

An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ACP-324430-26

Development	Proposed Royal Canal Urban Greenway
Location	Kildare County Council boundary to Talbot Bridge, Old Navan Road, Dublin.
Prospective Applicant(s)	Fingal County Council
Type of Application	Pre-Application under S.51A of the Roads Act.
Planning Authority	Fingal County Council
Date of Site Inspection	20 th August 2026.
Inspector	Peadar McQuaid

1.0 Introduction

Fingal County Council (the prospective applicant) requested Pre Application Consultations under Section 51A of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended), for the development of the proposed Royal Canal Urban Greenway (Talbot Bridge to Kildare County Boundary section).

Two pre-application consultation meetings took place between the Commission and the prospective applicant. The first meeting was held on the 24th August 2026 and the second meeting was held on the 16th September 2026. The prospective applicant submitted a written request, dated 23rd September 2026 to close the pre-application consultation.

This report provides an overview of the proposed project, a summary of the meetings and the advice provided by the Commission, the legislative provisions, and it recommends a list of Prescribed Bodies that should be forwarded copies of the application.

2.0 The Roads Act – Legislative Provisions

The Roads Act of 2015 inserted Section 51A into the Roads Act of 1993. Section 51A provides for consultations with An Coimisiún Pleanála before making an application under Section 51.

The Act provides that the Commission may give advice under Section 51A (3) in relation to the procedures involved in making the application, and what may have a bearing on its decision in relation to the application in respect of the effects of a proposed road development on the environment, or an area, site or land, and proper planning and sustainable development.

Section 51A of the Roads Act consultations differ from other strategic infrastructure legislation. The Act does not require the Commission to provide an opinion on whether the project is strategic infrastructure or not. Following the completion of any consultations between the commission and the applicant, the Roads Act states that

the applicant may apply to the commission for the approval in relation to a proposed road development.

3.0 Site Location and Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises of c. 8.1km shared urban pedestrian and cycle greenway along the Royal Canal corridor, extending from the Kildare County Council boundary in the west to Talbot Bridge (12th Lock) on Old Navan Road, Castleknock in the east. At Talbot Bridge, the proposed scheme is intended to tie into the completed greenway section at Ashtown.

The main elements of the proposed scheme include a shared walking and cycling route, typically up to 4m wide where available corridor width allows, with localised narrowing to approximately 2m in constrained sections, together with new and upgraded access points, crossings, lighting, boundary treatments, retaining structures, drainage, service diversions, temporary construction compounds and landscape works.

Key structures and interventions proposed as part of the scheme include:

- Landmark Bridge - a proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge of c.185m over the Royal Canal, between Kirkpatrick Bridge and Granard Bridge.
- Quarry Bridge - a proposed new bridge on the route.
- Castleknock Road underpass - an underpass beneath Castleknock Road on the southern side of Granard Bridge.
- Pocket Park - a proposed pocket park at Hansfield.

The scheme also includes demolition of two dwellings and ancillary structures on the approach to Hansfield Road to facilitate a continuous route alignment and pocket park. The proposed scheme is to be completed in three sections, Kildare County Border to Hansfield Railway Bridge, Hansfield Railway Bridge to Kennan Bridge, and Kennan Bridge to Talbot Bridge.

4.0 Natural Heritage Designations

Parts of the proposed greenway route run through and close to the following site:

- Royal Canal pNHA (site code: 002103)

The nearest European Sites are the Rye Water Valley/Carlton SAC (site code 001398) c.1.9km to the west. A number of SPAs and SACs are located in Dublin Bay c. 13.5km to the east.

5.0 Pre Application Consultation Meetings

The signed meeting records are appended to the case file. The main points discussed are briefly outlined as follows: project need, planning policy context, design process, compulsory purchase orders and public consultation. AA and EIA requirements were also discussed.

The Commission representatives identified several areas of interests including potential impacts on - visual amenity/landscape; cultural heritage; flood risk; drainage; and ecology, including the relationship with natural heritage sites and biodiversity.

The Commission's advice to the prospective applicant during the pre-application consultation meetings is summarised below.

First Meeting (24th August 2026)

- CPO: The prospective applicant confirmed that CPO would primarily be for land. 2 no. dwellings have been acquired by the prospective applicant to make way for the proposed Pocket Park at Hansfield. Other areas have been identified for CPO with landowner engagement ongoing.
- Policy Context: The Commission's representatives advised the prospective applicant to adequately demonstrate compliance with local policy contained in the Fingal County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 (CDP). Regard should be had to all relevant European, National, Regional policy including the Climate Action Plan 2024/2025 and Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021.
- Design Justification: The Commission's representatives advised that the application should demonstrate a clear overall design strategy and how the

main aspects of the development have been considered in an integrated way with other existing greenway sections of the Royal Canal.

- Riparian Habitat: The prospective applicant confirmed works will occur within the 10m riparian corridor buffer. The Commission's representatives advised that the prospective applicant is required to demonstrate how the integrity of the riparian corridor can be maintained and enhanced in accordance with CDP policies.
- Built Heritage: The prospective applicant confirmed no works would take place to any of the protected structures. The Commission's representatives advised that the Royal Canal is itself a protected structure and the proposed greenway works should have regard to relevant built heritage guidelines and best practice.
- CEMP: The Commission's representatives advised the prospective applicant that a robust CEMP will be required to address any construction phase related issues. The application should include a standalone Water Framework Directive Assessment which may form part of the EIAR.
- In combination effects: The Commission's representatives recommended that due consideration should be given to in-combination effects on the environment with other existing and permitted/proposed projects in the area. Consideration should be given in relation how the proposal interacts with the MP 13.A Masterplan Area lands and other zoned lands.
- EIAR/AA: The Commission's representatives advised that the scope, structure and content of the environmental impact assessment report (EIAR), biodiversity chapter and appropriate assessment (AA) reporting are in accordance with industry specific guidance and/or published best practice. Ecological survey data and assessments are up to date at the time of lodging the planning application.
- Derogation Licences: The prospective applicant stated that they will require Regulation 54 license(s). The Commission's representatives advised that

engagement with the NPWS should be conducted as soon as possible, as valid derogation licence(s), must be submitted with the application documents.

Second Meeting (16th September 2026)

- Derogation Licences: The prospective applicant enquired if the submission of the Otter derogation licence was required at the time of application. The Commission's representatives clarified that the application cannot be determined without sight of the derogation(s) and failure to include same at the time of application could therefore delay the assessment of the application.
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment: The prospective applicant enquired if submission of the BNG assessment was required at the time of application. The Commission's representatives confirmed that the BNG is not a mandatory legal requirement to inform an Environmental Impact Assessment however it is noted that BNG is specifically mandated under policies and objectives of the CDP and should be submitted with the application, if completed, as the Commission has no scope to accept unsolicited further information.
- Statutory Timelines: The prospective applicant enquired whether the 2024 Act statutory timelines would apply to this application being made under the Roads Act. The Commission's representatives advised that it would not.

6.0 Conclusion

Section 51A of the Roads Act 1993, as amended, provides that a Road Authority or an Authority can enter into consultations with An Coimisiún Pleanála prior to submitting an application under Section 51(2) in relation to a proposed road development. During the two meetings held, advice was provided in accordance with Section 51A (3), as noted above and the records of the meetings are found in the attached file.

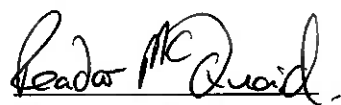
The prospective applicant now wishes to close the consultation stage and, following on from this stage, the applicant may apply to the Commission for approval of the proposed Royal Canal Urban Greenway scheme.

A recommended list of Prescribed Bodies, who should be forwarded copies of the application documentation, is as follows: Section 51(3)(b) of the Roads Act 1993, as amended, lists the following bodies:

- i. The Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland (OPW).
- ii. Bord Fáilte Éireann (now Fáilte Éireann).
- iii. An Taisce – the National Trust for Ireland.
- iv. The Environmental Protection Agency.
- v. Any other prescribed body or person.

It is also considered that the following prescribed bodies or persons, as per section 51(3)(b)(v) of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended), should also be notified:

- vi. Department of Planning and Local Government and Heritage
- vii. Minister of Environment and Climate & Communications
- viii. Kildare County Council
- ix. Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- x. National Transport Authority.
- xi. An Chomhairle Ealaíon (Arts Council)
- xii. The Heritage Council
- xiii. Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly
- xiv. Uisce Éireann
- xv. Inland Fisheries
- xvi. Waterways Ireland
- xvii. Department of Transport
- xviii. Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media
- xix. HSE
- xx. ESB
- xxi. Eirgrid



Peadar McQuaid

Planning Inspector

30th September 2026

