



An  
Coimisiún  
Pleanála

**Record of Meeting**  
**ACP-323831-25**  
**1<sup>st</sup> meeting**

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	ACP-323831-25 – West Clare Railway Greenway Project - Section 1 (Kilrush to Kilkee). Kilrush to Kilkee via Moyasta, Co. Clare		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application consultation		
<b>1st / 2nd / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	1st Meeting		
<b>Date</b>	05/03/2026	<b>Start Time</b>	11:00 a.m.
<b>Location</b>	MS Teams	<b>End Time</b>	12: 00 p.m.

<b>Representing An Coimisiún Pleanála</b>
Stephen Rhys Thomas, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Joe Bonner, Senior Planning Inspector
Kevin McGettigan, Executive Officer
<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>
Eoin O’Cathain (Presenter), Consultant Engineer, Roughan O’Donovan
Laura Lynch, Environmental Lead, Roughan O’Donovan
Deirdre Neff, Project Manager, Roughan O’Donovan
Morgan Lahiffe, Senior Engineer, Clare County Council
Grainne Reddan, Senior Executive Engineer, Clare County Council
Ellen Carey, Planning, Clare County Council
Alan Farrell, Director of Services, Clare County Council

The meeting commenced at 11:00 a.m.

The Commission apologised on having to reschedule the original meeting.

The Commission mentioned general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process as follows:

- The Commission outlined this meeting is being held under the provisions of Section 51A of the Roads Act 1993, as amended.
- The Commission outlined the purpose of this pre-application is to provide an opinion as to whether the proposed development falls within the provisions of Section 51A of the Roads Act and therefore requires an application for approval to be made to the Commission.
- The Commission also stated that it will provide advice on the procedures for making the application and on any considerations relating to the proper planning and sustainable development or environmental matters that may influence the decision.
- The Commission will keep a record of this meeting and any other meetings, if held. Such records will form part of the file which will be made available publicly at the conclusion of the process. The record of the meeting will not be amended by the Commission once finalised, but the prospective applicant may submit comments on the record which will form part of the case file.
- It is not permitted to use AI or other external recording at this meeting.
- The Commission will serve notice at the conclusion of the process as to the strategic infrastructure status of the proposed development. It may form a preliminary view at an early stage in the process on the matter.
- Further information may be requested by the Commission and public consultations may also be directed by the Commission.
- A further meeting or meetings may be held in respect of the proposed development.

- The holding of consultations does not prejudice the Commission in any way and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or any legal proceedings.

### **Presentation by the prospective applicant:**

The prospective applicant set out their presentation, which is attached to the file.

### **Discussion:**

The Commission's representatives queried whether the prospective applicant intended to hold only one pre-app meeting as indicated in an email the previous week.

The Commission's representative noted that they had reviewed the presentation delivered at the meeting and the draft chapter 4 of the EIAR from December 2025 in order to address matters considered relevant.

The Commission's representative also stated that they had visited and walked the proposed route to gain a clearer understanding of the proposed development.

### **Other Documents and Report Matters Arising**

The Commission's representatives queried elements of the documentation, noting that the prospective applicant referred to an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, an Outline Environmental Operational Management Plan and Winter bird surveys being carried out since 2021.

The Commission's representative noted that significant sections of the proposed route pass through sensitive environments and queried the range of studies undertaken to date, including those relating to the EIAR, NIS, associated appendices and surveys, Construction Management, an Invasive Species Management Plan, Flood Risk Assessment and Aquatic Flood Risk Assessment.

The Commission's representative also asked whether any additional supporting documentation is expected to accompany the application.

The prospective applicant responded that there will be an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), an Appropriate Assessment (AA), and a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO).

The prospective applicant stated that the EIA documentation will include a comprehensive set of scheme drawings and cross-sections describing the proposed works together with the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). A Natura Impact Assessment will accompany the application and will include surveys undertaken.

The prospective applicant further noted that a number of management plans are being prepared to support the application including a Construction Environmental Management Plan and an Invasive Species Management Plan. Two more additional management plans are currently being finalised and will accompany the application.

A Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment will be included as an appendix to the Hydrology chapter of the EIAR. These were identified as the primary supporting documents.

The Commission's representatives queried whether a Water Framework Directive Assessment has been undertaken and whether a bat survey report has been carried out.

In response, the prospective applicant stated that bats had been considered and were not identified as a significant issue.

The Commission's representatives stated that it is important for the prospective applicant to ensure that a wide range of environmental issues are considered. Typical supporting documents may include breeding bird surveys (including surveys undertaken outside the winter season), tree surveys and an archaeological assessment. The Commission's representative also questioned whether the Waste Management Plan would be covered within the Construction Management Plan.

The Commission representative queried the proposed traffic management, noting the number of roads affected and asking whether the Construction Traffic

Management Plan would be implemented in phases or across the entire route. They also asked how structured traffic management and road safety audits would be carried out given the number of junctions along the route.

In response, the prospective applicant confirmed that the traffic management arrangements are satisfactory.

The Commission's representative noted that considerations should be given to Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and how it may affect the application. The Commission's representative asked whether this is being addressed.

In response the prospective applicant confirmed that a Climate chapter is included within the EIAR.

### **Statutory Consultations**

The Commission's representative queried potential noise and visual impacts noting the open nature of the route and asking how disturbances caused by dogs would be managed. The prospective applicant responded that the greenway is fully contained and measures have been designed to prevent dog disturbances. Ecological advice, including consideration of fence gap sizes to prevent dog access has been incorporated, building on previous experience from Dublin Port and all mitigation measures will be fully documented in the EIAR.

The Commission's representative queried the statutory consultees noting reference to the Parks and Wildlife Service and Birdwatch Ireland. The Commission's representative asked whether Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) has been consulted in regarding the zebra crossing that is proposed at Moyasta and noted that Chapter 4 (page 19) of the EIAR states that utility companies will be consulted as part of the detailed design. The Commission representative asked whether any contact or consultation has taken place with the utility companies to date, noting it is unlikely that there are any significant utilities along the rail line.

In response, the prospective applicant stated that the EIA Scoping Report has been sent to all the statutory consultees and responses have been received. TII, as the sponsors of the scheme, are closely involved and aware of the proposed zebra crossing. The prospective applicant further noted that there are no major utility

assets along the route but indicated that they would need to confirm the extent of engagement with utility companies.

## **CPO**

The Commission's representative queried the CPO, asking whether the route presented is final and whether any changes are expected for the application.

The prospective applicant stated, in general terms, the 15.2 kilometres will proceed as presented. Some refinement is ongoing through the voluntary land acquisition agreement process and minor adjustments to landowner areas may occur but for all practical purposes, the same landowners will be affected.

The Commission's representative queried the corridor widths and whether the CPO mapping differentiates between temporary and permanent land acquisition or any land to be returned to the landowners. The prospective applicant confirmed that it does.

The Commission's representative stated that as the CPO application is being submitted in parallel, it is important that relevant details are included within the Greenway application so that the information is on record and that CPO application is not relying/referring to a separate application.

In response, the prospective applicant confirmed that this information is addressed in the Material Assets chapter.

## **Policy**

The Commission's representative queried the policy context noting that it is continually evolving and that the Climate Action Plan 2026 may be published before the application is submitted. If published, it was advised that it should be referred to in the application.

The Commission's representative also advised that the status of the Rural Future and Rural Development Policy 2021 to 2025 should be confirmed to ensure it has not been withdrawn, extended or replaced noting that references to outdated policy have arisen in litigation.

The Commission's representative referred to the 'Eurovelo: the European Cycle Route Network' and noted that the relevant route appears to run from Kilkee to

Loophead and comes back and only intersects with the route at Blackweir bridge, where the Greenway would cross the public road. It was noted that inclusion of the Eurovelo route is not a requirement and that it may follow existing planned routes. The Commission's representative suggested that the application should clarify the relationship between the proposed Greenway and the Eurovelo route which appears to follow existing roads.

### **Preliminary Design**

The Commission's representative referred to section 4.1 and other parts of chapter 4 of the EIAR, where it refers to the 'Preliminary Design' and noted that some elements are stated to be subject further detail at a later stage'. Given that sections of the route pass through or adjacent to designated sites including Special Protection Areas, the Commission's representative emphasised the importance of having sufficient detail to support definitive conclusions in the EIAR and NIS. Further clarification was sought on what was meant by further detail at a later stage and whether the proposed development presented represents the final design.

The Commission representative also queried whether the entire route has surveyed noting that some sections appear overgrown particularly after the railway cottage approximately 1.3 kilometers along the route from Kilkee.

In response, the prospective applicant stated that each discipline contributing to the EIAR has been responsible for its own surveys and that no concerns have been identified. It was confirmed that all survey work will be documented in the EIAR.

The Commission's representative referred to Section 4.4.3 'Level Crossings / Farm Accommodation Crossings' in 4.4 Receiving Environment' of the EIAR and noted that approximately 50 existing level crossings are identified along the former railway line while the design includes 64 level crossings along the route including access to local road and or private access for agricultural or private use.

The Commission's representative queried how many at grade agricultural crossings are proposed and whether all crossing points are identified on the plans and sections to be submitted.

The Commission's representative also queried whether cyclist priority would apply at all crossings or whether landowner accommodation has been addressed through

grade separated crossings such as underpasses and overpasses with only limited gated crossings where required.

In response, the prospective applicant stated the exact number of at grade agricultural crossings was not available but indicated that approximately 50 may be required. It was noted that where crossings are frequent, overpasses or underpasses are proposed, while infrequent crossings will be facilitated by gated crossings allowing the Greenway to be temporarily closed. The prospective applicant acknowledged that cyclist priority may not apply in all cases and confirmed that this will be clarified in the application.

The Commission's representative further queried with reference to Figure 4.4. 'landowner accommodation works will be provided, as required" and whether these matters would be agreed, post decision.

The Commission's representative also queried whether the crossings would permit the movement of cattle only or also agricultural vehicles, and if so whether the proposed surface would be of sufficiently robust to accommodate heavy agricultural vehicle movements.

In response the prospective applicant noted that conditions will vary from point to point. There are, however, certain areas where agricultural vehicles will be able to access the crossings.

### **Privacy of Residences**

The Commission's representative queried with reference to 4.5.6 on page 4/31 regarding additional screening for houses in Kilrush at the resident's request, that Percy French Estate in Kilkee is currently a quiet cul-de-sac and asked how parking directly outside houses would be managed given that there is no dedicated parking on the Kilkee side. The Commission's representative also queried how parking near the old train station would be addressed.

The prospective applicant acknowledged the concern and confirmed it is being considered. Kilkee has sufficient existing parking and tourists are expected to park within the town rather than along Percy French Estate. The EIAR includes a survey of existing parking in Kilkee to support this. The prospective applicant confirmed that specific measures are under review for Percy French Estate.

The Commission's representative queried whether any measures are proposed to protect the privacy of residents in the terrace of houses north of the Kilkee start point given their proximity to the roadside and the increased activity the Greenway would introduce. The Commission's representative asked whether these residents were consulted noting that the EIAR page 4/24 refers to two main locations where privacy screening has been proposed at landowners request.

The prospective applicant confirmed residents have been consulted. One landowners owns four of the houses and discussions have taken place with them. The prospective applicant acknowledge that some concerns remain and stated that efforts have been made to address them wherever possible.

### **Bridges**

The Commission's representative queried the status of the 32 proposed structures, including the 8 clear span bridges. They asked whether each bridge will be individually designed or follow a standard design and whether full drawings, sections and elevation details will be provided. The Commission's representative also noted piles are proposed near the recycling center and asked about ground conditions.

The prospective applicant confirmed that drawings exist for new bridges, including foundations and flood compatible infrastructure details.

The Commission's representative asked whether photomontages will be provided to show the visual impact of the fencing and vegetation along the causeway over the rail bridge over Poulnasherry Bay and the proposed overbridges and underbridges.

The prospective applicant confirmed that photomontages are being finalised and will all be included in the application.

### **Lighting**

The Commission's representative queried whether lighting is proposed along the Greenway aside from the N67 crossing and whether temporary construction lighting has been factored into the impact assessments.

The prospective applicant confirmed that no permanent lighting is proposed on the Greenway and will check regarding temporary construction lighting.

### **Drainage**

The Commission's representative queried about the drainage pollution prevention at the car park at Moyasta.

The prospective applicant confirmed that an interceptor ditch will be provided around the car park.

### **Access**

The Commission's representative queried the availability of local access to the Greenway referring to Section 4.3.3 on page 4/21 and 22 of the EIAR which notes that local roads will provide access but are generally unsuitable for parking and will primarily serve local pedestrians and cyclists

The Commission representative queried about Brews Bridge, including landscaping and whether any parts of the route will be shared, the role of the existing car park and areas that may be inaccessible.

The prospective applicant confirmed that the only shared access is the bridge at Moyasta. They noted that the existing car park at Brews Bridge could be incorporated into the published parking network and areas of restricted access will be identified.

The Commission's representative asked whether will there be zebra crossings other than at Moyasta and Kilrush

### **Existing Structures**

The Commission's representative queried Section 4.4.2 of the EIAR regarding inspections of existing structures, embankments and footings prior to construction. The Commission's representative asked how the potential need for works, replacements, or modifications to structures such as the bridge over Poulnasherry Bay has been addressed, particularly in sensitive SAC and SPA areas, given that chapter 4 of the EIAR states that no design changes would be permitted that could undermine the EIAR assessment.

The Commission's representative sought clarity on how uncertainty regarding structural integrity and potential impacts has been managed.

The prospective applicant confirmed that inspections have focused on structures with potential impact on the SAC. They acknowledged that not every structure has

been assessed and will double check, ensuring that the wording in the EIAR is unequivocal.

### **Construction Compounds**

The Commission's representative advises on the wording at Section 4.5.1 and Section 4.6 of the EIAR and queried whether the locations of the construction compounds are known. The Commission's representative noted that the use of the word 'anticipated' suggests uncertainty and advised that clearer wording should be used to confirm whether compounds will be provided at specific locations and to assess their impacts during the construction phase, particularly given proximity to SAC, SPA and pNHA areas.

### **Final Queries**

The Commission's representative referred to typographical errors and wording in Section 4.5, 4.6, 4.7.2, 4.8.1 of the EIAR. The Commission's representative further queried the wording in Section 4.8.2 and whether it may be the result of a copy and paste error.

The Commission's representative asked if whether parking controls are proposed on the trailheads or if parking will be unrestricted. The Commission's representative also noted the publication by the Department of Transport 'Moving Together – A collaborative Approach to Systems Change in Transport 2026-2030' and that it may or may not be relevant to the project.

The Commission's representative queried about the anticipated construction period. The prospective applicant indicated that the anticipated construction period is 18 months and stated that they are finalising the Construction Management Plan.

The Commission's representative queried whether there are any areas of contaminated ground along the route. The prospective applicant confirmed that ground investigations are ongoing and noted that grounds at Kilrush was previously used as landfill. The prospective applicant further stated that even if contaminated ground is identified that the works will involve light construction and that leaving the ground undisturbed would be the most sustainable approach.

The Commission's representative queried whether any buildings or structures along the route will need to be demolished. The prospective applicant confirmed that no demolition of buildings or structures is proposed.

The prospective applicant also queried about the pre-app procedure and indicated that they are keen to submit the application in May or early June under the current Act.

**Conclusion:**

A record of this meeting will be issued shortly. The prospective applicant may submit any written comments or raise any further matters it wishes to discuss at a further meeting, should one be required.

The onus is on the prospective applicant to formally close the pre-app process before submitting the application.

A follow up meeting is not expected; however, procedural and technical queries remain welcome.

The meeting concluded at 12:00 p.m.



19/03/26

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**Stephen Rhys Thomas**

**Assistant Director of Planning**