assessment for this scheme.

8 Part 8 Consultations

Plans and particulars of the proposed development will be available for inspection or purchase for a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy during public opening hours for a period of 4 weeks at the following Carlow County Council Office locations:

- County Buildings,
Athy Road,
Carlow,
R93 E7R7.

Muine Bheag Area Office
McGrath Hall,
Muinebheag,
Co. Carlow,
R21 HD80.

Plans and particulars for the proposed development including all reports will also be available for inspection online at consult.carlow.ie

A submission or observation in relation to the proposed development, dealing with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which the development would be situated, may be made,

in writing, to the Planning Department, Carlow County Council, County Buildings, Athy Road, Carlow clearly marked “Queen of the Universe Safe Routes to School Scheme, Bagenalstown”

or

online at Carlow County Council’s public consultation portal at <https://consult.carlow.ie/>

or

by email to part8@carlowcoco.ie with the subject line being clearly noted as “Queen of the Universe Safe Routes to School Scheme, Bagenalstown”.

Submissions or observations received will be subject to public viewing.