

Submission Details

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Submitter

Name	Freda Gleeson
Address	Kaukauna Lodge Birdhill Co Tipperary
Note	Please see attached my submission

In relation to application

Application Number	PT8TT134
Applicant Name	Tipperary County Council
Development Address	R445 Carraigeway birdhill Gortybrigane and Birdhill

From Freda Gleeson, Kaukauna Lodge, Birdhill, Co. Tipperary, 21st Sep 2024

Att: Local Authority Tipperary County Council

Re: Observation on Active Travel Scheme Birdhill Planning ref PT8TT134

Dear Sir/ Madam,

While I commend your efforts to promote active travel and build on the new Killaloe By Pass Road Scheme which creates a cycle path from the R494 Ballina/Killaloe to the R445 in Birdhill, the proposed changes inside Birdhill village present 3 dangerous hazards to the public which need to be addressed by significant amendments to the scheme.

Firstly, the scheme proposes a mixed footpath/ cycle environment in the middle of the village, at the interface with Matt the Threshers restaurant, Trading Centre Coffee shop and Coopers Public house. This creates a serious threat to pedestrian safety in terms of risk of collision between pedestrians and cyclists on the mixed footpath. These venues encourage significant visitors to the village and pedestrian movements outside and criss-crossing all premises, visitors which will not necessarily have familiarity with the arrangement and could with some, considering venues on both sides of the road sell alcohol, be partially intoxicated making them more vulnerable to unusual mixed mode footpaths. Therefore, to create a shared footpath between cyclists and pedestrians in the point of greatest interaction appears exceedingly dangerous and inappropriate and should be removed from the scheme, keeping a kerb separation from the carriageway and clear level separation and surface separation between cyclists and pedestrians.

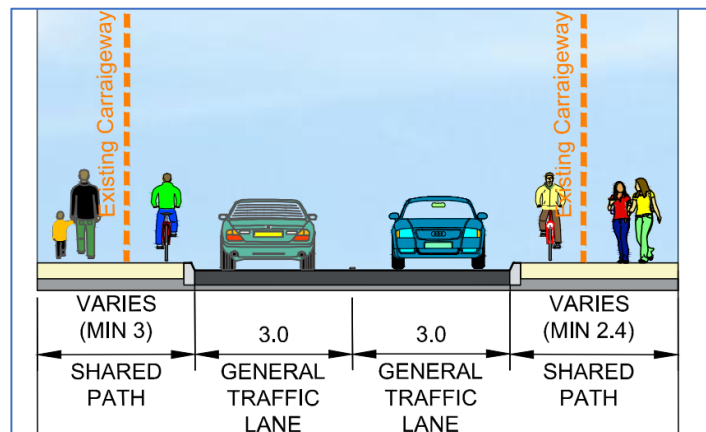
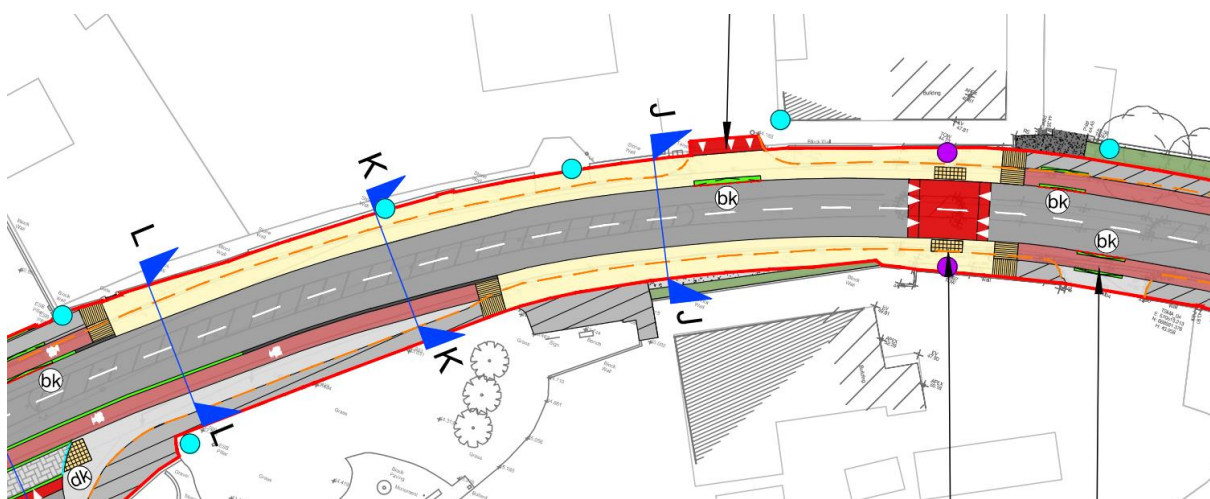
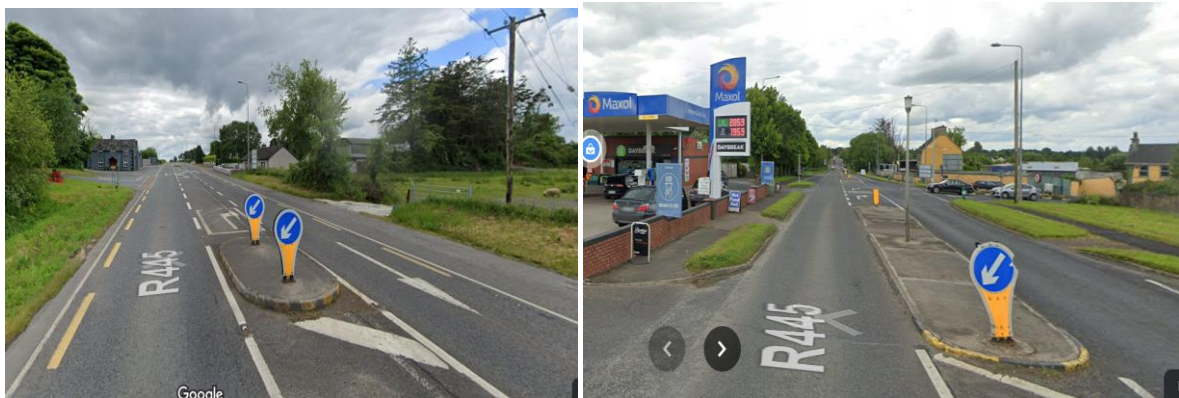


Fig 1 & 2 – Scheme Section JJ and Plan : Hazardous mixed level pedestrian and cycle use between commercial properties at centre of village showing minimum path reducing to 2.4m shared with cyclists at critical interface at commercial centre of village for pedestrians with pubs and restaurant.



Secondly, and more extensively hazardous across the village, is the removal of the right turning lane and traffic separation island throughout the centre of the village. Considering the curved nature of the road in the centre of the village approaching the intersection of the Newport R504 and O'Briensbridge road R466 heading towards Limerick, along with right turning access to aforementioned commercial premises, and a significant number of entrances to houses and other properties, the removal of the centre Island and turning lane, introduces a significant safety hazard to traffic movement which the current road arrangement addresses carefully, and indeed similarly with other intersections along the R445 road at Ballyhane road crossing and Daly's Cross (See images below). This removal of the safety zone for turning right and traffic lane separation is clearly the result of the creation of the cycleway. This seems a design flaw in compromising the safety of traffic movements, which ultimately put cyclists and pedestrians at greater risk, including increasing significantly the risk to motorists themselves turning right in the village.



Thirdly in relation to turning left along the R445, the introduction of the cycle lane running across numerous entrances for houses, commercial properties, and other properties, and the main Newport R504, O'Briensbridge R466 intersection, this scheme places an inside blind spot hazard of colliding with cyclists in the most vulnerable way for serious cyclist accidents, particularly where large vehicles and trailers are turning left. The cycle lane design would encourage a cycle path right of way on the inside of left turning traffic, and also a conflict on cyclists turning right (which happens a lot in relation to the R504/ R466 intersection and entrances to commercial properties), as they have no lane for turning right. It is notable also that the village is used significantly by cycle groups and pelotons. These groups do not travel in single file and will actually require use of the entire carriageway for safety of maneuver and passage, thus rendering the single cycle lane inadequate for the majority of cyclists that use the village. See above image of leisure/sports cyclists using the village in pelotons.



Finally in relation to my own property in the R445 and R466 junction and just below the junction, the new traffic Island and restricted center lane for turning will make it less safe for traffic entering and exiting my property, for which I have 5 entrances and exits in the proximity of the junction, including residential and agri business purposes. While this is not the most impactful part of the scheme, this plus the aforementioned aspects put myself, my family and visitors at greater risk than currently

exist, driving or walking in the village, and I respectfully ask this is taken into account along with the wider public wide safety issues.

In light of these significant safety and hazard issues I respectfully request that

- 1) the cycle lanes proposed terminate at the entrance to the reduced speed limit for the village on both Limerick and Nenagh approaches,
- 2) that the existing centre lane for traffic separation and right turns, along with existing grade separated footpaths are preserved as is, inside the village speed limits, and particularly in the commercial centre of the village and no mixed footpaths be created here.
- 3) Cyclists and motorists approaching the village should be encouraged to use the existing carriageway once they reach the speed limit and observe each other directly in lane, ensuring full visibility and understanding of right of way and intended movement and maneuvers, rather than creating a dual carriageway behaviour where inside passing and right of way would lead to confusion and danger.
- 4) The proposed pedestrian crossings at the centre of the village commercial properties and the bus stop and intersection with the Newport & O'Briensbridge road are commendable in principle but should not be intersected by both vehicle and cycle lanes, and should remain as simply a 2 lane carriageway with centre island reservation crossing arrangement. This would allow pedestrians crossing to have a safe refuge in the centre of the road and focus on directional traffic in each separate lane. This would require the crossings themselves be sited in a way that they don't interfere or cause mixing of right turning traffic adjacent to the crossings, and to this extent it may be appropriate to consider removing crossing at the Newport / O'Brien bridge Road intersection noting pedestrians heading to the Park or further up the Village from the Railway Station or vice versa are better served by other crossings, with pedestrian movements close to this crossing being very limited in need but far more difficult for motorists and pedestrians to navigate (this is the widest and most complicated junction in the village with traffic approaching and leaving in 4 directions, and the scene of past incidents of motorists striking pedestrians. The suggested adjustments to crossing locations are highlighted on Fig 3 to explain the narrative.

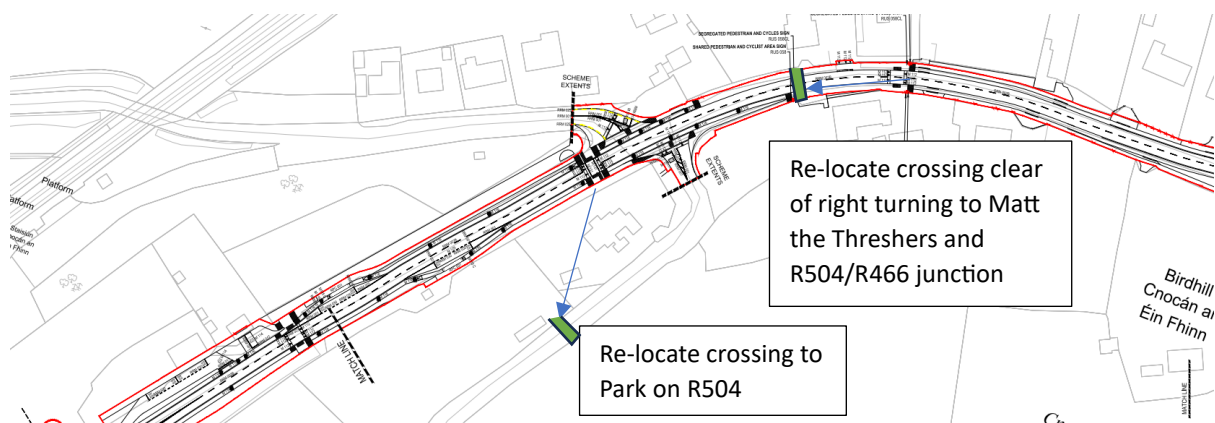


Fig 3 General Arrangement plan – suggested adjustment of crossing points to avoid right turning lane hazards

Benefits of these adjustments to the scheme

If these adjustments are made the scheme would be far safer for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists. As an active travel scheme for Birdhill village, savings in these areas - which would be substantial in terms of current scheme construction costs - could be re-directed at the importance of footpaths and

pedestrian movements in the village – noting that most cycle traffic is actually transient and not generated from within the village itself.

Both the Newport R504 and O'Brienbridge roads R466 would benefit significantly from extended speed limits (on the Newport Road to 200 meters from the existing Park Entrance, and on the O'Briensbridge extended to the Nature Walk the Pollagh Trail), with a safe footpath extending from the recent scheme on the R466 from the Railway station over the railway Bridge, which is a very significant hazard to the public (especially the narrow rail bridge), but an essential part of the active and nature walking route in the village. The crossing point at the Park on the R504 would also benefit from a controlled crossing, one which could be relocated from the R504/R466 junction so at no additional cost. These walking routes are enjoyed by a huge variety of people from the hinterland, the village and people visiting the village. The following sketch indicates how the active travel scheme could be re-balanced towards pedestrian active walking and ensure cyclists and vehicle movements benefit from the existing safe road design and does not compromise this in future use.

Fig 4 & 5 – General Arrangement Plan – Mark up suggested amendments to the Scheme which are expected to increase benefits and safety and reduce the overall scheme cost.

