

Leitrim County Council



PART 8

BRIEFING DOCUMENT

***PROPOSED DRUMOD MORE, DROMOD TO KILLINAKER,
ROOSKEY GREYWAY***

Introduction and Background to Project

Leitrim County Council is proposing the construction of a greyway / footpath between the villages of Dromod and Rooskey on the L1601. The route of the proposed greyway will follow the line of the local road. The approximate length of the new greyway is 2000m.

The proposed walk/ greyway will provide a scenic recreational use for locals and visitors to both villages and connect housing developments on the Rooskey side to the train station in Dromod from an active travel perspective.

Scheme Overview

The route will be cleared of overgrown vegetation where necessary, trees which have grown within the corridor with hedges removed over areas where the verge is narrow. Fences and drainage associated with the greyway will be installed. The detail along the route will be determined at the Detailed Design stage of the project which will adhere to the principals of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (formerly National Roads Authority).

The proposed greyway will predominantly be constructed at a width of 2m, with an additional grass separation zone of 1m on the roadside of the path. The exceptions to this are inside the 60km/h speed limit on the Dromod side where no separation zone is required and where the greyway crosses Killinaker Bridge, here the path will reduce to 1.5m with a 0.6m separation zone. The path will be relatively flat with only 12m approximate fall over the total length.

Drainage of the greyway will vary along the route depending on whether its running along a raised section of embankment or down into a cutting. In areas where the greyway is running along an embankment, drainage from the road gullies will enter linear drainage that was previously installed for the old National Road. In areas where the trail is running through a cutting, drainage will consist of gullies that run into the land drains. Safety fences will be erected along the route and shall comprise of 1.2m to 1.4m high stock-proof or timber post and rail fencing.

The location and details of the project accompany the Part 8 application drawings.

Landownership

The majority of greyway can be constructed on the road verge without the need to acquire land from the local landowners, however near Dromod village and all of the Rooskey side of Killinaker bridge land acquisition is required due to a narrow road verge. Six landowners in total will be required. Discussions have taken place with these landowners, and they agree in principle with the proposed development with agreements to follow when planning is approved.

Planning Policy Context

National Policy

Project Ireland 2040 - The National Planning Framework is based on achieving ten strategic outcomes, the most pertinent of which to this chapter is sustainable mobility, securing compact and sustainable growth and ensuring a transition to a low carbon and climate resistant society. The transition to more sustainable modes of travel (walking, cycling, public transport) is promoted, particularly within smaller towns and villages and in rural areas. The NPF also supports the implementation of planning and

transportation strategies for urban areas, with a major focus on improving walking and cycling routes, including targeted measures to enhance permeability and connectivity.

Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029

Leitrim County Council has a number of policies and objectives set out in our County Development Plan which supports the proposed development. Core Strategy Objective 4 states that it is the policy of the Council To promote the integration of land use and transportation policies and to prioritise provision for cycling and walking travel modes and the strengthening of public transport with particular emphasis for inter urban centre travel. The core strategies that direct this project are.

CS OBJ 4 To promote the integration of land use and transportation policies and to prioritise provision for cycling and walking travel modes and the strengthening of public transport with particular emphasis on the bus for inter urban centre travel.

CS OBJ 19 To ensure that development is promoted, supported or facilitated through the County Development Plan that provides for climate action including that related to the increased risk of flooding and the promotion of sustainable transport options and renewable energy where possible to achieve a successful transition to a low carbon economy.

The policies and objectives contained therein are guided by the national policy document “*Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future, (2019)*”. The promotion of initiatives that can reduce congestion, improve local environments and encourage healthier and safer lifestyles are key features of sustainable transportation. Leitrim County Council seeks to influence people’s travel behaviour towards more sustainable options and seeks to do so by working closely with relevant organisations in improving public transport facilities and promoting opportunities for alternative transportation such as walking.

Leitrim County Council also recognises the importance of walking to the wellbeing and quality of life of residents. It will support and encourage the continued development of walking as a sustainable form of transportation and will work with organisations and groups in the promotion of safe walking throughout the county.

Section 5.2.10 of the County Development Plan deals with Leitrim Recreation Strategy. The Recreation Strategy sets out a roadmap for the further development of recreation amenities in the county in the interest of both residents and tourism.

Section 5.5 of the County Development Plan deals with Greenways, Cycling and Walking. It states that Leitrim County Council 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’.

In accordance with the principles of sustainable development, the basis of the Council’s transportation policies includes the encouragement of walking and cycling as a recreational activity and a healthy exercise.

Section 8.7 of the County Development Plan aims at promoting sustainable mobility. Sustainable mobility is about the movement of people and goods in a manner that engenders quality of life and ease of access for all and seeks to encourage a modal shift in favour of public transport and other active modes. Achieving significant modal shift and delivering a more sustainable mobility model is

dependent on a wide range of factors including government investment in public transport and active travel.

MSSM POL 1 To support sustainable mobility, enhanced regional accessibility and connectivity within Co. Leitrim in accordance with the National Policy Outcomes of the National Planning Framework 2040 and the National Development Plan.

MSSM POL 5 To encourage better integration of transport services with the aim of reducing car trips by encouraging and fostering improved consultation and co-operation between both public and private providers of transport services operating in the county and wider region, including all providers of bus and rail services.

Section 8.8 of the County Development Plan deals specifically with Walking and Cycling. A number of long-distance walking and cycling tourist routes have been laid out and signposted throughout the County. The Council will facilitate the maintenance of existing routes and further expansion of these networks in co-operation with local community groups and the Regional Tourism Authority. These routes will be appropriately signposted to facilitate tourists and warn motorists.

WC POL 1 To promote walking and cycling as efficient, healthy and environmentally friendly modes of transport by securing the development of a network of direct, comfortable, convenient and safe cycle routes and footpaths, particularly in town centres and in the vicinity of schools.

WC POL 6 To require adequate filtered permeability solutions in relation to large-scale residential, commercial or mixed-use development proposals (both in terms of new development and retrofitting into existing built-up areas) to facilitate active travel, accessibility and connectivity in settlements.

Section 7.8.5 of the County Development Plan deals with 'Healthy Communities'. The Council is aware that the tourism and exploration potential of its trails and amenities has not yet been fully developed and will facilitate, and where necessary become directly involved in, the promotion and development of walking and cycling trails.

Relevant policies and objectives in this regard include:

HC POL 3 To facilitate the provision of appropriate high quality recreational and amenity facilities within the county.

In relation to Natura 2000 sites which refer to Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, the County Development Plan states that the Council shall take appropriate steps to avoid, in these areas, the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species, as well as disturbance of the species for which the areas have been designated, in so far as such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of the *EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC Directive)*.

With regard to Natura 2000 sites, the County Development Plan includes the following policies:

NH POL 1 To protect and conserve Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

NH POL 2 To implement Article 6(3) and where necessary Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects with the potential to impact European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s). All assessments must be in compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, and the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended as relevant.

Environmental Assessment

Appropriate Assessment

NATURA 2000 sites are protected habitats for flora and fauna of European importance. They comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), designated under the Birds Directive.

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by JKW Environmental Consulting to assist the Planning Authority in their determination. The report concludes that a Natura Impact Statement / Appropriate Assessment is not required for this project. This report is contained in Appendix B.

Environmental Impact Assessment

An Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report was completed for proposed scheme by JKW Environmental Consulting. It concluded that a full Environmental Impact Assessment Report is not required for the project. This report is contained in Appendix C.

Ecological Impact Assessment

An Ecological Impact Assessment Report has been prepared by JKW Environmental Consulting as part of the Part 8 planning application to assist the planning authority in their determination. This report is contained in Appendix D. It concludes that if all mitigation measures are implemented, the proposed scheme can be appropriately built and operated without significant adverse effects on designated areas, flora and fauna.

Archaeological Assessment

Archaeology has been reviewed and an Archaeology Impact Assessment Report has been issued by Fado Archaeology as part of this Part 8 planning application to assist the Planning Authority in their determination. This report is contained in Appendix E. It concludes that the development of the trail will not impact on any recorded archaeological or architectural features.

Road Safety

The proposed greyway will run along the L1601 for the entire route as set out on the site layout drawings. Therefore, pedestrians will be adjacent to live vehicular traffic.

The speed limit is 80 km /hr speed zone with acceptable sight distances for approaching traffic. No road crossings are incorporated in the design as the greyway stays on the West side of the road for the duration linking to existing footpaths in both Dromod & Rooskey.

A stage one road safety audit has been undertaken by TTRSA. They have identified a list of safety issues that could be removed or modified in order to improve the scheme. They have also included a list of suggestions in the report.

Existing Bridges

The greyway will pass over Killinaker bridge. The bridge is in very good condition and is an interesting attraction on the route.

Public Lighting

Public lighting is not proposed along the route as this is a rural location.

Appendix A: Photographs of Proposed Greyway Location



Figure 1: Start point for the Greyway on the Dromod side which ties into existing footpath and uncontrolled crossing at Shannon Haven Estate.



Figure 2: Typical view along the route



Figure 3: Typical view along the route with wide verge (Dromod side of Killinaker Bridge)



Figure 4: Typical view along the route with narrow verge (Rooskey side of Killinaker bridge)



Figure 4: View of the starting point on the Rooskey side looking North towards Dromod