



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Board Order ABP-301076-18

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### Planning and Development Acts, 2000 to 2018

#### Planning Authority: Wexford County Council

**Application** by Wexford County Council for approval under section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in accordance with plans and particulars, including a Natura impact statement, lodged with An Bord Pleanála on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2018.

**Proposed Development:** Development of a greenway consisting of a shared cycle/pedestrian path with three sections:

- The main greenway is a substantially off-road 10.7-kilometre long three-metre wide macadam path along the northern fringe of Wexford Harbour from Ferrybank in Wexford Town to Culleton's Gap near Curraclloe. The route traverses agricultural land, the Wexford Wildfowl Reserve, lands adjacent to the North Slob sea wall and the Raven Wood.
- The Ferrybank Loop is a three-metre wide path with a total length of 6.1 kilometres. It consists of 2.6 kilometres on the main greenway, one kilometre on or adjacent to Ardavan Lane, 0.9 kilometres through Ardavan Business Park and 1.6 kilometres of a segregated cycle track on the R741 Regional Road from Ardavan to Ferrybank.
- An additional 1.4-kilometre section of the existing Raven Wood Loop will be upgraded to a three-metre wide off-road shared cycle/pedestrian path with a macadam surface.

There will be no access onto the mid-section of the main greenway from 15<sup>th</sup> September to 15<sup>th</sup> April annually. The mid-section extends from the Visitors' Centre at Wexford Wildfowl Reserve through the North East Slob to the edge of The Raven. Access control measures include a 1.8-metre high secure fencing along this section of the greenway, secure gates and a series of other measures as detailed in the application. The proposed works also include the construction of a boardwalk across the Burgess Wetland, screened viewing platforms on the greenway route at the Wildfowl Visitor Centre and Curraclloe Channel, a 25-space carpark at Ardcavan Lane, culverts, fencing, signage and associated works, all in the townlands of Ferrybank South, Ferrybank North, Tincone, Burgess, Ardcavan, Crosstown, Craanagam, North West Slob, Big Island, North East Slob and The Raven, County Wexford.

## **Decision**

**Refuse to approve the above proposed development based on the reasons and considerations set out below.**

## **Matters Considered**

In making its decision, the Board had regard to those matters to which, by virtue of the Planning and Development Acts and Regulations made thereunder, it was required to have regard. Such matters included any submissions and observations received by it in accordance with statutory provisions.

## Reasons and Considerations

1. The Board is not satisfied that the local authority has demonstrated that the proposed development would not adversely affect the integrity of the Raven Point Nature Reserve Special Area of Conservation (site code: 000710), the Wexford Harbour and Slobs Special Protection Area (site code: 004076) and the Raven Special Protection Area (site code: 004019) in view of the conservation objectives for these sites. The increased level of usage by pedestrians/cyclists associated with the greenway will increase accessibility and human activity and potentially result in a significant negative impact on the existing Annex 1 habitats at the Raven Point Nature Reserve Special Area of Conservation (site code: 000710) and additional disturbance and displacement to birds using intertidal habitats at the Raven Special Protection Area (site code: 004019). Furthermore, the Board is not satisfied that the long-term efficacy of the mitigation measures to protect the greenland white fronted geese and hen harrier populations and other bird species has been sufficiently demonstrated. In overall conclusion, the Board is not satisfied that the proposed development would not adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites in view of the sites' conservation objectives.
2. It is considered that the proposed development, the design of which is predicated on significant mitigation measures, including extensive screening, fencing and security measures of varying scale and design, would have significant and unacceptable negative effects on the environment and residential properties in the vicinity and would be detrimental to the attractive and sensitive visual and landscape amenities of the area. Furthermore, these negative impacts would arise even though the full extent of the greenway would be open only from 15<sup>th</sup> April to 15<sup>th</sup> September each year. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

