



in conjunction with



Tullow Orbital Pedestrian & Cycle Scheme Phase 2

Proposal Summary to Accompany Part 8 Public Consultation

May 2022

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R93 E7R7.

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The following is a report prepared in accordance with Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) providing information in relation to the provision of a high quality combined footpath & cycle track, which will link a number of residential areas and provide alternative access to retail premises, recreational amenities and town centre services in Tullow.

1. Description of the Proposed Development

Carlow County Council's Active Travel Department, in conjunction with the National Transportation Authority (NTA), proposes to provide 550m of new combined footpath and cycle track in Tullow, which will link the Oakley Heights, An Caislean and Court View housing developments with Castle Lane. The works will also include the provision of new and upgraded public lighting along the route and access control bollards.

The scheme will include the following elements: (see figure 2 – Scheme Extents)

- Provision of a combined 3.5m wide footpath/cycle track with macadam surfacing from Oakley Wood to An Caislean Development (blue line).
- Provision of a combined 3.5m wide footpath/cycle track with concrete surfacing from An Caislean to Castle Lane (purple line).
- Upgrading of existing macadam footpath to provide a 3.5m wide combined footpath/cycle track along Castle Lane (orange line).
- Provision of a combined 3.5m wide footpath/cycle track with macadam surfacing from Castle Lane to Court View (green line).
- Upgrading of existing concrete footpath at Court View to provide a 3.5m wide combined footpath/cycle track (red line).
- Provision of timber post and rail fence.
- Installation of LED public lighting and associated ducting.
- Topsoiling & grass seeding.
- Installation of associated signage and road markings as necessary.

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Figure 1 - Site Location



Figure 2 - Scheme Extents

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

Tullow is the second-largest town in the County with a population of 4,673 in 2016. It is well located on the national road network including the N81 and with proximity to the M9. As a market town, Tullow has a strong employment and service base serving surrounding areas, including industry, agricultural and retail services.

The **Draft Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028** identifies Tullow as a District Town in the Settlement Hierarchy. This tier corresponds to the Towns and Villages tier of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), which are described as settlements over 1,500 which provide a housing, employment or service function. As Tullow is one of the key urban settlements in the county, designated as a District Town, the **Tullow Local Area Plan 2017-2023** was also prepared with an overall objective to facilitate development in a self-sufficient manner.

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

Draft Carlow County Development Plan, 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.

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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. O3: Reduce walking and cycling distances to areas of employment, community services, schools, shops, public transport and other community facilities through implementation of the 10 Minute Town Concept, the provision and maintenance of high-quality linkages and the delivery of local permeability links within existing communities.
- 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.

5.13 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.

Tullow 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.

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 and the principles of Universal Design as defined in the Disability Act 2005.

Conclusion

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

- It will provide improved access to retail premises, recreational amenities, educational facilities and town centre services for pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable road users.
- It will facilitate modal shift away from private car use towards more sustainable modes of transport such as cycling and walking.
- It will facilitate permeability and improved connectivity between residential areas for pedestrians and cyclists.
- It will provide pedestrians and cyclists within a safe and comfortable environment by reducing interactions with motorised traffic and through the provision of new and improved public lighting.

3 Scheme Justification

Tullow saw substantial population growth of 17.6% (701) between 2011 and 2016. With a strong employment and service base there is capacity for growth in the town, however there is also a commensurate need to develop supporting services and in particular to support sustainable travel and alternatives to car-based commuting. There are also issues around possible conflicts between vehicular traffic and vulnerable road users wishing to access town centre services and amenities.

This scheme will address these issues by providing a dedicated footpath / cycle track, with new and upgraded public lighting, which will allow residents to switch to a sustainable mode of travel in a safe environment.

4 Impact of the Proposed Scheme

Impact on traffic

It is envisaged that this scheme will have a minor impact on traffic during construction, however no long term negative impacts are expected. The construction of a dedicated combined footpath / cycle track in a safe environment will allow residents 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 retail premises, recreational amenities, educational facilities and town centre services. 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
- 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 majority of the works will take place within the existing road corridor and along existing well established public access routes. A short section of the scheme, approximately 80m in length, which links the Oakley Heights and An Caislean housing developments, will pass through an existing green field site. 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. New and improved public lighting, road signage, road markings and landscaping in the vicinity of the works will also enhance and improve the existing streetscape at the works location.

Impact on ecology

The proposed works do not lie within or affect any existing ecologically sensitive areas.

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 Draft Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 – Nothing recorded in the vicinity of the proposed works.

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 no 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 Tullow Town under the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme. There is no requirement for a site specific flood risk assessment for this scheme.