



Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council



Aghoo Pedestrian Underpass

Part 8

Supporting Information Document

April 2024

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1.0 Introduction

This report outlines proposals for a new pedestrian underpass at Aghoo, Co. Leitrim.

The Aghoo Road Underpass Project is located on the Shannon-Erne Waterway along the Regional Road (R207) at Aghoo Bridge, approximately 3km south of Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim. The project arises from the proposed continuation of the Shannon-Erne Blueway Trail from Aghoo Bridge to Lock 4 (Aghoo).

Waterways Ireland is the navigation authority for the Shannon-Erne Waterway. Waterways Ireland owns and maintains the towpath along the banks of the canalised river and canal sections of the Shannon-Erne Navigation. At various locations along the Shannon Navigation and Shannon-Erne Waterway, walkways and cycle routes have been developed in both the rural and urban environments which have proven to be very popular attractions to the region (e.g. Acres Lake).

Leitrim County Council in partnership with Waterways Ireland propose to continue the Shannon-Erne Blueway Trail from Aghoo Bridge onwards to Lock 4 (Aghoo). A previous Part 8 planning approval for the section of Blueway Trail between Aghoo Bridge and Lock 4 (Ref. 20/C/05) was secured in 2020. Subsequently, the terrestrial pathway element of the development was partially completed on site in 2022.

This new Part 8 application proposes a significant amendment to the previous Part 8 approval under Planning Reference 20/C/05. The proposed amendment will involve the development of a new pedestrian road underpass immediately adjacent to the existing Aghoo Masonry Arch Bridge. The new underpass structure will tie-in with existing footpaths connecting either side of the bridge and link to a new trail head at Lock 4 (400m east). A pedestrian underpass along the trail at Aghoo Bridge would significantly enhance the safety of the trail and avoid the need to make an 'at grade' crossing of a Regional Road (R207).

The previous proposal contained in planning the Part 8 approval sought to construct a pedestrian walkway within the arch of the existing bridge, however, this proposal is not being pursued due to safety concerns regarding navigation.

2.0 Nature and Extent of Proposed Works

2.1 Pedestrian Underpass

The proposed road underpass construction will constitute a significant amendment to a previous Part 8 planning approval for the section of Blueway Trail between Aghoo Bridge and Lock 4 (Appendix A refers). The alignment of the overall route of the trail is outlined in Figure 1 below.

The proposed pedestrian underpass will be located immediately adjacent to the existing Aghoo Masonry Arch Bridge. The precise positioning of the new pedestrian underpass shall be confirmed at detailed design stage. The new underpass structure will tie-in with existing footpaths connecting either side of the bridge and link to a new trail head at Lock 4 (400m east). The mitigation of potential construction impacts on the existing masonry arch bridge may also affect the final alignment of new pedestrian underpass.

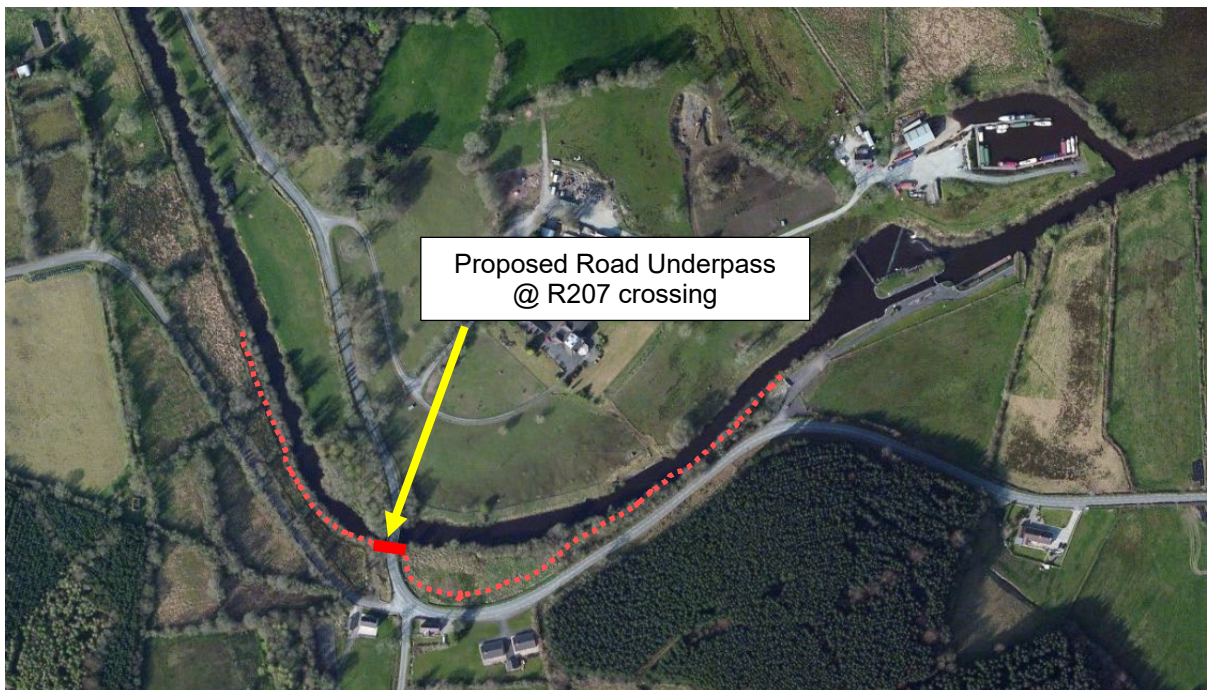


Figure 1: Site Location Map

Please refer to drawings **DR-C-0003 Proposed Layout** and **DR-C-006 Profile New Proposed Road Culvert** for construction details of the pedestrian underpass.

Construction of the underpass will involve excavating the existing road carriageway and placing a 2.5m x 2.5m (approximately) precast concrete units across the span of the carriageway. It will also be necessary to construct a piled foundation due to the poor

ground conditions, which have been identified. Refer to the planning drawings for details. The proposed works shall also include a temporary sheet piled wall, wing walls, road markings, fencing, vehicular restraint system and drainage.

3.0 Drainage

A filter drain shall be provided along the proposed Blueway path and within the proposed concrete culvert, comprising of a gravel filled trench with perforated pipe, which shall discharge directly to the adjacent watercourse. Refer to planning drawings for details.

No water supply or effluent disposal will be required for this development.

4.0 Access

The proposed pedestrian underpass location can be accessed from the existing field gate entrance adjacent to Glenview Folk Museum near Aghoo bridge and also the barriered parking area to the south-east. The site can also be accessed by pedestrians/cyclists from the existing Ballyduff to Aghoo Bridge Walking Trail.

5.0 Details of Public Lighting

There is no new public lighting proposed as part of this development.

6.0 Site Selection

The proposed site was selected as it forms a continuation of the existing Ballyduff to Aghoo Bridge Walking Trail.

7.0 Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029

The proposed Blueway Trail Development is in compliance with the following policies and objectives of the County Development Plan:

Section 5.0 – Tourism (Pg 98)

The County Development Plan's tourism objectives and policies seek to maximise opportunities for growth and realise the economic benefits of tourism for the County in a sustainable manner.

Tourism Policy 1

'To support the development of new strategic tourism attractions that can create 'experiences' as motivational 'must do' signature experiences to draw visitors to the county, in a manner consistent with Leitrim's own brand identity'.

Tourism Objective 6

'To work with all relevant stakeholders to promote and support the implementation of the Shannon Tourism Masterplan'.

Section 5.5 – Greenways, Cycling and Walking (Pg 106)

This section of the County Development Plan supports the continued development of Greenways in the County and states as follows: *Leitrim County Council, working with strategic partners at a national, regional and local level, is strongly committed to developing further walking and cycling tracks, recognising the benefits not only for the local community but also for generating tourism activity and the resulting economic impacts..... The Council is committed to completing the Carrick-on-Shannon to Leitrim Village boardwalk and the **Ballinamore Walk to Aghoo Bridge**.*

Section 5.6 Adventure Tourism, Lakes and Waterways (Pg 107)

Section 5.6 of the County Development Plan references the development of infrastructure in the vicinity of Lakes and Waterways and states as follows: *The value of the lakes and waterways in Leitrim from a tourism and amenity perspective is significant having regard to their scenic beauty, serene environment and natural heritage and habitat value. There is potential to expand public amenity in these areas to include car parking, information boards, toilets, viewing points, boardwalks and boat mooring*

Adventure Tourism, Lakes and Waterways Objective 1 (Pg 108)

To facilitate walking and cycling access to lakes and waterways from towns and villages where services are provided.

Section 8.0 Transport (Pg 155)

This section outlines the Council's commitment to promoting more sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling which encourages healthier and safer lifestyles, including heritage walks and the protection of public rights of way, which are an important amenity and tourism resource. It states that opportunities to upgrade transport

routes and carry out ancillary works including cycle and walking routes will be pursued and implemented as resources become available.

Section 8.4 Integration of Land use Planning and Transportation (Pg 158)

The integration of land use and transportation is a fundamental principle of the national policy document 'Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future' and its policy successor, 'National Sustainable Mobility Policy' (2022). The relevant policy and objectives are outlined below.

Integration of Land use Planning and Transportation Policy 6

New transport infrastructure projects, including blueways and greenways, that are not already provided for by existing plans/programmes.

Integration of Land use Planning and Transportation Objective 1

To transition towards sustainable and low carbon transport modes, through the promotion of alternative modes of sustainable transport and 'walkable communities' together with the achievement of compact settlement forms close to established public transport.

Section 11.23 - Industrial Archaeology and Canals (Pg 272)

Section 11.23 references the importance of the County's Industrial Heritage. 'The Council is aware of the cultural importance of the County's industrial heritage and in particular of the canal and waterway systems that traverse the County. Canals, lough gates and associated structures are fine examples of 19th century industrial engineering, which have mellowed over time to form an intrinsic part of the County's landscape. The importance of protecting these structures is all the greater given the increased importance of the canal and navigation network as a tourism and recreational resource'.

Archaeology Policy 3

To protect and enhance public accessibility to the county's industrial heritage.

8.0 Drawings

The following Part 8 drawings shall be submitted as part of the application:

C-0001 Site Location

C-0002 Existing Layout

C-0003 Proposed Layout

C-0004 Site Access

C-0005 Proposed Culvert at Existing Road Profile

C-0006 Profile New Proposed Road Culvert

C-0007 New Proposed Road Sections

C-0008 New Proposed Road Sections

C-0009 Road Details – Build-up Details

C-0020 Culvert and Walls – Plan View

C-0021 Culvert and Walls - Details

C-0022 Culvert and Walls – Sections and Details

C-0023 Culvert and Walls – Sections and Details

C-0030 Proposed Drainage – Plan View

9.0 Public Consultation Process

The project was formally advertised for public consultation between **Friday 3rd May 2023 and Friday 31st May 2024**. Details of the project are available for inspection during normal office hours at the office of the Planning Authority and also on the Council website. The closing date for submissions is **4.00 p.m. Monday 17th June 2024**.