



Longford County Council

N55 Ballymahon Main Street Improvement Works at Athlone Road Junction

REPORT OF PARTICULARS OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT TO BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC DISPLAY

Longford County Council Great Water Street Longford	19007-R-P8 Issue PL4	Kilgallen & Partners Consulting Engineers Well Road, Portlaoise Co. Laois
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REVISION HISTORY

Client	Longford County Council
Project	N55 Ballymahon Main Street Improvement Works at Athlone Road Junction
Title	Report of Particulars of Proposed Development to be made available for Public Display

Date	Detail of Issue	Issue No.	Origin	Checked	Approved
16/02/23	Issued for Part 8	PL4	SC	PB	PB

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1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, and Part VIII, Article 80 & 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended, Longford County Council has given notice of its intention to carry out development ('the proposed development') comprising amendment to the previously approved N55 Ballymahon Main Street Improvement Works Scheme in the Townland of Creevagh Beg.

The proposed development will comprise:

- replace the previously approved roundabout at the Athlone Road Junction with a signalised priority junction;
- provide appropriate cycle facilities at the Athlone Road Junction and on the approaches thereto;
- provide controlled crossing facilities at the Athlone Road junction for pedestrians and cyclists.

This report is prepared for inclusion with the Plans and Particulars being made available for public inspection in accordance with the above Act and Regulations. It is to be read in conjunction with the following drawings which show details of the proposed development and which, along with this Report, will also be made available for public inspection:

Drawing No	Title
Drawing No. 19007-DR-P8-01	Cover Site Location
Drawing No. 19007-DR-P8-02	Site Layout
Drawing No. 19007-DR-P8-03	Previously Approved Roundabout

Table 1.1 Drawings Made Available for Inspection with this Report

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

In 2018, the elected members of Longford County Council approved development [‘the previously approved scheme’] comprising improvement works to the N55 through Ballymahon. The previously approved scheme included:

- a proposal to replace the existing priority junction at the Athlone Road with a roundabout;
- proposals for dedicated cycle facilities on the N55 west of the Inny River.

The previously approved scheme did not include proposals for:

- appropriate cycle facilities at either the Athlone Road Junction or the approaches thereto;
- controlled crossing facilities at the Athlone Road Junction for either pedestrians or cyclists.

A general layout of the previously approved scheme at the Athlone Road Junction is provided on Drg No 19007-DR-P8-03.

Longford County Council proposes to amend the previously approved scheme as follows:

- provide appropriate cycle facilities across the Athlone Road junction and on the approaches thereto;
- omit the previously approved roundabout and instead construct a signalised priority junction at the Athlone Road Junction;
- provide controlled crossing facilities at the Athlone Road junction for pedestrians and cyclists.

The works to construct the amended scheme will comprise:

- site clearance;
- overlay / reconstruction of the existing pavement and paved areas;
- construction of new pavement and paved areas and embankments where required to support the new areas;
- removal of existing wall on northern side of the junction;
- changes to existing drainage infrastructure as required for amended kerb locations and installation of bypass hydrocarbon separators on existing surface water outfall pipes;
- ancillary fencing, walls, gates and guardrails.

A general layout of the proposed development is provided on Drg No 19007-DR-P8-02.

3. REASONS FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1. Provision of dedicated cycle facilities at the Athlone Road junction and approaches thereto

As described in Section 2, the previously approved scheme did not include proposals for dedicated cycle facilities at either the Athlone Road Junction or the approaches thereto. Thus it did not encourage cycling to and from areas east of the Inny River and also did not encourage the development of a broader cycle loop for Ballymahon.

The County Development Plan 2015 – 2021 [CDP] emphasises the accessibility of alternative transport to the private car. This leads to the following specific objectives in the CDP:

- PED 1 The Planning Authority aims to improve the attractiveness and usability of the pedestrian environment of the County, particularly in residential areas, designated settlements and in areas of high amenity.*
- PED 2 The Council shall promote the use of alternative transport to the private car 189 through encouraging enhanced pedestrian and cycling facilities in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.*
- PED 4 The Council shall promote the organisation of traffic in towns and villages in order to separate motor vehicular, bicycles and pedestrian traffic. This is to be carried out in accordance with the 'National Manual for the provision of Cycle Facilities in Urban Areas', 'The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets' and 'The National Cycle Manual'.*

Amendment of the previously approved scheme to provide dedicated cycle facilities across the Inny River and through the Athlone Road Junction will therefore deliver greater compliance with the policy and objectives of the CDP in regard to cyclists.

3.2. Replacement of previously approved roundabout with a signalised priority junction

The design standard for roads to which a speed limit of 60 km/h or less applies is the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets [DMURS], published by the Department for Transport Tourism and Sport. The Athlone Road junction is in a 50km/h speed limit zone and so DMURS is the appropriate design standard for improvement works to this junction.

DMURS states that large roundabouts are generally not appropriate in urban areas, mainly because they are difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to navigate. Large roundabouts are particularly unsuited for these vulnerable road users where controlled crossings/cycle facilities are not provided, as is the case with the previously approved roundabout.

Thus, replacing the previously approved roundabout with a signalised priority junction complies with the recommendations of DMURS for junctions in urban areas.

3.3. Provision of controlled crossing facilities at the Athlone Road junction

The provision of controlled crossing facilities will improve safety for these vulnerable road users as they navigate the Athlone Road Junction.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Appropriate Assessment

The proposed development was subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening.

This screening found there is no requirement to proceed to Stage 2 of the AA process.

A copy of the Screening Report is included with the Plans and Particulars being made available for inspection under the Part 8 process.

4.2 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

The impact of the previously approved scheme on Archaeology and Cultural Heritage was assessed before being made available for public consultation under the Part VIII process. To mitigate against archaeological and heritage impacts, the following measures would be implemented:

- *in the detailed design of the project, intrusion into below-ground strata would be minimised;*
- *monitoring of intrusive groundworks would be carried out by a qualified archaeologist;*
- *in any areas of proposed tree planting, shallow-rooting species would be used in areas adjacent to archaeological monuments.*

Test trenching was carried out in 2019 in the lands immediately east of the Inny River and north of the junction. The test trenching found no evidence of archaeological features, deposits or artefacts, although 19th / 20th century demolition rubble was encountered. Based on these results, it was concluded that the previously approved scheme would not impact on any below-ground archaeological features and no further archaeological work was recommended. A copy of the report on this investigation is included with the Plans and Particulars being made available for inspection under the Part 8 process.

The proposed development lies within the footprint of the previously approved scheme and does not propose works that would compromise the mitigation measures to be implemented.

5. LAND ACQUISITION

5.1 Land acquisition

The Scheme requires the acquisition of lands from two private properties.

5.2 Rights of way

The Scheme does not propose the elimination of any rights of way.