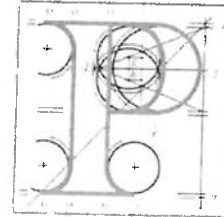


Our Case Number: ACP-324568-26



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Lance Feaver
Ardatole
Barnesmore
Donegal Town
F94 E825

Date: 25 September 2026

Re: Proposed Development of the Barnesmore Gap Greenway Project
County Donegal

Dear Sir / Madam,

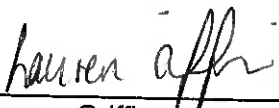
An Coimisiún Pleanála has received your recent submission (including your fee of €50) in relation to the above-mentioned proposed road development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

Please note that the proposed road development shall not be carried out unless the Commission has approved it or approved it with modifications.

If you have any queries in the meantime, please contact the undersigned officer of the Commission at laps@pleanala.ie

Please quote the above mentioned An Coimisiún Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Commission.

Yours faithfully,



Lauren Griffin
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737244

HA02

Teil
Glao Áitiúil
Láithreán Gréasáin
Ríomhphost

Tel
LoCall
Website
Email

(01) 858 8100
1800 275 175
www.pleanala.ie
communications@pleanala.ie

64 Sráid Maoilbhríde
Baile Átha Cliath 1
D01 V902

64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

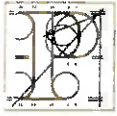
Teil
Glao Áitiúil
Facs
Láithreán Gréasáin
Ríomhphost

Tel
LoCall
Fax
Website
Email

(01) 858 8100
1800 275 175
(01) 872 2684
www.pleanala.ie
communications@pleanala.ie

64 Sráid Maoilbhríde
Baile Átha Cliath 1
D01 V902

64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

SID Online Observation

Online Reference
SID-OBS-006104

Online Observation Details

Contact Name
Lance Feaver

Lodgement Date
24/09/2026 13:24:55

Case Number / Description
324568

Payment Details

Payment Method
Online Payment

Cardholder Name
Lance Feaver

Payment Amount
€50.00

Fee Refund Requisition

Please Arrange a Refund of Fee of

€

Lodgement No

LDG—

Reason for Refund

Documents Returned to Observer

☐ Yes ☐ No

Request Emailed to Senior Executive Officer for Approval

☐ Yes ☐ No

Signed

EO

Date

Finance Section

Payment Reference

ch_3UJBhrB1CW0EN5FC0cG4tEj6

Checked Against Fee Income Online

EO/AA (Accounts Section)

Amount

€

Refund Date

Authorised By (1)

SEO (Finance)

Authorised By (2)

Chief Officer/Director of Corporate Affairs/SAO/Board
Member

Date

Date

24 September 2026

An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

Re: HA05E.324568 - Barnesmore Gap Greenway - Submission in Support of the Proposed Development

1. Introduction and support for approval

I make this submission in support of the Barnesmore Gap Greenway and respectfully request that the Commission approve the proposed development. In my professional opinion, this is an important infrastructure project with the capacity to deliver lasting benefits for Donegal Town, Ballybofey and Stranorlar, the communities between them, and the wider county.

I am a planning consultant based in Donegal, with extensive experience of infrastructure projects, including greenways and rail trails internationally. My background includes work in both local authority and private practice, including in Ireland and New Zealand. I bring to this submission a practical understanding of how infrastructure proposals are assessed on paper and how they subsequently sit within their surroundings.

2. Strategic planning merit and the public interest

The EIAR identifies support in the National Planning Framework, the Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, and the County Donegal Development Plan 2024-2030, which includes Variation No. 1 to the County Development Plan, the Donegal Town Area Plan and associated Local Transport Plan. In particular, the Development Plan's Greenways Strategy identifies Barnesmore Gap as a strategic opportunity, while Policy T-P-8 seeks to protect established and historic railway corridors primarily for strategic infrastructure provision, expressly including greenways.

The proposal is also strongly aligned with national and European transport policy. The National Sustainable Mobility Policy supports increased active travel and the expansion of walking and cycling infrastructure, while the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways specifically supports the development of nationally and regionally significant greenways. At European level, the European Declaration on Cycling supports a significant increase in safe and coherent cycling infrastructure and improved connectivity between rural areas and urban centres. In my view, the Barnesmore Gap Greenway is consistent with the type of connected active travel infrastructure envisaged by these policy frameworks.

In my opinion, the project's greatest strength is that several public benefits can be delivered through one connected piece of infrastructure. A route that enables a visitor to experience Barnesmore Gap can also enable a local family to take a short walk, a child to cycle to school, or a resident to reach a community facility. Its value should therefore not be measured only by the number of people completing its full length, as short local trips, repeat use and access to individual sections are equally important.

Planning & Environmental Consultants

www.feaver.co

email: info@feaver.co

3. Landscape fit and the difference between plans and the completed scheme

The Landscape and Visual Amenity assessment considers the landscape and visual effects of the proposal, including the effect of the proposed mitigation over time. In my view, this supports the distinction between the appearance of the proposal on plans and the experience of the completed development within its landscape setting.

I consider that a largely low level recreational route can sit comfortably within this landscape without competing with the features that make it special. The reuse of parts of the former railway corridor is particularly helpful in establishing a legible relationship between the proposed use and an existing landscape feature.

4. Public consultation and engagement with landowners

The Greenway Project Team deserves clear recognition for the extent and continuity of its consultation. The application documents demonstrate substantial public consultation throughout the development of the project, together with extensive individual engagement with affected landowners through meetings, correspondence, site visits and design discussions.

I also wish to acknowledge the approach taken by Brian Reid in leading the project on behalf of Donegal County Council. From my own engagement with Brian, I have found his approach to be constructive, pragmatic and open to considering how the Greenway can integrate with other existing and future uses.

In my view, this collaborative approach has contributed positively to the quality and deliverability of the proposal now before the Commission.

The EIAR also addresses practical landowner matters including access and crossings, boundaries, drainage, services and reinstatement. In my view, with appropriate mitigation and continued engagement with affected owners, the completed greenway should be capable of functioning successfully alongside the continuing use of adjoining land.

5. Well designed trailheads and integration with nearby uses

I consider the trailheads to be well conceived as access points and public spaces, rather than simply car parks at the ends of a path. Their different scales respond to different locations: the principal town trailheads can accommodate a wider range of activity, while the intermediate locations provide access to shorter sections and particular landscape experiences.

At Donegal Town and Ballybofey/Stranorlar, the relationship with existing facilities provides opportunities for people to combine greenway use with other activities. The more compact Lough Eske and Biddy's of Barnes trailheads respond appropriately to their different settings and provide access to shorter sections of the route. In my planning judgement, the proposed trailheads are appropriately scaled and capable of integrating successfully with their surrounding uses.

6. Parking provision and shared use

I support the scale and distribution of the proposed parking strategy. The traffic assessment considers seasonal demand, user dwell times and the differing availability of existing parking during the week and at weekends. Its conclusion is that sufficient provision is proposed. Adequate parking is provided at each principal town trailhead, with smaller provision at the intermediate locations, including existing parking and designated bays.

The use of co-parking is sensible, as different activities need not reach their maximum demand at the same time. The traffic assessment records greater availability in the existing town car parks at weekends than on weekdays, providing a sound basis for complementary use and successful co-parking.

7. Environmental Effects and Mitigation

As with any linear infrastructure project of this scale, the Greenway will result in some environmental effects, particularly during construction and where earthworks, drainage works, structures or vegetation removal are required. The relevant consideration is whether those effects have been appropriately identified and whether suitable avoidance, mitigation and management measures have been incorporated into the project.

In my view, the environmental assessment demonstrates that these matters have been considered throughout the development and refinement of the scheme. The EIAR addresses the relevant environmental disciplines, including biodiversity, land and soils, water, air quality, climate, noise and vibration, landscape and visual effects, cultural heritage and material assets. Importantly, the assessment has informed route selection, detailed design, mitigation and construction management rather than simply assessing a predetermined design.

I consider that the application provides a comprehensive environmental assessment and a clear framework for mitigation.

8. Conclusion

I strongly support approval of the Barnesmore Gap Greenway. In my professional judgement, its connected route, thoughtfully designed trailheads and opportunities for integration with nearby uses make it a valuable and proportionate investment in Donegal's public infrastructure.

My experience of greenways and rail trails internationally gives me confidence that the completed scheme can be appreciably more recessive than its initial appearance on plans may suggest. The project should be assessed with a clear understanding of that operational reality, while securing the mitigation and management needed for the individual locations along it.

I respectfully request that the Commission approve the proposed development, with proportionate conditions securing the assessed mitigation and effective delivery and management.

Submission completed by:



Lance Feaver
Director and Principal Planner

Postal Address: Ardatole, Barnesmore, Donegal Town, F94 E825

Planning & Environmental Consultants

www.feaver.co

email: info@feaver.co