KPMG

Planning Report

Proposed Royal Canal Urban Greenway

October 2026



Document review and approval

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview

KPMG Planning, 1 Stokes Place, Dublin 2, have been instructed by DBFL Consulting Engineers, acting on behalf of Fingal County Council (FCC), to prepare this Planning Report to accompany the application under Section 51 of the Roads Act (1993) for a Proposed Greenway running adjacent to the Royal Canal. The Proposed Development is a joint initiative with FCC as the applicant, in conjunction with the National Transport Authority (NTA) as funding partner and Waterways Ireland (WI), the principal property owner.

The Proposed Development consists of the construction of an approximately 8.1km shared pedestrian and cycle greenway along and adjacent to the Royal Canal towpath, extending from the Kildare County Council boundary in the west to Talbot Bridge (Old Navan Road) in the east, where it will tie into the completed Ashtown Greenway. The greenway is for the exclusive use of pedal cyclists and pedestrians. Full details of the Proposed Development are set out in Section 2.5. Please refer also to the Statutory Notices enclosed with this application as set out in Section 2.4.

The proposal will facilitate a link between completed sections of the Royal Canal Greenway to the east – from Ashtown to Castleknock and to the west starting at Leixlip in Co. Kildare and which runs continuously for approximately 134km to Cloondara in Co. Longford.

The Proposed Greenway will be completed in three sections between the Kildare county boundary and Talbot Bridge on the Old Navan Road. These sections are defined by their distinct geographical and physical characteristics, as follows and shown in Figure 1.1:

- Section 1 – Kildare County Border to Hansfield Railway Bridge
- Section 2 – Hansfield Railway Bridge to Kennan Bridge (Porterstown Road)
- Section 3 – Kennan Bridge (Porterstown Road) to Talbot Bridge (Navan Road)

Further detail on the location of the proposed development is provided in Section 2.

The Proposed Development will provide a high-quality, safe, attractive and environmentally sensitive walking and cycling corridor serving Castleknock, Blanchardstown, Clonsilla, Coolmine, and the wider Dublin 15 area. This significant new amenity will encourage recreation while offering an attractive sustainable transport option for residents and commuters, delivering environmental, economic and health benefits.

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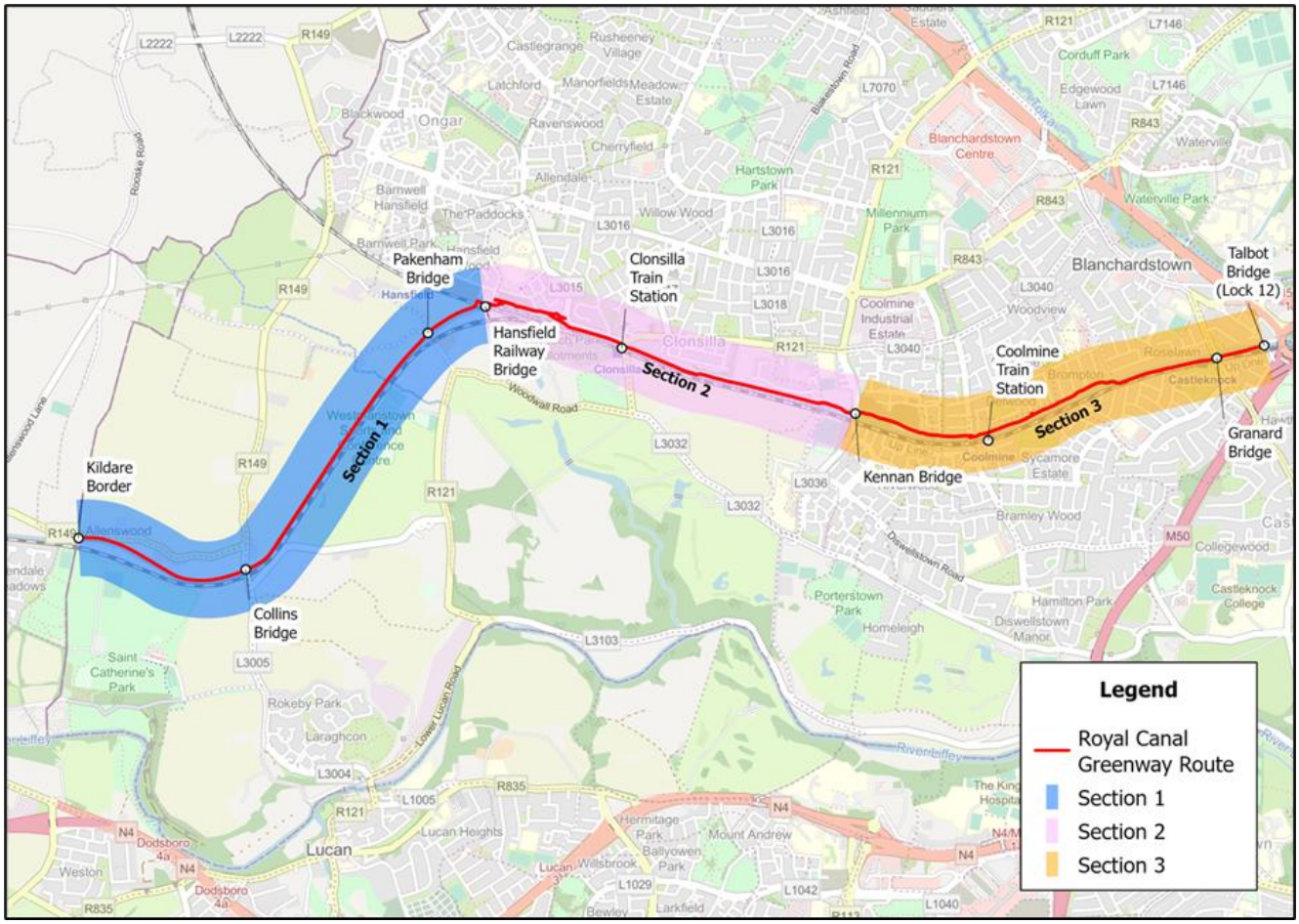

Figure 1-1 Route of the Proposed Development shown by section

1.2 Purpose of the Report

This report outlines the key planning and development considerations relating to the Proposed Development including:

- Details of the location and local context of the Proposed Development.
- A description of the Proposed Development.
- An overview of relevant planning history.
- A summary of the public and stakeholder consultation undertaken to inform the planning and design of the Proposed Development.
- An overview of relevant planning policy at national, regional and local levels and the manner in which the Proposed Development aligns with and supports those policies.
- A justification of, and need for, the Proposed Development, including a planning assessment of land use zoning, socio-economic and community benefits, urban design, public realm and structures, connectivity and accessibility, landscape and visual integration, climate and sustainability, biodiversity, archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage, land acquisition and demolition works, and services and utilities.
- A summary of environmental effects with reference to the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening submitted with this application.

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1.3 The Design Team

FCC appointed the following multidisciplinary design team to support the preparation of the planning application for the proposed scheme:

- DBFL Consulting Engineers (Project Managers and Engineering, EIA Specialist)
- KPMG Planning (Planning and EIA specialist)
- AWN Consulting (EIA specialist)
- JBA Consulting (Biodiversity, Landscaping, Environmental, Engineering, EIA Specialist)
- IAC Archaeological Consultancy (Archaeology and Cultural Heritage – EIA Specialist)
- Áit Urbanism + Landscape Ltd (Landscaping Architect, LVIA Consultant – EIA Specialist)
- Arup (Infrastructure Equality Audit)
- PMCE (Road Safety Audit)
- Sabre (Lighting Design)
- Sean Harrington Architects (Bridge design)

1.4 Application Documentation

The application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), comprising a Non-Technical Summary, the main EIAR chapters and supporting technical appendices, together with an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.

The Proposed Development is also supported by a suite of design, construction, environmental and technical documents that should be read in conjunction with this Planning Report and the EIAR. The Preliminary Design Report and associated drawing packages set out the engineering design, route alignment, structures, drainage, lighting, landscaping, land requirements including lands for which Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) are required and other works forming part of the Proposed Development. The development and selection of the preferred route are documented in the Route Options Report, while the Stage 1 Road Safety Audit and Infrastructure Equality Audit address road safety, accessibility and inclusive design considerations.

The proposed construction approach and associated environmental and traffic management controls are set out in the Construction Methodology Report, Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan and Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan. The application is also accompanied by a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment, Water Framework Directive Assessment, Ground Investigation Report, arboricultural and tree survey documentation and public consultation reports.

A full list of documents prepared in support of the Proposed Development and submitted with this planning application is provided in Table 1.1. The complete suite of submitted documents and drawings is identified in the Schedule of Application Documents and Drawing Register.

All documentation, plans and particulars are available at *consult.fingal.ie/en/browse* and *www.pleanala.ie*

Table 1-1 Application Documentation

Application Documentation	
Category	**Content**
Planning Particulars	Cover Letter, Site Notice, Newspaper Notice.
Consent / schedules	Schedule of Application Documents, Drawing Register, Landowner Letter of Consent, Letters of Support, ACP Consultation Records, EIAR Portal Confirmation
Standalone Reports	As listed below and set out in Schedule of Application Documents

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Drawings	As listed below and set out in Drawing Register
EIAR	Volume 1 Non-Technical Summary (NTS)
	EIAR Volume 2 Part 1 Chapters 1-7 (as listed below)
	EIAR Volume 2 Part 2 Chapter 8 (as listed below)
	EIAR Volume 2 Part 3 Chapters 9-19 (as listed below)
	EIAR Volume 3 Appendices Parts 1-5 (as listed below)
EIAR Volume 2 Chapter List	
Chapter List	**Document Title**
Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	Background to the Proposed Development
Chapter 3	Policy Context
Chapter 4	Alternatives Considered
Chapter 5	Air Quality
Chapter 6	Climatic Factors
Chapter 7	Noise and Vibration
Chapter 8	Biodiversity
Chapter 9	Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage
Chapter 10	Landscape and Visual
Chapter 11	Land, Soils and Geology
Chapter 12	Water
Chapter 13	Population and Human Health
Chapter 14	Material Assets: Traffic and Transportation
Chapter 15	Material Assets: Waste Management
Chapter 16	Material Assets: Utilities
Chapter 17	Material Assets: Land Use and Property
Chapter 18	Interactions
Chapter 19	Summary of Mitigation and Monitoring Measures
EIAR Volume 3 Appendices Parts 1-5	
EIAR Chapter	**Appendix / Supporting Material**
Chapter 1: Introduction	N/A
Chapter 2: Background to the Scheme	N/A
Chapter 3: Planning Policy Context	Volume 3 Appendix Part 1 Appendix 3.1: Land Use Zoning Map
Chapters 4 to 7	N/A
Chapter 8: Biodiversity	Volume 3 Appendix Part 1 Appendix 8.1 NBDC records of protected species within 2km of the Proposed Development since 2016 Appendix 8.2 NBDC records of invasive species within 2km of the Proposed Development since 2016 Appendix 8.3 Habitat Maps A-O of the Proposed Development Appendix 8.1 NBDC records of protected species within 2km of the Proposed Development since 2016 Appendix 8.2 NBDC records of invasive species within 2km of the Proposed Development since 2016 Appendix 8.3 Habitat Maps A-O of the Proposed Development Appendix 8.4: Royal Canal Tree Removal Plan (with m² values per area) Appendix 8.5: Additional Non-JBA surveys • 8.5.1. BEC (2013), Ecological Study of the Royal Canal between Talbot Bridge and Maynooth Train Station

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	• 8.5.2. Natura Environmental Consultants (2018), Royal Canal Urban Greenway Biodiversity Assessment 2018 Report To Fingal County Council • 8.5.3. Triturus Environmental Ltd (2024) Royal Canal (1st to 16th lock) macrophyte survey 2023. • 8.5.4. Triturus Environmental Ltd (2025) Royal Canal (1st to 16th lock) macrophyte survey 2024. • 8.5.5. Triturus Environmental Ltd (2024) Royal Canal (1st to 16th lock) aquatic macro-invertebrate survey 2023 • 8.5.6. Moorkens E.A. and Killeen, I (2025) Survey of the Royal Canal east of Kilcock for freshwater molluscs with particular reference to the glutinous snail, *Myxas glutinosa*, Spring 2024. • 8.5.7. Triturus Environmental Ltd (2025c) Royal Canal Urban Greenway glutinous snail (*Myxas glutinosa*) survey 2025 • 8.5.8. Royal Canal Bat Assessment – 8km Section, Co. Dublin & Co. Kildare. 2026. Bat Eco Services <u>Volume 3 Appendix Part 2</u> • 8.5.9. Royal Canal Urban Greenway Badger (*Meles meles*) stage 1 & 2 survey 2025. Triturus Environmental Ltd • 8.5.10.1 Royal Canal Urban Greenway otter (Lutra lutra) survey 2025. Triturus Environmental Ltd • 8.5.10.2 Royal Canal (1st to 16th lock) Otter survey 2025. Triturus Environmental Ltd Appendix 8.6: Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) BNG Report in respect of Royal Canal Urban Greenway
Chapter 9: Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage	<u>Volume 3 Appendix Part 3</u> Appendix 9.1: Legislation Protecting the Archaeological Resource; Appendix 9.2: Legislation Protecting the Architectural Resource.
Chapter 10: Landscape, and Visual	<u>Volume 3 Appendix Part 4.1</u> Appendix 10.1: Arboricultural Report Appendix 10.2: Landscape Report <u>Volume 3 Appendix Part 4.2</u> Appendix 10.3: Verified View Location and Appendix 10.4 DART+ WEST Technical Note for FCC
Chapter 11: Land, Soils and Geology	N/A
Chapter 12: Water	N/A
Chapter 13: Population and Human Health	N/A
Chapter 14: Material Assets: Traffic and Transportation	<u>Volume 3 Appendix Part 5</u> Appendix 14.1: Demand Analysis Appendix 14.2: Parking Survey
Chapter 15: Material Assets: Waste Management	<u>Volume 3 Appendix Part 5</u> Appendix 15.1: Site-Specific Resource and Waste Management Plan
Chapter 16: Material Assets: Utilities	N/A
Chapters 17 to 19	N/A

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Standalone Reports, Drawings and Registers	
Category	**Document / Material**
Planning	Planning Report
Design	Preliminary Design Report, Lighting Design Report
Construction	Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) Appendix A Construction Methodology Report and Appendix B Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (OCTMP).
Water / Flooding	Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment Report; Water Framework Directive Assessment.
Appropriate Assessment	Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report.
Options / Audits	Route Options Report; Stage 1 Road Safety Audit; Infrastructure Equality Audit.
Surveys / Consultation	Ground Investigation Report; Public Consultation Report.
Drawings	Site Location Map and Redline Boundary Drawings; Preferred Route Drawings; Drainage Drawings; Lighting Design; Compulsory Purchase Order – CPO Drawings Pack; Landscape Design Drawings; Arboriculture Survey Drawings Compounds Drawings; Architectural Bridge Drawings.

1.5 Planning Procedure

The Proposed Development comprises a road development within the meaning of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) and is subject to Environmental Impact Assessment. Fingal County Council is applying to An Coimisiún Pleanála for approval of the Proposed Development pursuant to Section 51 of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended).

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been prepared to accompany the application and assesses the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the environment. In accordance with the Roads Act 1993 (as amended), An Coimisiún Pleanála may approve the Proposed Development with or without modifications or conditions or may refuse approval.

Section 68(1) of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) defines a cycleway as:

> *"a public road or proposed public road reserved for the exclusive use of pedal cyclists or pedal cyclists and pedestrians."*

Section 68(2)(a) of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) provides that:

> *"A road authority may construct (or otherwise provide) and maintain a cycleway."*

Section 68(2)(b) further provides that:

> *"Where a road authority constructs or otherwise provides a cycleway it shall by order declare either (i) that the cycleway is for the exclusive use of pedal cyclists, or (ii) that the cycleway is for the exclusive use of pedal cyclists and pedestrians."*

Having regard to the above provisions, Fingal County Council has the statutory authority to provide the Proposed Greenway as a cycleway reserved for the use of pedal cyclists and pedestrians.

While the proposed greenway is being advanced for approval pursuant to Section 51 of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended), the declaration contemplated by Section 68(2)(b) does not arise at the approval stage. The Proposed Development will be constructed pursuant to the statutory powers of Fingal County Council under the Roads Act and, following completion of the cycleway, Fingal County Council will make the order required under Section 68(2)(b) declaring the completed facility to be a cycleway for the exclusive use of pedal cyclists and pedestrians. The making of this order is an administrative step that

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follows the provision of the cycleway and is not a precondition to the approval of the Proposed Development by An Coimisiún Pleanála.

1.6 Other Consents and Statutory Requirements

The Proposed Development is being advanced pursuant to Section 51 of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended). The approval sought under Section 51 relates specifically to the proposed road development and does not replace or supersede other statutory consents, licences, approvals, declarations or agreements that may be required prior to construction or implementation of particular elements of the Proposed Development.

Other consents, approvals and authorisations required for implementation of the Proposed Development include:

- Consent, licences, approvals and agreements from Waterways Ireland, as owner and statutory authority responsible for the Royal Canal and associated infrastructure, in respect of works affecting canal lands, structures, navigation and operational infrastructure, as required;
- Completion of the compulsory acquisition process for lands (CPO Orders) and interests required to facilitate the Proposed Development;
- Agreements and technical approvals with CIE / Irish Rail in relation to interfaces with existing and proposed railway infrastructure, including the DART+ West project.
- Letters of Support for the Proposed Development received from CIE / Irish Rail and Waterways Ireland are enclosed with this application.

Fingal County Council has engaged, and will continue to engage, with the relevant statutory authorities and stakeholders to secure all required consents, approvals and agreements prior to the commencement of construction. The Council is satisfied that these matters can be addressed through the relevant statutory and administrative processes and do not affect the ability to implement the Proposed Development.

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2.0 Location and Context

2.1 Location

The Proposed Development will run adjacent to the Royal Canal and stretches from the Fingal/Kildare county boundary in the west to the Talbot Bridge on the Old Navan Road in the east, at which point it will connect with a previously constructed section of the greenway (Ashtown Greenway). The subject site is approximately 8.1km in length and is illustrated in Figure 2-1 below.

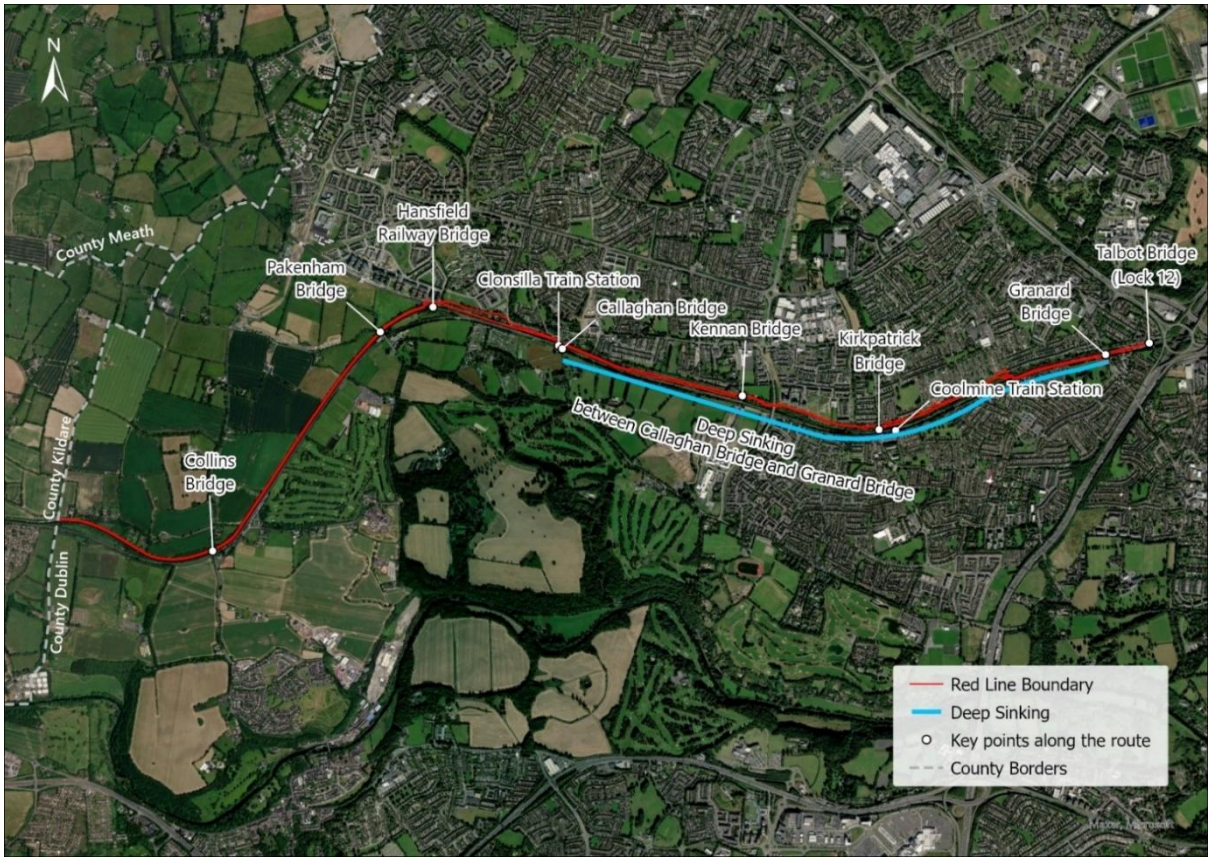

Figure 2-1 Location of Proposed Development as shown in red

The Proposed Greenway will be completed in three sections between the Kildare county boundary and Talbot Bridge on the Old Navan Road. These sections are defined by their distinct geographical and physical characteristics, as described below:

Section 1 – Kildare County Border to Hansfield Railway Bridge

Section 1 extends from the county boundary with Kildare to Hansfield Railway Bridge. This section is rural to peri-urban in character and is predominantly agricultural, while also benefiting from proximity to local amenities such as Westmanstown Golf Club and Westmanstown Sports Centre.

The surrounding landscape is generally flat, with the canal corridor forming a linear feature through the area. Land uses within this section are primarily agricultural, interspersed with recreational and amenity uses, resulting in a generally low-density receiving environment with limited urban development.

Protected Structures located within the Section 1 of the Study Area include the Royal Canal itself and the Collins Bridge and Pakenham Bridge.

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The existing towpath is present along the northern embankment. The overall topography for Section 1 and its surrounding landscape is generally flat. The existing surface for this section of the towpath is grass, no unbound or bound surfacing, as shown on Figure 2.2.



Figure 2-2 Existing Towpath between Collins & Pakenham Bridges

Section 2 – Hansfield Railway Bridge to Kennan Bridge (Porterstown Road)
Section 2 extends from Hansfield Railway Bridge to Kennan Bridge (Porterstown Road). The character of the Study Area changes from rural to predominantly suburban in nature. Existing land uses include residential neighbourhoods, educational and community facilities, railway infrastructure, local parks and agricultural lands. Significant recent growth associated with the Hansfield SDZ has resulted in the development of large-scale housing schemes, schools, community facilities and neighbourhood centres north of the canal, while agricultural lands and open fields remain evident to the south.

Protected Structures in Section 2 include Callaghan Bridge, Kennan Bridge, Porterstown School House, Clonsilla Signal Box, and Porterstown Crossing Keeper's House (former).

Currently, there are three different surface finishes along the existing towpath which is on the northern side of the Royal Canal for Section 2. From Hansfield Railway Bridge to Hansfield Road service access there is no surfacing provided, from Hansfield Road service access to Callaghan Bridge there is asphalt surfacing provided and from Callaghan Bridge to Kennan Bridge quarry dust surfacing has been provided, photographs of the existing surfaces are illustrated below in Figure 2-3.

The overall topography for Section 2 is generally flat along the existing towpath to the north/eastern side of the canal. The topography and layout of the existing towpath typically consist of a 2-3m wide track flanked by a deep cutting of 1.0 – 5.0m to the canal on one side and a varying height embankment supporting the Dublin – Maynooth Railway on the other side of the canal.

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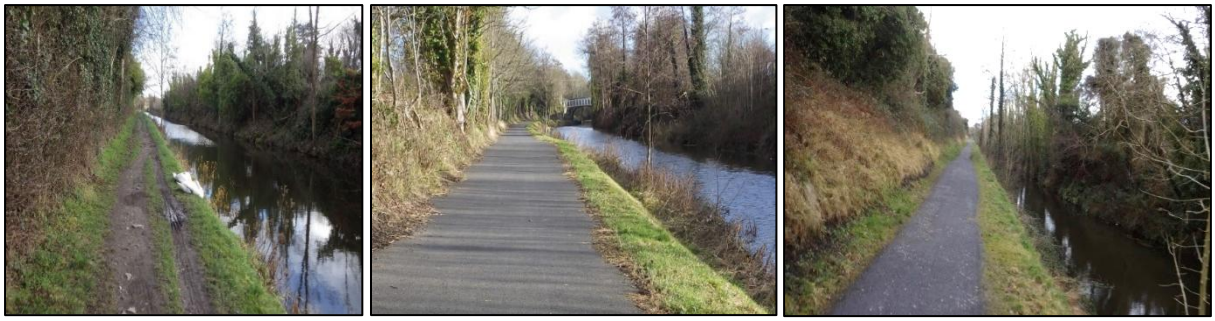

Figure 2-3 Existing surfacing along the northern towpath of Section 2

Section 3 – Kennan Bridge (Porterstown Road) to Talbot Bridge (Navan Road)
Section 3 extends from Kennan Bridge (Porterstown Road) to Talbot Bridge (Old Navan Road). This section is predominantly urban with extensive residential catchments on both sides of the Canal. Several employment and retail uses are also located within this area along with community and amenity facilities. The 'Deep Sinking' section, referred to in Section 2.5 below, is situated between Clonsilla Road and Castleknock Road. There are also three protected bridges in Section 3 – Kirkpatrick Bridge, Granard Bridge and Talbot Bridge (in addition to the Canal itself).

The existing towpath for Section 3 from Kennan Bridge to Granard Bridge is on the southern side of the Royal Canal directly adjacent to the railway line/stations. For the majority of this section, there is no surface finish along the existing towpath (Figure 2-4).



Figure 2-4 Existing surfacing along the towpath for Section 3

The layout of the existing towpath typically consists of a 2-3m wide track flanked by a deep cutting of 1.0 – 9.0m to the canal on a varying height embankment adjacent to the Dublin – Maynooth Railway. The railway and canal towpath tend to merge between Dr. Troy Bridge and Kirkpatrick Bridge, to create a local 1.9m wide pinch point on the towpath for a length of approximately 50m, as shown in Figure 2-5.

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Figure 2-5 Pinch point between towpath and the railway signal

A number of other structures such as retaining walls create pinch points along the towpath in Section 3 of the route, with widths as narrow as 1.5m. The topography on the northern bank of the Royal Canal varies along the section, with steep banks, filling and re-grading of lands required to achieve acceptable longitudinal gradients (Figure 2-6).



Figure 2-6 Northern bank in Section 3

2.2 Context

An overview of the background to the Proposed Development and its position within the local environment is provided below.

Background and Wider Context

The Proposed Development forms part of the strategic Dublin–Galway cycle corridor (266 km), first identified in the National Cycle Network Scoping Study 2010, and will complete the missing link in the Royal Canal Greenway between Maynooth and Spencer Dock, Dublin. Fingal County Council (FCC), as the Contracting Authority, is responsible for the delivery of the route within its administrative area.

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The scheme comprises an approximately 8.1 km shared pedestrian and cycle route on and adjacent to the Royal Canal towpath, connecting the completed Ashtown Greenway at Talbot Bridge (Old Navan Road) in the east with the Kildare County Council section at the county boundary in the west.

The Kildare section, completed in 2025, connects to an existing continuous route extending approximately 134 km through Kildare, Meath, Westmeath and Longford to Cloondara. As illustrated on the Waterways Ireland Royal Canal Greenway Status Map, approximately 134 km of the Greenway has now been completed from Leixlip to Cloondara, while a further 4 km section between Ashtown and Phibsborough has also been delivered. The Proposed Development therefore represents the critical missing link required to complete the Royal Canal Greenway through Dublin 15 and connect the wider corridor (Figure 2-7).

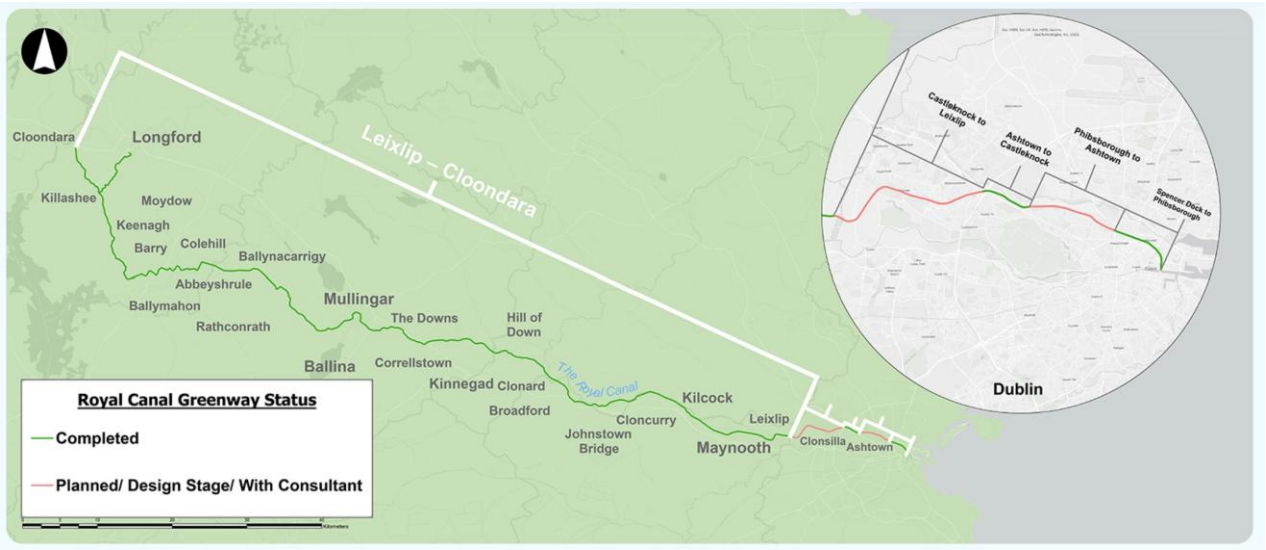

Figure 2-7 The Royal Canal Greenway Status Map Source: Waterways Ireland (Available at: [Waterways Ireland - Royal Canal Status Update](), Accessed 05/06/26)

The Royal Canal links the River Shannon in County Longford to the River Liffey and its passage onto the Dublin docklands. On its way, it passes close to several towns, including Mullingar, Kilcock, Maynooth and Leixlip before entering Fingal where it passes through the built-up areas of Clonsilla, Coolmine, Castleknock and Blanchardstown as it moves towards the city and Dublin Docklands.

Surrounding Land Uses

The Proposed Development is mainly located within the highly populated suburban area of Dublin 15, which is set for continued growth and expansion over the coming years. Surrounding land uses comprise a mix of established and emerging residential communities, schools, community facilities, neighbourhood centres, recreational amenities, public open spaces and public transport infrastructure, including stations along the Dublin–Maynooth rail line. The route also interfaces with strategic growth areas including the Hansfield SDZ and lands within the Barnhill and Kellystown Local Area Plan areas, which are planned to accommodate significant future residential development. The Royal Canal corridor itself functions as an important recreational, ecological and green infrastructure asset within the area and provides a key connection between surrounding communities and local amenities.

Against this backdrop of existing and planned growth, the Proposed Development will provide an important active travel and recreational corridor supporting sustainable mobility, connectivity and accessibility across the wider area.

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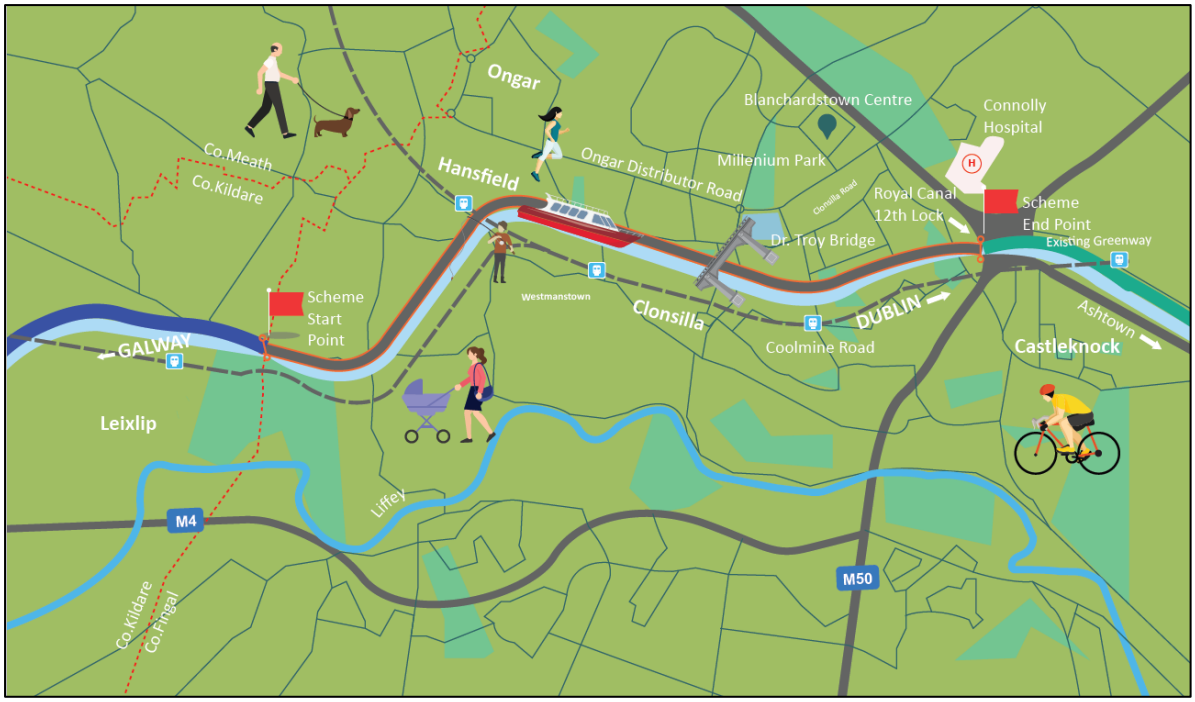

Figure 2-8 The Royal Canal Urban Greenway – Context

2.3 Route Selection

The route of the Proposed Greenway has been determined based on a detailed route options study - a 'Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA)' process as part of Phase 2 'Concept Development and Options Selection' of the NTAs Project Life Cycle - Capital Investment. The assessment had been carried out for all three sections of the scheme separately (National Transport Authority, Project Lifecycle Guidelines; DBFL Consulting Engineers, 2020).

Section 1, as shown in Figure 2-9, initially had two principal route options (Option S1-1 and Option S1-2) between Kildare County Council boundary line (Royal Canal Amenity Group building) and Hansfield Railway Bridge. The preferred route for Section 1 was Option S1-1, which is the Proposed Greenway along the northern side of the Royal Canal from the Kildare county boundary (Royal Canal Amenity Group) to Hansfield Railway Bridge.

Section 2 had seven principal route options (Option S2-1, S2-2, S2-3, S2-4, S2-5, S2-6 and S2-7) between Hansfield Railway Bridge and Kennan Bridge (Porterstown Bridge). The preferred route for Section 2 was Option S2-5, which is the Proposed Greenway along the northern side of the Royal Canal from the Hansfield Railway Bridge to Kennan Bridge via Porterstown School House lands.

Section 3 was divided into three sub-sections (Option 3a, 3b, 3c) due to the complexity of the 'deep sinking', between Kennan Bridge (Porterstown Road) to Talbot Bridge (Old Navan Road). The preferred route for Section 3a was Option S3a-4, which is the Proposed Greenway via Windmill Court and Sheepmoor Lane. The preferred route for Section 3b was Option S3b-4, which is the Proposed Greenway on the northern side of the Royal Canal, north of the wooded area by Delwood, Brompton and along the southern canal bank via proposed new pedestrian/cycle bridge. The preferred route for Section 3c was Option S3c-2, which is the Proposed Greenway on the southern side of the Royal Canal from the 12th Lock Hotel to Talbot Bridge/Old Navan Road (150m).

The route selection process was undertaken in accordance with the National Transport Authority Project Lifecycle Guidelines and considered a range of reasonable alternatives for each section of the Proposed Greenway. The options were evaluated through a structured Multi-Criteria Assessment having regard to engineering, environmental, ecological, heritage, land use, accessibility, constructability and

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stakeholder considerations. The preferred route was selected as it best met the project objectives while avoiding or minimising environmental impacts and technical constraints and providing a continuous, safe and accessible walking and cycling connection along the Royal Canal corridor.

A detailed description of the alternatives considered, the assessment methodology applied and the principal reason for selecting the preferred route is provided in Chapter 4 (Alternatives Considered) of the EIAR and in the Royal Canal Urban Greenway Route Options Assessment Main Report 2020. The assessment includes a comparison of the likely environmental effects of the reasonable alternatives examined.

2.4 Statutory Notice

The description of development as per the statutory notices is provided below. Further information on the Proposed Development is set out in Section 2.5.

Notice pursuant to Section 51(3)(a) of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) in relation to an application for approval of a proposed road development and the submission of an environmental impact statement

Fingal County Council
Royal Canal Urban Greenway

Fingal County Council ("the Road Authority") has applied under section 51(2) of the Roads Act, 1993 (as amended) to An Coimisiún Pleanála ("the Coimisiún") for approval in relation to a proposed road development consisting of the construction of an approximately 8.1km shared pedestrian and cycle greenway along and adjacent to the Royal Canal towpath, extending from the Kildare County Council boundary in the west to Talbot Bridge (Old Navan Road) in the east, where it will tie into the completed Ashtown Greenway. The proposed development will be constructed in the townlands of St. Catherine's Park, Coldblow, Westmanstown, Barnhill, Barberstown, Clonsilla, Kellystown, Porterstown, Diswellstown, Sheepmoor, Carpenterstown and Blanchardstown, as illustrated in the map below.

The Proposed Development will include the following works:

- *Construction of the greenway route, including the following pavements and surfacing:*
- *Section 1 – unbound surface (width 2-3m) from Kildare County Border to Hansfield Railway Bridge (Ch. 0 – 3200m).*
- *Section 2 – bituminous surface (3-4m width) for the majority of the section, with the exception of pre-cast concrete cantilevered boardwalk from approx. Ch. 4140 - 4540.*
- *Section 3 - bituminous surface (4m width) for the majority of the section, in-situ concrete surfacing and portions of raised boardwalk due to local topography.*
- *Embankments and retaining structures at various locations to stabilise ground conditions.*
- *3 no. toucan signalised crossings (4m wide) and 1 no. zebra crossing at road interfaces along the route.*
- *Lighting installation between Hansfield Railway Bridge and the 12th Lock (approx Ch. 3200m to Ch. 8100m).*
- *Ground level adjustments along the interface with Delwood Park including lowering of path levels and the construction of a 2m high timber palisade fence with anti-climb mesh (Ch. 6200 – 6800).*
- *Construction of the Quarry Bridge, a 30m single-span composite steel beam and concrete deck bridge spanning a historic quarry on the northern bank of the Royal Canal (Ch. +6500m) and associated boardwalk sections.*
- *Privacy planting and railings along the Brompton green area to supplement existing boundary fencing.*

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- *Construction of the Landmark Bridge, a steel bridge approximately 235m in length with a maximum single span of 30m, traversing the Royal Canal (Ch. 7115m to 7350m) and associated ramped sections.*
- *Excavation and construction of an underpass beneath Castleknock Road on the southern side of Granard Bridge (Ch. +7770).*
- *Development of a Pocket Park at Hansfield, incorporating a wildflower meadow, native hedgerow, embankment slide, informal play area, benches and associated landscaping.*
- *Provision of rest areas along the route, including bicycle parking stands, benches and associated landscaping.*
- *Removal of two existing residential properties and associated ancillary structures in the vicinity of Hansfield Road in order to facilitate the delivery of the greenway alignment and associated pocket park infrastructure.*
- *Landscape and reinstatement works, including removal of selected trees, hedgerows and vegetation, where required and replacement planting using native and naturalised species.*
- *Temporary site compounds, storage areas, and construction access arrangements will be reinstated upon completion of the works.*
- *All associated and ancillary works, including excavation and earthworks, installation, diversion and protection of utilities and services including drainage, fencing, boundaries, roadworks including signage, public lighting, road markings and traffic signals.*

The Proposed Development is for the exclusive use of pedal cyclists and pedestrians. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report has been submitted to the Commission in accordance with section 50 (of the Roads Act, 1993 (as amended) in respect of the proposed road development. The Royal Canal is a Protected Structure (RPS 944a, including 10th Lock 944b, 11th Lock 944c and 12th Lock 944d), along with Callaghan Bridge (RPS 706).

A copy of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and the Plans & Particulars of the Proposed Development will be available for inspection or purchase at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy between the hours of 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 4pm Monday to Friday (exclusive of public holidays), for a period of not less than 6 weeks at: The Planning Section, Fingal County Council, County Hall, Main Street, Swords, Co Dublin, K67 X8Y2, and at the Reception Desk of An Coimisiún Pleanála, 64 Marlborough St, Dublin 1, D01 V902.

A copy of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and the Plans & Particulars of the Proposed Development are also available for inspection online during the above timeframe at www.pleanala.ie and at consult.fingal.ie/en/browse

An Coimisiún Pleanála may, in relation to an application for approval under Section 51 of the 1993 Roads Act (as amended), by order, approve the proposed development with or without modifications or it may refuse such development or any part thereof.

Submissions and observations may be made in writing to An Coimisiún Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin, D01 V902 from Monday the 16th of November 2026 until the close of business on Monday the 11h of January 2027 in relation to: 1) The implications of the Proposed Development for proper planning and sustainable development in the area concerned; 2) The likely effects on the environment of the Proposed Development; and 3) The likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on a European Site, if carried out. Any submission/observation must be accompanied by a fee of €50.This fee does not apply to certain prescribed bodies or to property owners and others with a legal interest in land who are objecting to compulsory acquisition of land in with they have such an interest in a compulsory acquisition case. Submissions with a fee can be made via post (to: An Coimisiún Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin, D01 V902), in person and via the Commission's online submission portal https://online.pleanala.ie/en-ie/sid/observation. Submissions where, as set out above, a fee is not

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required can be made via post, in person and via email to laps@pleanala.ieand must be received by An Coimisiún Pleanála not later than 17:30 hours on Monday the 11h of January 2027.

A person may question the validity of any such decision by An Coimisiún Pleanála by way of an application for judicial review under Order 84 of the Rules of the Superior Courts (S.I. No. 15 of 1986) in accordance with Section 50 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. Practical information on the review mechanism can be accessed on the Board's website www.pleanala.ie or on the Citizens Information website www.citizensinformation.ie

It should be noted that the Freedom of Information Act applies to all records held by Fingal County Council.

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2.5 Proposed Development

The Royal Canal Urban Greenway (the Proposed Development) is a pedestrian and cycle route approximately 8.1km in length to be constructed along and adjacent to the Royal Canal. The route extends eastwards from the Kildare County Boundary to the Old Navan Road, near the 12th Lock, where it will connect with the previously constructed Ashtown Greenway.

The Royal Canal links the River Shannon in County Longford to the River Liffey in Dublin City's Docklands. It passes close to a number of towns, including Mullingar, Kilcock, Maynooth and Leixlip, before entering Fingal where it passes through the built-up areas of Clonsilla, Coolmine, Castleknock and Blanchardstown on its way towards Dublin city. The Proposed Development will provide a continuous, high-quality active travel corridor serving the communities of Clonsilla, Coolmine, Castleknock and Blanchardstown and will improve accessibility to schools, public transport, employment centres, recreational amenities and local services. The scheme will encourage a modal shift towards walking and cycling, while supporting recreation, health and wellbeing, sustainable transport objectives and climate action policies at national, regional and local level.

The main elements include a shared walking and cycling route, generally up to 4m wide where available corridor width allows, with localised narrowing 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 include the proposed Quarry Bridge, the proposed Landmark Bridge over the Royal Canal, an underpass beneath Castleknock Road on the southern side of Granard Bridge, and a pocket park at Hansfield. The scheme also includes removal of two dwellings and ancillary structures on the approach to Hansfield Road to facilitate the alignment and pocket park.

An overview of proposed works for each section of the route is provided below.

- **Section 1 – Kildare County Border to Hansfield Railway Bridge (**Ch. 0000m – 3200m)

The Proposed Development will follow the existing towpath along the northern side of the Royal Canal from the Kildare/Fingal County Council boundary to Hansfield Railway Bridge. The Greenway will comprise a 2-3m wide granular unbound surface, accommodated within the existing embankment widths. The route will continue through the existing pedestrian underpass at Hansfield Railway Bridge. Toucan signalised crossings will be provided at Collins Bridge and Pakenham Bridge to allow safe transition between the existing pedestrian footpath and the proposed Greenway. Six Sheffield stands, providing 12 cycle parking spaces, are proposed in Section 1.

- **Section 2 – Hansfield Railway Bridge to Kennan Bridge (Porterstown Road)** (Ch. 3200m – 5300m)

The greenway will be constructed on the northern side of the Royal Canal from Hansfield to Kennan Bridge via Porterstown Schoolhouse lands between Callaghan and Kennan bridges. Following the Hansfield Railway Bridge, the greenway route will enter the St. Joseph's Clonsilla Residential Development and follow a recently constructed pedestrian and cycle facility through these lands. The route will then continue through the adjacent wooded area as a new 3-4m wide route, requiring localised clearance of existing trees and the removal of two existing residential properties and associated ancillary structures in the vicinity of Hansfield Road to facilitate the Proposed Development and Pocket Park.

From here, the route will again link into an existing pedestrian route, which will be widened to 3-4m along the northern side of the Royal Canal from the Hansfield Road access to the point where it ramps up onto the Old School House lands. A bituminous surface will be laid for the majority of this section, with the exception of a pre-cast concrete cantilevered boardwalk to the east of Clonsilla on the approach to the Old Schoolhouse lands (Ch.4235-4610).

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The Pocket Park proposed at Hansfield, south of the St. Joseph's residential development, will include a wildflower meadow, native hedgerow, an embankment slide, an informal play area, benches and associated landscaping. Eight Sheffield stands, providing 16 cycle parking spaces, are proposed in Section 2.

- **Section 3 – Kennan Bridge (Porterstown Road) to Talbot Bridge (Navan Road)** (Ch 5300m – 8100m)

A 4m wide bituminous surface is proposed for the majority of the section with in-situ concrete surfacing and portions of raised boardwalk due to local topography.
The Greenway route continues onwards on the northern side of the canal from Kennan Bridge to Kirkpatrick Bridge via Sheepmoor Lane. The proposed route is located north of the wooded area along the northern embankment from Kennan Bridge to Sheepmoor Lane which will reduce the impact on trees.

The scheme will follow pedestrian/cycle facilities proposed as part of the Windmill Court Residential Development followed by the existing roadway along Sheepmoor Lane. The Greenway will be situated on the upper level of the northern embankment, from Coolmine Road (Kirkpatrick Bridge) to the Brompton green area (Ch. 6280-6960), which has the benefit of minimising tree removal and the potential visual impact of the scheme on the Canal.

The Proposed Development is routed near the top of the northern embankment (adjacent to Delwood Park residential back gardens) and into the open space at Brompton which has the benefit of minimising the potential impact on trees and habitats.

To prevent overlooking of the rear gardens of properties at Delwood Park and address security considerations, the level of the greenway will be lowered to match, or be lower than, the existing ground level of the adjacent rear gardens. A 2m high timber palisade fence with anti-climb mesh will also be provided. This fencing, along with defensive planting, will enhance security and reduce visual intrusion for residents.

A 30m single span composite steel beam and concrete deck bridge, referred to as the 'Quarry Bridge', will be constructed to enable the proposed greenway to cross a steep section of historic quarry area on the northern bank of the Royal Canal (Ch. +6530m).

A 4m wide paved Greenway will be provided along the southern side of the Brompton green area. A 2m high fence line will be maintained along the southern side of the Greenway, with additional planting and railings provided on the Brompton side to protect residential privacy. The scheme will provide access to the Brompton and Roselawn estates.

The route then crosses from the northern side to the southern side of the Royal Canal. The Greenway will cross the Canal over an architecturally designed pedestrian and cycle bridge – referred to as the 'Landmark Bridge' (approx Ch. 7115m to Ch. 7350m). The proposed new bridge will be approximately 235m in length and have a maximum single span of 30m. The bridge has been designed to respect existing uses along the Canal and existing and future operations on the Dublin to Maynooth rail line.
The greenway will continue on the southern side of the Royal Canal, past Castleknock Station and under Castleknock Road through a proposed new greenway underpass on the southern side of Granard Bridge (Ch. + 7820). A paved 4m wide greenway will be provided on the southern towpath from Granard Bridge to the 12th Lock Hotel. Due to a pinch point between the hotel and the canal, a 3m wide greenway is only feasible from the 12th Lock Hotel to Talbot Bridge/Old Navan Road (150m). The greenway will tie into the current Ashtown section of the Royal Canal Greenway at Talbot Bridge providing continued linkage onwards to Dublin City.

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A toucan signalised crossing is proposed at Kirkpatrick Bridge, and a zebra crossing will be installed at Talbot Bridge. Four Sheffield stands, providing eight cycle-parking spaces, are proposed in Section 3.

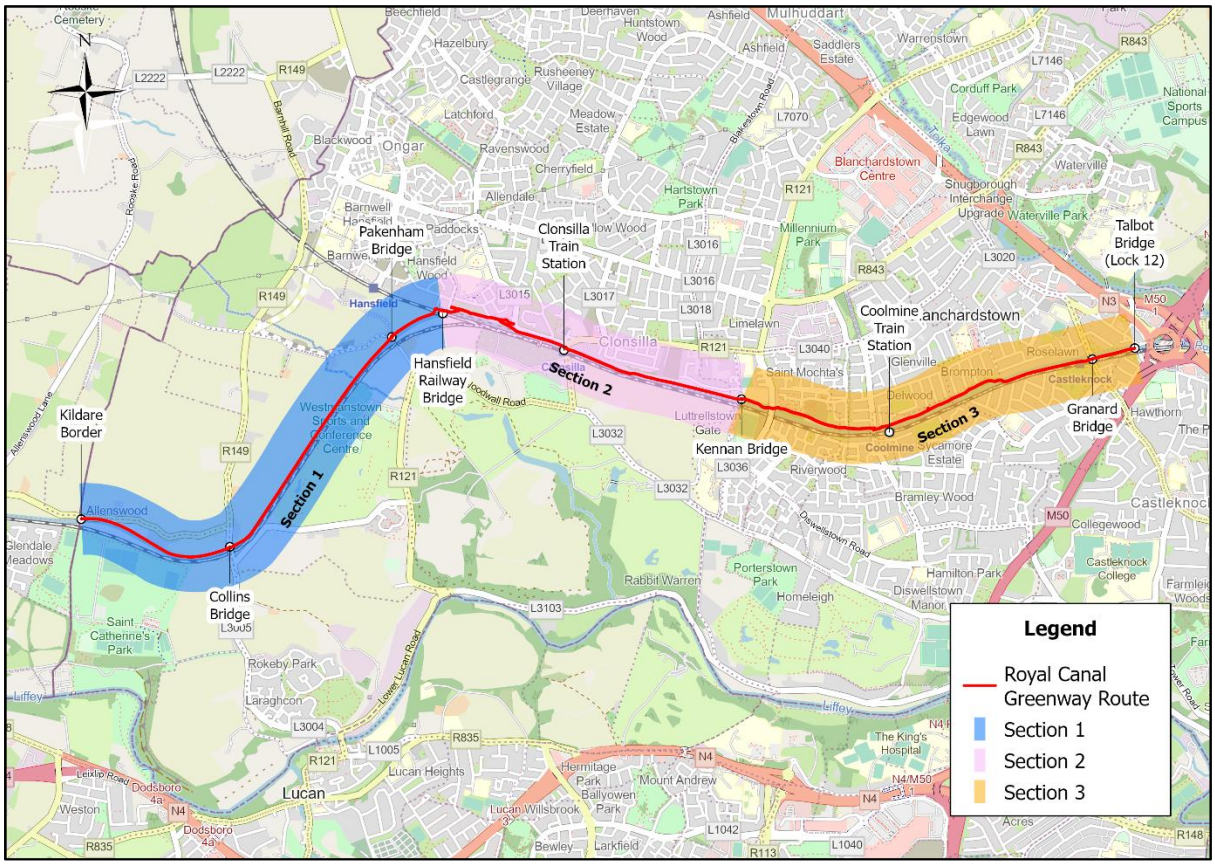

Figure 2-9 Sections of the Proposed Development route

Lighting Arrangements for the Proposed Development

New public lighting will be provided along the greenway from Hansfield to the Old Navan Road (Talbot Bridge) (largely comprising Section 2 and 3). New public lighting is not proposed to be provided on the western section of the greenway from the Kildare/Fingal County Boundary to the Hansfield Railway Bridge due to its rural nature (largely comprising Section 1). Underground ducting and associated infrastructure will be installed along section 2 and 3 to facilitate future public lighting installation subject to ecological and user safety requirements. Details of lighting proposals are set out in Section 5.4 of the Preliminary Design Report and Public Lighting Layout Drawings (ref. SES 08322) enclosed.

Principal Construction Activities for the Proposed Development

The principal construction activities associated with the Proposed Development, as described above are anticipated to include site establishment, fencing of works areas, temporary traffic management, temporary surface water management, vegetation clearance, topsoil stripping, earthworks, utilities works, pavement construction, construction of the proposed bridges, boardwalks and underpass, ancillary roadworks, accommodation works, landscaping and reinstatement. Temporary site compounds, storage areas, and construction access arrangements will be reinstated upon completion of the works.

Further details of the proposed construction activities, sequencing and environmental controls are provided in the Construction Methodology Report and Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP). Temporary traffic management, construction access and the management of

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construction-related traffic are addressed in the Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (OCTMP). These documents should be read together with the relevant technical chapters of the EIAR.

2.6 Notable Features

There are a number of constraints, both natural (i.e. existing natural environment) and physical (the built environment), which have guided the route of the Proposed Development.

Heritage

The Royal Canal is a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) (Site Code 002103) under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. The pNHA comprises the canal channel and associated banks, hedgerows, towpath, grassland, open water, scrub and woodland habitats. The designation reflects the ecological value of the canal corridor and its importance for the conservation of habitats and species of national significance.

The Royal Canal is also a significant heritage asset and is included in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS 944a), together with a number of associated features including the 10th Lock (RPS 944b), 11th Lock (RPS 944c) and 12th Lock (RPS 944d). Constructed in the late eighteenth century as a navigation route linking Dublin to the River Shannon, the Canal remains an important element of Ireland's industrial, engineering and transport heritage. A number of bridges along the route are also protected structures, including historic limestone humpback bridges which contribute to the distinctive character and heritage value of the corridor.

The Proposed Development interfaces directly with the Royal Canal corridor, including locations where works are proposed within or adjoining the canal cut and in the vicinity of associated protected structures. The potential direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Development on the Royal Canal, the protected structures associated with it, and their setting have been assessed in Chapter 9 (Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage) of the EIAR. The protected structure status of the Royal Canal and associated features has informed the design and assessment of the Proposed Development. Measures to avoid, minimise and manage potential impacts on these heritage assets are set out in Chapter 9 of the EIAR.

Environmental Considerations

In recognition of the Royal Canal's status as a Water Framework Directive (WFD) Protected Area and the potential interaction of the Proposed Development with the water environment, a dedicated Water Framework Directive Assessment has been prepared as part of the application documentation. The assessment considered the potential effects of the Proposed Development on hydrologically connected surface water and groundwater bodies and evaluated compliance with the objectives of Article 4 of the WFD, including the requirement to avoid deterioration in waterbody status and to ensure that the achievement of good status or ecological potential is not jeopardised. The assessment concluded that, with the implementation of the embedded design measures and mitigation proposed, the Proposed Development will not cause deterioration in the status of any hydrologically connected waterbody, will not compromise the achievement of WFD objectives, and that an Article 4(7) derogation assessment is therefore not required. Further details are provided in the accompanying Water Framework Directive Assessment (Doc. Ref: 257501.0270WR01) prepared by AWN Consulting.

The Royal Canal also supports a range of habitats and species of ecological importance and forms part of a wider ecological corridor extending through the Dublin region. Ecological surveys have identified a variety of habitats along the route of the Proposed Development. These habitats occur outside designated European Sites and are not, in themselves, Natura 2000 sites or Qualifying Interests of any European Site affected by the Proposed Development. The ecological value of the Royal Canal corridor and the potential effects of the Proposed Development on habitats and species are assessed in the

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Biodiversity chapter of the EIAR. In addition, a Screening for Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken in respect of European Sites and concluded that the Proposed Development, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is not likely to have a significant effect on any European Site, as set out further in Section 7 of this Planning Report.

Dublin-Maynooth Rail Line

The Proposed Development interfaces at a number of locations with the Dublin–Maynooth Rail Line, which generally follows the route of the Royal Canal. The rail corridor is a key element of the regional and national transport network, providing important commuter services between Dublin and the surrounding hinterland while also forming part of the wider rail connection to the west of Ireland.

The relationship between the Proposed Greenway and the railway corridor has been an important consideration in the design and development of the scheme. In particular, regard has been had to the DART+ West proposals, including the closure of a number of existing level crossings, the provision of overhead electrification infrastructure, new pedestrian and cycle bridge crossings and the associated clearance requirements adjacent to the railway. The Proposed Development has therefore been developed having regard to both existing railway operations and the planned future expansion and enhancement of rail infrastructure within the corridor.

Deep Sinking

The Deep Sinking is a distinctive section of the Royal Canal located between Clonsilla Road and Castleknock Road, where the canal was excavated through the historic Carpenterstown limestone quarries during its original construction in the late eighteenth century. This section is characterised by a deep rock cutting, elevated towpaths, steep embankments and a mature tree canopy, creating a unique landscape and microclimate along the canal corridor. The area supports a range of habitats and species associated with the canal environment and is recognised for its ecological, landscape and cultural heritage value (Clonsilla & Porterstown Heritage Society, n.d.; An Taisce, 2022).

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3.0 Relevant Planning History and Related Developments

An overview of planning activity within a study area defined as 500m either side of the proposed route is set out in Table 3-1 and shown in Figures 3-1 and 3-2. The Proposed Development route and redline boundary does not impose on any planning application awaiting decision from either the Planning Authority or An Coimisiún Pleanála.

3.1 Relevant Planning History

A review of planning history, comprising approved planning applications since November 2020, confirms that there are no planning applications within the Proposed Development redline boundary which are awaiting decision, at Further Information Stage or appeal stage, or with extant permission. FCC Ref. FW25A/0416E [ACP-PL-500971-DF-26] is identified as awaiting ACP decision within the wider catchment, however, does not intersect with the Proposed Development redline boundary.

Figure 3-1 illustrates the wider Royal Canal Greenway network, of which the Proposed Development will form a key part, completing the connection between the Kildare County boundary and the existing Ashtown Greenway. The Greenway between Maynooth, County Kildare and Cloondara, County Longford was completed and officially opened in March 2021. Once fully delivered, the Royal Canal Greenway will provide a continuous high-quality walking and cycling route extending from Dublin Docklands through Counties Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Westmeath and Longford to the River Shannon. The Proposed Development, extending from the Kildare County Boundary to Talbot Bridge (Old Navan Road), represents the final section of the Royal Canal Greenway requiring planning approval.

Upon completion, the Proposed Development will facilitate a continuous Greenway corridor from Dublin City to Kildare and onwards towards the Midlands and the west of Ireland. In addition to its strategic recreational and tourism function, the route will provide an important active travel corridor connecting communities in Dublin 15 with key destinations, employment areas, public transport services and educational facilities, while enhancing sustainable connectivity between Dublin City, Maynooth and the wider region.

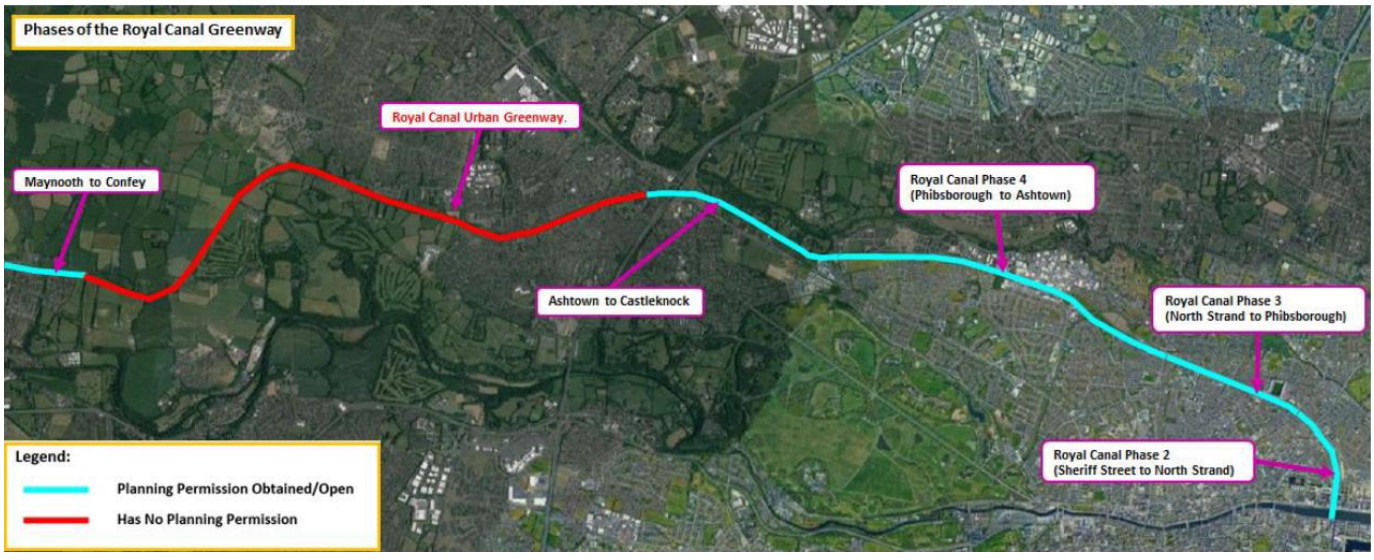

Figure 3-1 Status of the other phases of the Royal Canal Greenway

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3.2 Consented Schemes

Residential Development
A review of planning applications within 500 m of the subject site since November 2020 indicates that a total of 1,838 residential units have been granted planning permission (Fingal County Council Planning Register, reviewed August 2026).

The location of permitted developments, including commenced and uncommenced schemes, is shown in Figure 3-2 and detailed in Table 3-1.

The majority of residential development activity is concentrated to the north of the proposed route within the Hansfield Strategic Development Zone and surrounding lands. Several large residential schemes exceeding 150 units have been permitted or commenced, including developments at Hansfield Orchard, St. Joseph's Phase 2 and 3, Porterstown and Winterwood. Additional medium-sized developments ranging from approximately 40 to 100 units are distributed throughout the study area.

The scale of residential growth within the area demonstrates a continuing increase in population and demand for recreational amenities, active travel infrastructure and connectivity to local services and public transport. The Proposed Development will help support these communities by improving access to the Royal Canal corridor and enhancing walking and cycling connections between residential areas, schools, neighbourhood centres and transport facilities.

The Proposed Development also connects with existing and planned active travel infrastructure associated with nearby residential developments. In particular, it interfaces with the permitted canal-side pedestrian and cycle route associated with the Hansfield SDZ lands (FCC Reg. Ref. FW17A/0234/E1) and will provide improved connectivity for a number of major residential schemes located along the corridor, including the permitted 419-unit apartment development at Hansfield (FCC Reg. Ref. FW23A/0013).

Other Schemes
A review of non-residential planning activity within the study area identifies a number of transport, community, recreation and commercial developments which, together with the Proposed Development, will contribute to the continued development of accessibility, sustainable travel and community infrastructure provision.

The most significant transport projects comprise the approved DART+ West Railway Order and the BusConnects Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme. Together with the Proposed Development, these schemes will contribute to enhanced integration between walking, cycling and public transport networks across the area. The interaction of the Proposed Development with these and other existing, permitted and approved developments has been assessed as part of the cumulative effects assessment undertaken in the EIAR.

The study area also contains a number of community and recreation projects, including a sports clubhouse, playground, community facility, recreation facility and sporting infrastructure. In addition, a neighbourhood centre at Hansfield comprising retail, community and public realm facilities has recently been completed. These developments, together with the permitted residential growth identified within the study area, form part of the wider pattern of development considered in the cumulative assessment contained within the EIAR. The Proposed Development will provide a strategic active travel connection serving these existing and planned communities while improving accessibility to local services, amenities and public transport infrastructure.

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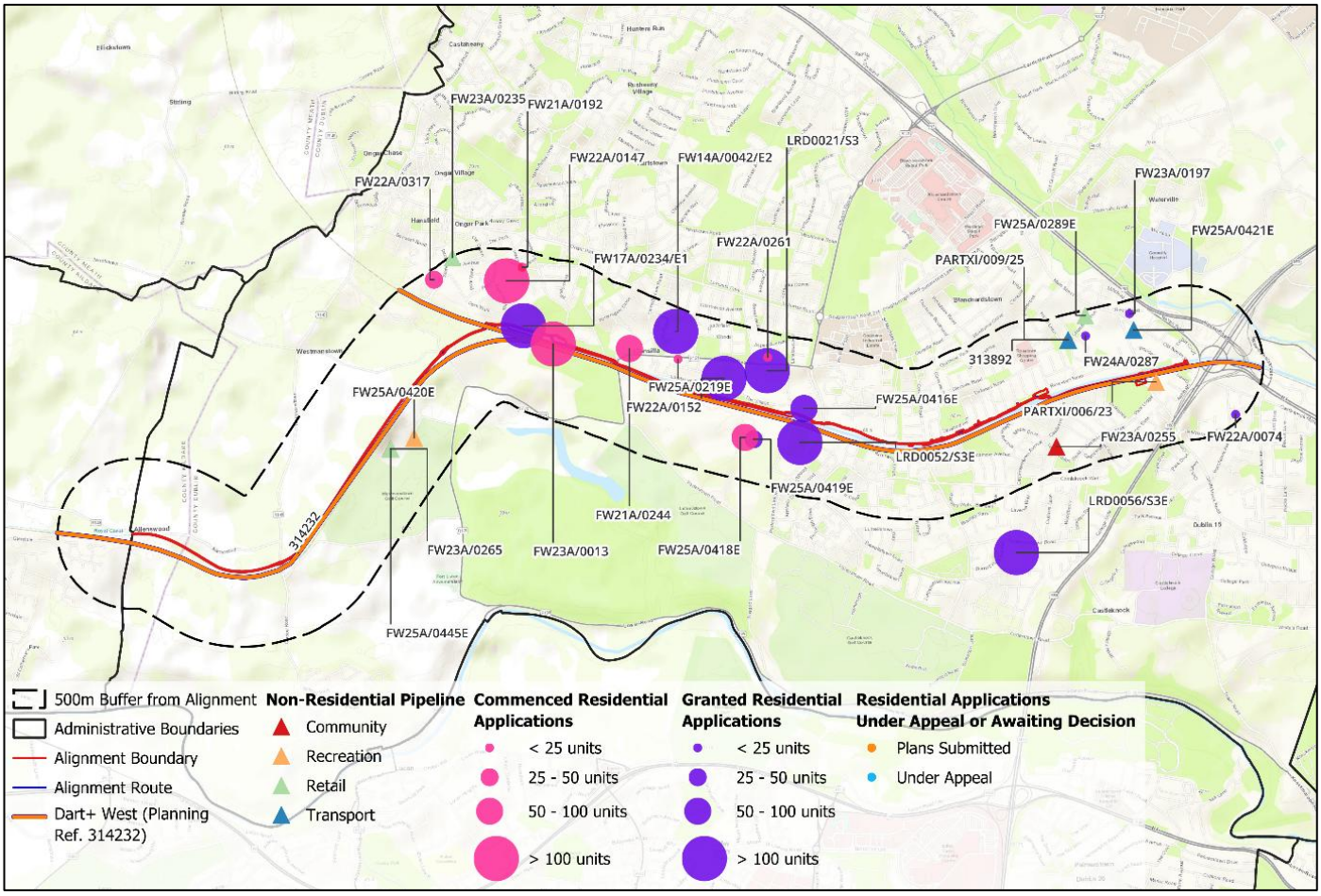

Figure 3-2 Residential and non-residential planning activity within 500m of the Proposed Development over a 5.5-year period up to August 2026 (Fingal County Council Planning Records, ACP Records)

Table 3-1 Planning History – Residential Schemes

Reference	Address	Description	Status	Decision Date	Units
Planning History – *Residential Schemes*					
FW21A/0192	The Daughters of Charity, St Joseph's Centre, Clonsilla	Construction of a single-storey building containing two apartments and a staff office. The development is located at the Daughters of Charity, St Joseph's Centre, Clonsilla.	Completed	09/12/2021	2
FW14A/0042/E2	Site bounded by the New Ongar Road to the North, Castlefield Court Estate, to the South, Mount Symon Estate to the West and Charnwood Estate, to the East	Construction of 124 two-storey, three- and four-bedroom houses on a 4.26 ha site. Includes a detached childcare facility serving this scheme and 166 nearby permitted homes. Provides communal and on-curtilage parking, open space and optional roof-mounted solar panels. Vehicular access is from Clonsilla Link Road, with landscaping, drainage and ancillary works.	Plans Granted	28/02/2022	124
FW21A/0244 [ACP-313792-22]	The Lodge, Clonsilla Road, Clonsilla, Dublin 15	Demolition of the existing house and outbuilding and construction of a 59-unit apartment block. The scheme includes 23 one-bedroom, 34 two-bedroom and 2 three-bedroom apartments with balconies or terraces. Provides undercroft and surface car parking, cycle parking, open space and access from Clonsilla Road. Landscaping, boundary treatments, bin storage, services and ESB infrastructure are included.	Commenced	ACP Grant 15/12/2023	59
FW22A/0074	52 Beechpark Avenue, Castleknock, Dublin 15	Demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings and construction of five three-storey detached houses. Includes realignment of the existing access and a new one-way road with three parking spaces. The exit onto Beechpark Avenue will accommodate the existing Montessori school set-down. New roads, paths, boundaries, landscaping and associated site works are included.	Plans Granted	05/12/2022	5

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Reference	Address	Description	Status	Decision Date	Units
Planning History – *Residential Schemes*					
FW22A/0147	townland of Clonsilla Dublin 15 Apartment Development , and is partially occupied by formerly associated with St. Joseph's Hospital., The site is bounded to the south-west by Park Heights road, to the north-west by Park Crescent road, Clonsilla	A residential development comprised of 174 no. apartments and duplex units, together with a childcare facility, on a site measuring c. 3.6 Ha which is part of Zone 5 "Hospital" of the Hansfield Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) Planning Scheme 2006. The application site is in the townland of Clonsilla, Dublin 15, and is partially occupied by buildings formerly associated with St. Joseph's Hospital. The site is bounded to the south-west by Park Heights road, to the north-west by Park Crescent road, to the north-east by Hansfield Wood Lawn estate, and to the east and south by St Joseph's Hospital. The proposed development includes for the demolition of existing buildings on site (c. 2,791 sq.m total) and the construction of 174 no. apartments and duplex units, together with a childcare facility, in 8 no. three to six storey blocks…*	Commenced	14/12/2022	174
FW22A/0261	Alencon, Weaver's Row, Clonsilla Road, Dublin 15	Construction of seven two-storey, three- and four-bedroom houses. The scheme comprises a terrace of four houses, one detached house and two semi-detached houses. Also includes retention of boundary walls, front hoarding and gate, a stoned entrance and ancillary site works.	Completed	11/01/2023	7
FW22A/0152	Weavers Row, Clonsilla Rd, Clonsilla, Dublin 15	Mixed-use development comprising a two-storey foodstore, three retail units and provides 191 car spaces, 326 cycle spaces and revised/new access points from Weavers Row. Also includes demolition, signage, landscaping, boundary treatments and ancillary site works… Construction of 72 no. dwellings	Plans Granted	12/01/2023	72
FW22A/0317	A site area of 0.924ha within Zone 7 of the Hansfield Strategic Development Zone, bounding Barnwell Park, Station Street and Station Road, Hansfield, Dublin 15	Construction of 41 homes within Zone 7 of Hansfield SDZ. The scheme comprises 34 two- and three-storey houses and 7 apartment/duplex units in a three-storey building. Includes private and public car and bicycle parking, landscaped open space and internal roads. Lighting, utilities, drainage, surface-water attenuation and associated infrastructure are included.	Commenced	16/06/2023	41
FW17A/0234/ E1	Zone 6 Hansfiled, SDZ Lands, Dublin 15	Construction of 155 homes comprising houses, apartments and duplex units within Hansfield SDZ. Includes a four-storey apartment block, two three-storey duplex blocks and a childcare facility. Provides 292 parking spaces, new vehicular access to Hansfield Road and pedestrian/cycle connections. Also includes demolition, public open space, landscaping, lighting and associated works.	Plans Granted	01/11/2023	155
FW23A/0197	River Road, Dublin 15	Demolition of the existing buildings and construction of three detached dwellings. Includes new vehicular and pedestrian entrances, a roadside boundary wall and new boundaries between houses. Landscaping and ancillary works are also proposed.	Plans Granted	27/11/2023	3
FW23A/0013	Zone 6 within the Hansfield SDZ Planning Scheme 2006, Formerly part of St. Joseph's Hospital, Clonsilla, Dublin 15	Construction of 419 apartments in four blocks of four to six storeys within Hansfield SDZ. Includes residential amenity space, balconies/terraces and a two-storey childcare facility. Provides 213 car spaces, 1,445 bicycle spaces, five vehicular accesses and public open space. The scheme also amends elements of St Joseph's Phase 1, including buildings and road layout.	Commenced	20/02/2024	419
LRD0021/S3E [ACP-320886-24]	Lands to the Front & Rear of Clonsilla Inn, Porterstown, Dublin 15	Demolition of existing structures and construction of 170 apartments/duplexes in seven blocks of one to five storeys. Includes a cafe, childcare facility, public park, two plazas, play areas and a nature walk. Provides undercroft and surface car and bicycle parking, internal roads and pathways. Landscaping, lighting, drainage, utilities and Porterstown Road upgrades are included.	ACP Plans Granted	ACP Grant 21/01/2025	170
FW24A/0287	Site to the rear of 16 Church Avenue, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15	Construction of two semi-detached, two-storey houses to the rear of 16 Church Avenue. Includes associated site works, sustainable drainage and off-street parking.	Plans Granted	03/03/2025	2

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Reference	Address	Description	Status	Decision Date	Units
Planning History – *Residential Schemes*					
LRD0056/S3E [ACP-322813-25]	Winterwood, Carpenterstown Road, Dublin 15	Demolition of Winterwood house and outbuildings and construction of 175 homes on a 1.87 ha site. The scheme comprises 30 houses and 145 apartments in three six-storey blocks, plus a creche. Provides open space, 111 car spaces, 387 bicycle spaces and a new Carpenterstown Road access. Landscaping, drainage, internal roads, green/blue roofs and photovoltaic panels are included.	ACP Plans Granted	ACP Grant 19/09/2025	175
FW25A/0219E	Old Cottage Site, Clonsilla Road, Kellystown, Clonsilla, Dublin 15	Construction of four two-storey, three-bedroom terraced houses. Includes new boundary treatments, landscaping and all associated site works.	Commenced	21/10/2025	4
PARTXI/009/25	Fortlawn, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15	Demolition of four existing houses and construction of 21 homes across two sites. Site A provides 7 terraced houses and 12 apartments; Site B provides 2 semi-detached houses. Works include new roads and footpaths, parking, landscaping and incidental play areas. Associated drainage, utilities, lighting and site development works are also proposed.	Plans Submitted	Plans Granted By Council Motion 9/2/26	21
FW25A/0418E [ACP- PL-500488-DF-25]	Lands in the Townlands of Kellystown and Porterstown, Dublin 15	Construction of 56 dwellings with all associated site works	Commenced	ACP appeal decided 12/06/2026	56
FW25A/0416E [ACP-PL-500971-DF-26]	Porterstown Road, Dublin	Demolition of structures, construction of 87 dwellings and a creche with all associated site works	Plans Granted	ACP Decision awaited	87
FW25A/0419E [ACP- PL-500486-DF-25]	Luttrellstown Gate, Lands in the Townlands of Kellystown and Porterstown, Dublin 15	Construction of 47 dwellings with all associated site works	Plans Granted	ACP appeal decided 12/06/2026	47
LRD0052/S3E [ACP-324182-26	Townland of Porterstown, Clonsilla	Large Residential Development (LRD) Construction of 302 dwellings with all associated site works. EIAR submitted with application	ACP Plans Granted	ACP appeal decided 22/06/2026	302
Total Residential Applications Awaiting Decision					**87**
Total Identified Residential Applications					**1,925**
Total Permitted Residential Units					**1,838**

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Table 3-2 Planning Pipeline – Other Schemes (Non-Residential) Consultation

Reference	Address	Description	Status	Decision Date
Planning History – *Non-residential*				
FW23A/0235	Part of Zone 1 'Main Street North' of the Hansfield SDZ Planning Scheme 2006., The site is located on lands to the east side of Station Road, Hansfield, immediately south and west of Block A of the existing Neighbourhood Centre, Hansfield	Amendments to a previously permitted neighbourhood centre within Hansfield SDZ. Includes a two-storey supermarket, ancillary retail unit, café, community centre, staff facilities, warehouse and service areas. Provides 92 car spaces, 32 cycle spaces, signage, new pedestrian/cycle links, public realm works and associated landscaping.	Completed	20/09/2023
FW23A/0255	Community Credit Union, Laurel Lodge Road, Castleknock, Dublin 15	Change of use of the former Community Credit Union building to community use. Works include removal of internal counters and partitions, interior fit-out, service upgrades and associated external works for use by Castleknock Community Centre.	Completed	16/10/2023
FW23A/0265	GAA Grounds, Westmanstown Sports and Conference Centre, Clonsilla, Dublin 15	Outline permission for a two-storey sports clubhouse with a floor area of 600 sq m. Facilities include changing rooms, equipment storage, gym, meeting room and associated club uses.	Outline Permission Granted	31/10/2023
PARTXI/006/23	Laurel Lodge, Castleknock Road, Blanchardstown	Development of a 400 sq m Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) playground designed in accordance with universal design principles. Includes play equipment, safety surfacing, fencing, bicycle parking, landscaping, drinking fountain and ancillary site works.	Plans Granted	12/02/2024
ACP-313892	Blanchardstown to Dublin City Centre	Bus Connects Blanchardstown to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme	Plans Granted	ACP Grant 21/06/2024
ACP-314232	County Dublin, County Meath, County Kildare	DART+ West Railway Order covering the Dublin to Maynooth and M3 Parkway corridor	Plans Granted	ACP Railway Order Dated 18/07/2024
FW25A/0289E	Rear of 7 Church Avenue, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15	Demolition of an existing single-storey garage building and construction of a two-storey detached commercial building for retail use as a beauty salon. Includes rooflight, new signage and associated site works.	Plans Granted	28/08/2025
FW25A/0421E	Tesla EV Charging Hub, Castleknock Road, Dublin City	Development of a Tesla electric vehicle charging hub. Includes 8 high-power charging bays, Tesla charging units, power cabinet equipment, modular substation, signage, relocated bin store and associated site development works.	Plans Granted	19/11/2025
FW25A/0445E	Garda/Westmanstown Gaels GAA Club, Westmanstown Sports & Conference Centre, Dublin 15	Construction of a single-storey modular multifunctional building for sports and club use. Facilities include changing rooms, toilets, wheelchair-accessible toilet, storage space and a general-purpose room.	Commenced	21/11/2025
FW25A/0420E	Westmanstown Sports Centre, Dublin 15	Construction of two padel tennis courts with artificial grass surfaces. Includes perimeter fencing, lighting columns and all associated ancillary site works.	Plans Granted	06/01/2026

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4.0 Consultation

4.1 Overview

Extensive engagement has been undertaken since project inception in 2018 and has continued throughout the development of the Proposed Development to the lodgement of the planning application. Consultation was carried out with relevant departments of Fingal County Council (FCC), the National Transport Authority (NTA), Waterways Ireland (WI), statutory agencies, elected representatives, local community groups and the wider public.

Two rounds of non-statutory public consultation were undertaken during the development of the scheme, comprising consultation on the Emerging Preferred Route in 2019 and the Preferred Route Option in 2021. In parallel, ongoing engagement was undertaken with key stakeholders to inform the development and assessment of route options and the progression of the Preferred Route, as detailed below.

4.2 Public Consultation

First Non-Statutory Public Consultation (2019)

The Emerging Preferred Route for the Proposed Development was presented during a Non-Statutory Public Consultation held between 25 February and 27 March 2019.

A total of 602 submissions were received. The majority related to a 1 km section of the route between Kirkpatrick Bridge (Coolmine Road) and a point approximately 400 m west of Castleknock Railway Station. The principal issues raised related to traffic, biodiversity, anti-social behaviour and public safety.

While many submissions supported the Emerging Preferred Route, a greater proportion favoured the provision of the greenway on the southern side of the Royal Canal between Kirkpatrick Bridge and Granard Bridge adjacent to Castleknock Station.

The issues raised during consultation were reviewed against the project objectives and relevant local and national policy. As a result, preliminary designs were prepared for route options on both the northern and southern sides of the canal between Kirkpatrick Bridge and Granard Bridge. Constructability considerations were also assessed and incorporated into a refined options assessment process which informed the identification of the Preferred Route. Details of this process are presented in the Route Options Assessment Main Report (Document Ref. p170239-Rep-001).

Further details regarding submissions received and responses to issues raised are provided in the Public Consultation Reports submitted with the application.

Second Non-Statutory Public Consultation (2021)

The second round of non-statutory public consultation was undertaken between May and July 2021. Submissions were accepted through the FCC Consultation Portal and by post. This consultation was undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic and, due to public health restrictions, traditional in-person consultation events could not be held. Letters were therefore issued to potentially affected property owners and occupiers, providing information on the Proposed Development and offering one-to-one engagement opportunities to discuss potential impacts, concerns and queries.

A total of 1,143 submissions were received during the Preferred Route Consultation. The principal issues raised related to Preferred Route (714), Environment (679), Safety and Anti-social Behaviour

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(610), Traffic/Access/Parking (506) and Scheme Design (284) (with individual submissions often referencing several issues).
Feedback received through the consultation process, together with ongoing stakeholder engagement, informed a number of refinements to the Draft Preferred Route Option. While these modifications were generally localised in nature, they assisted in optimising the design and addressing issues raised by stakeholders and the wider community.

Further details regarding submissions received and responses to issues raised are provided in the Public Consultation Reports submitted with the application.

4.3 Key Stakeholder Consultations

In parallel with the public consultation process, engagement was undertaken with several key stakeholders to inform the development of the Proposed Development and address both strategic and technical issues. Stakeholder consultation assisted in the identification of constraints and opportunities and informed the ongoing design development of the scheme.

Consultation and engagement were undertaken with the National Transport Authority, relevant departments of Fingal County Council, Waterways Ireland, An Garda Síochána, Iarnród Éireann and the DART+ West Project Team, Dublin Cycling Campaign, the Royal Canal Amenity Group (RCAG), elected representatives and local residential groups throughout the route options assessment and design development process.

A summary of stakeholder feedback received and the manner in which it was considered is provided in the Route Options Report and the Public Consultation Reports submitted with the application.

4.4 Consultation with An Coimisiún Pleanála

In accordance with the statutory pre-application consultation process for strategic road development proposals, Fingal County Council engaged with An Coimisiún Pleanála in advance of the submission of the proposed Royal Canal Urban Greenway application under Section 51 of the Roads Act 1993, as amended.

The pre-application consultation process comprised two formal meetings held virtually with representatives of An Coimisiún Pleanála on 24 August 2026 and 16 September 2026, respectively. The meetings were attended by representatives of Fingal County Council, the project design team and relevant specialists. During these consultations, the project team presented details of the proposed development, the statutory approval route, the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), Appropriate Assessment Screening, design evolution, alternatives assessment, consultation undertaken to date and the proposed application documentation. ACP subsequently issued formal records of both meetings.

The consultation process provided an opportunity for ACP to identify matters requiring particular consideration prior to lodgement and to provide procedural guidance regarding the preparation and submission of the application. Key issues raised during the consultation process included:

- Presentation of significant and residual environmental effects within the EIAR.
- Ecological assessment methodology, including application of the mitigation hierarchy, protected species licensing requirements and biodiversity enhancement measures.
- Appropriate Assessment and Water Framework Directive assessment requirements.
- Consideration of climate policy, national, regional and local planning policy, and climate adaptation measures.
- Protection of the Royal Canal corridor, riparian habitats, biodiversity, cultural heritage and landscape character.
- Assessment of cumulative effects with other existing and proposed developments.

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- Construction environmental management requirements and identification of construction compounds.
- Application procedures, document schedules, public notices, prescribed body notifications and lodgement sequencing requirements.

The observations and recommendations provided by ACP have informed the preparation and finalisation of the application documentation. Table 4.1 summarises the principal matters raised during the pre-application consultation process and identifies how these matters have been addressed within the application.

Table 4-1 ACP Consultation Matters and Applicants Response

Matters raised by ACP	Applicant Response
Clearly identify significant and residual environmental effects and provide concise conclusions.	Significant effects, mitigation measures and residual effects are clearly identified within each EIAR chapter and consolidated within the mitigation and residual effects summary chapter.
Demonstrate compliance with national, regional and local planning and climate policy.	The Planning Report and EIAR Planning Policy chapter assess consistency with relevant European, national, regional and local policy, including climate policy objectives.
Ensure biodiversity assessment applies the mitigation hierarchy and includes robust ecological evidence.	The Biodiversity chapter documents the ecological assessment methodology, mitigation hierarchy, survey programme and supporting evidence base.
Clarify protected species licensing requirements and engagement with NPWS.	Details of engagement with NPWS and protected species licensing requirements are provided within the Biodiversity chapter and supporting documentation.,
Include Appropriate Assessment reporting founded on best scientific evidence.	An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report accompanies the application
Undertake a standalone Water Framework Directive assessment.	A dedicated Water Framework Directive Assessment has been prepared and submitted with the application.
Demonstrate protection of the Royal Canal, protected structures and heritage setting.	Heritage considerations are addressed within the Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage chapter together with project design measures and mitigation commitments.
Assess cumulative effects with DART+ West and other developments.	Cumulative effects are assessed within the EIAR, including consideration of relevant existing, permitted and reasonably foreseeable developments.
Identify construction compounds and construction-stage mitigation measures.	Construction compounds are identified on project drawings and assessed within the EIAR. Construction mitigation measures are set out in the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
Clarify application procedures, notices, prescribed body consultation and lodgement requirements.	The application has been prepared in accordance with the procedures outlined by ACP under Section 51 of the Roads Act 1993, as amended, including the required notices, prescribed body notifications and supporting documentation.

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4.5 Consultation Outcomes

The public and stakeholder consultation processes formed an important part of the development of the Proposed Development and informed both the route options assessment and subsequent design development stages. Feedback received from the public, elected representatives, statutory consultees and other stakeholders was reviewed and considered throughout the evolution of the scheme.

The consultation process contributed to refinements in route alignment, access arrangements, crossing locations, landscaping proposals and measures designed to protect residential amenity and environmental sensitivities. The outcome is a Proposed Development that reflects both the project objectives and the issues raised through engagement with stakeholders and the wider community.

Consultation with An Coimisiún Pleanála informed the finalisation of the statutory application documentation and environmental assessment process. In particular, the consultations assisted in refining the presentation of the EIAR, confirming the scope of ecological assessment and mitigation, identifying supporting documentation requirements including Water Framework Directive assessment and Appropriate Assessment reporting, and clarifying the procedural and administrative requirements associated with a Section 51 Roads Act application. The matters raised by An Coimisiún Pleanála have been incorporated into the application documentation, as summarised in Table 4.1.

Detailed records of the consultation undertaken, submissions received and responses provided are contained in the Public Consultation Reports and the Route Options Report submitted with the application as supporting documents.

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5.0 Policy Context

5.1 Introduction

The Proposed Development has been developed having regard to the national, regional and local policy framework applicable to sustainable mobility, active travel, green infrastructure, recreation, healthy placemaking, climate action and heritage protection. A detailed review of the policy framework is contained within Chapter 3 of the EIAR. This chapter focuses on the planning considerations arising from that policy framework and demonstrates how the Proposed Development supports and assists in the delivery of the relevant policy objectives.

Table 5-1 Policy Overview

National Policies	• National Planning Framework (NPF): Project Ireland 2040 - Revision (2025) • National Development Plan (2021-2030 and July 2025 update) • Climate Action Plan (2025) • National Sustainable Mobility Policy 2022 • NTA Active Travel Programme 2026 • National Physical Activity Framework 2024-2040
Regional and Sectoral Policies	• Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways (2018) • Greenways and Cycle Routes Ancillary Infrastructure Guidelines (2022) • Waterways Ireland Heritage Plan (2016–2020) • Waterways Ireland Heritage & Biodiversity Plan 2030 • Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region • National Cycle Network Plan 2023 • Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (2016–2035) • Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (2022–2042) • Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan (2022)
Local Policies	• Fingal County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

5.2 National Policy and Sectoral Guidelines

5.2.1 National Planning Framework (NPF): Project Ireland 2040 - First Revision (April 2025)

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of the country out to the year 2040 (Government of Ireland, 2025). It is a national document that will guide at a high-level, the strategic planning and development of the country over the next 20+ years, so that as the population expands, growth is sustainable (in economic, social, and environmental terms).

The revised NPF Framework published in April 2025 takes account of changes that have occurred since the original publication in 2018 building on the framework and ensuring it remains fit for purpose and responsive to societal change. In the period between 2022 and 2040 it is expected that there will be roughly an extra one million people living in our country. The Eastern and Midland Region (EMRA) will experience population growth of approximately 470,000 additional people between 2022 and 2040 (c. 690,000 additional people over 2016-2040) resulting in a total population of almost 3 million people.

The scale of the challenge to deliver new homes and alongside those, new jobs, is enormous and at a level previously unforeseen and consequently unplanned for. The proposition for the Proposed Greenway is greatly strengthened against this context of accelerated housing delivery. The need for recreational space and enhanced sustainable mobility options is heightened on consideration of population growth, and the development justification is reinforced. A key aim of the NPF is to promote

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and encourage sustainable travel and mobility, particularly in urban and suburban areas. The NPF sets out a shared set of goals for the country expressed as National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) (Figure 5.1).



Figure 5-1 National Strategic Outcomes: The National Planning Framework (Government of Ireland 2025)

The Proposed Greenway can play an important role in supporting **NSO 1 on Compact Growth** by promoting and facilitating the most sustainable modes of travel – walking and cycling. The Proposed Development represents an exemplar in the type '*enabling infrastructure and support amenities'* recognised in the NPF as required to achieve compact growth in our cities and towns. Furthermore, the Proposed Development encourages labour mobility and strengthens accessibility between population centres and employment centres – key to compact growth.

The Proposed Development also contributes to **NSO2 on Enhanced Regional Accessibility** encourages a move away from carbon intensive travel models to sustainable and active travel. Cycling has a major role to play in enhancing regional connectivity, and specifically through the implementation of the National Cycle Network (NCN) Plan, published in 2023 – of which this development proposal for the Greenway is a key feature. The NCN integrates greenways, the EuroVelo network and regional and local cycling routes supporting economic growth of regional urban areas of 5,000+ population as well as priority tourist destinations. In direct reference to cycling, NSO 2 sets out a specific aim to '*Develop a safe and connected cycle network between cities, towns and key tourist destinations to reduce the carbon impact of transport, promote a healthy and inclusive society and promote economic growth.'*

NSO 3 on Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities is also relevant in the context of the development proposal which links rural parts of Kildare and west Dublin through to peri-urban and urban neighbourhoods and its measure to *"Invest in **greenways**, blueways and peatways as part of a nationally coordinated strategy;"*

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The development proposal is hugely important in the context of its support for **NSO 5 on Sustainable Mobility**. In alignment with the National Sustainable Mobility Policy, published in 2022, the proposed scheme has a strong role to play in the provision of a *'well-functioning, integrated sustainable transport system (walking, cycling and public transport), enhancing competitiveness, sustaining economic progress and enabling sustainable mobility choices for citizens, supports the overall Framework objectives'*. The proposal provides an attractive, sustainable alternative to car transport and in this way contributes to all of the measures set out to achieve NSO5 including the following:

> *"Develop a comprehensive network of safe cycling routes in metropolitan areas to address travel needs and to provide similar facilities in towns and villages where appropriate, in line with the NTA's Cycle Connects plan, due to be published in 2024;"*
>
> *"Improve connections and walking routes in accordance with the principles of universal design so as to optimise journeys undertaken by foot and enhance pedestrian comfort and safety;"*

NSO 7 is for Enhanced Amenities and Heritage. Again, the development proposal strongly aligns and supports measures set out under this national strategic objective, such as:

> *"Implementation of planning and transport strategies for the five cities and other urban areas will be progressed with a major focus on improving walking and cycling routes, including continuous greenway networks and targeted measures to enhance permeability and connectivity."*
>
> *'Invest in and enable access to recreational facilities, including trails networks, designed and delivered with a strong emphasis on conservation, allowing the protection and preservation of our most fragile environments and providing a wellbeing benefit for all'.*

The development proposal also aligns with the purpose and intentions of **NSO 8 Transition to a Carbon Neutral and Climate Resilient Society.** The proposal is an excellent example of a sustainable transport option that NSO 8 seeks to promote and aligns with the NSO 8 measure to support:

> *"Sustainable travel measures, including comprehensive Cycling and Walking Network for metropolitan areas of Ireland's cities, and expanded Greenways."*

In addition, the Proposed Greenway responds to and helps in the delivery of a range of National Policy Objectives (NPOs) as listed below: -

National Policy Objective 34 encourages cycle networks through the facilitation of the development of a National Greenways/Blueways Strategy which prioritises projects on the basis of achieving maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level:

*"Continue to **facilitate tourism development** and in particular the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, and a Blueways and Peatways Strategy, which prioritises:*

> *A coordinated approach to the sustainable management of outdoor recreation sites;*
> *Projects on the basis of their environmental sustainability, achieving maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level while ensuring their development is compliant with the National Biodiversity Action Plan, the national climate change objective and requirements for environmental Assessments."*

National Policy Objective 37

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Ensure the integration of **safe and convenient alternatives to the car** into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and Proposed Developments and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.

National Policy Objective 93
Improve air quality and help prevent people being exposed to unacceptable levels of pollution in our urban and rural areas through integrated land use and spatial planning that supports public transport, **walking and cycling as more favourable modes of transport to the private car**, the promotion of energy efficient buildings and homes, heating systems with zero local emissions, green and blue infrastructure planning and innovative design solutions.

5.2.2 National Development Plan 2021-2030 and NDP Update July 2025

The National Development Plan 2021–2030 (NDP) sets out the investment framework to support the delivery of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and its National Strategic Outcomes (Government of Ireland, 2021 and 2025). Recognising that more than 50% of new housing in cities and 30% elsewhere is to be accommodated within existing built-up areas, the NDP notes that compact growth will be supported through investment in high-quality, integrated public transport, active travel infrastructure and supporting amenities. The NDP also highlights the need for a 'step change' in the provision of environmentally sustainable transport systems to achieve Ireland's climate objectives, noting that segregated walking and cycling facilities can help reduce congestion, facilitate modal shift and strengthen connectivity with public transport networks.

In supporting regional economic development, the NDP identifies tourism and recreation infrastructure as important investment priorities, including activity-based tourism such as greenways. The Plan provides for continued investment in established tourism brands, including the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East, and states that greenway development will remain a priority throughout the lifetime of the Plan. The NPF further highlights the success of projects such as the Waterford Greenway, recognising their contribution to tourism, local economic development and quality of life. The NDP also reaffirms the Government's commitment to active travel through the National Active Travel Programme and continued support for the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways.

5.2.3 Climate Action Plan (2025)

Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25), prepared under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, sets out the measures required to deliver Ireland's climate targets during the second carbon budget period (2026–2030). CAP 25 identifies transport as one of the largest contributors to national greenhouse gas emissions and highlights the need for a continued programme of interventions to reduce emissions through sustainable mobility, modal shift and behavioural change. It notes that while vehicle electrification will play an important role, increased use of public transport, walking and cycling will be essential to achieving the required emissions reductions.

The transport strategy is based on the Avoid–Shift–Improve framework, with particular emphasis on reducing the need to travel and encouraging a shift towards more sustainable modes. Key measures include enhanced integration of land-use and transport planning, compact growth, active travel infrastructure, improved public realm, and stronger connectivity with public transport networks. CAP25 also promotes the implementation of demand management measures through statutory planning and transport frameworks, including Development Plans and Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies.

Local authorities are identified as having a central role in supporting transport decarbonisation through the planning system, including the promotion of compact growth, permeability, active travel, and sustainable mobility measures. In this regard, the Proposed Development directly supports the

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objectives of CAP25 by providing high-quality active travel infrastructure that encourages a shift from private car use to walking and cycling. The development will improve connectivity and accessibility, support sustainable travel patterns, and contribute to the decarbonisation of the transport sector in accordance with national climate policy.

The Proposed Development constitutes a practical and tangible climate action measure. By providing a safe, attractive and continuous active travel corridor connecting established and future communities to schools, rail stations, employment areas and local services, the scheme will assist in reducing reliance on private vehicle use and supporting the modal shift objectives established under CAP25.

5.2.4 National Sustainable Mobility Policy 2022

The National Sustainable Mobility Policy establishes a national framework for increasing the proportion of journeys undertaken by sustainable modes, including walking, cycling and public transport. The policy promotes the creation of safe, accessible and attractive active travel infrastructure as a key mechanism for reducing private car dependency and improving public health outcomes. The Proposed Development directly supports these objectives through the delivery of a high-quality active travel corridor linking residential neighbourhoods, public transport services, employment areas and recreational destinations along the Royal Canal corridor.

5.2.5 Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways (2018)

The Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways (2018) (Department of Transport, 2018) provides the national framework for the planning, design and delivery of Greenways in Ireland. The Strategy seeks to increase the extent, quality and geographic spread of Greenway infrastructure while ensuring that routes are developed to an appropriate standard and integrated with local communities, tourism assets and wider transport networks.

A key principle of the Strategy is the importance of early and meaningful engagement with landowners, local communities and other stakeholders in the route selection and design process. The Strategy also emphasises the need to minimise impacts on property holdings through sensitive route design and the provision of appropriate mitigation and accommodation measures where required. In addition, it recognises that successful Greenways should provide access to attractive landscapes, heritage assets and visitor destinations, thereby supporting recreation and tourism opportunities.

The Proposed Development has been developed in accordance with these principles through an extensive programme of stakeholder and public consultation, as detailed in Section 4. The selected route seeks to balance the need to minimise impacts on adjoining landowners and existing land uses while maximising connectivity, accessibility and amenity value for future users. The development will also enhance access to recreational, cultural and natural assets along the corridor, supporting the wider objectives of the Strategy in relation to sustainable mobility, tourism and healthy lifestyles.

The Strategy, together with related national policies promoting Greenways, Blueways and active travel infrastructure, recognises the role of such networks in improving connectivity, encouraging physical activity, supporting tourism and contributing to more sustainable travel patterns. **The Proposed Development will make a positive contribution to these objectives through the delivery of a high-quality, accessible and attractive active travel corridor.**

5.2.6 Greenways and Cycle Routes Ancillary Infrastructure Guidelines 2018 (Update 2022)

The design of the Proposed Greenway has been informed by these Guidelines, published by the Department of Transport in partnership with Sport Ireland, which provide detailed recommendations for ancillary infrastructure that complements the main greenway or cycle route. While primary standards focus on the path itself (width, surface, gradient), this document sets out guidance on features that bring routes to life, making them more attractive, engaging, and enjoyable for all users. The Proposed

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Greenway features a range of rest areas, public amenities and signage along the route, in alignment with the recommendations of these Guidelines.

5.2.7 Waterways Ireland Heritage & Biodiversity Plan 2030

The Waterways Ireland Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2030 aims to protect and celebrate the natural, built, and cultural heritage along Ireland's waterways. It focuses on conserving ecosystems that support diverse flora and fauna, while also promoting community involvement and education to foster awareness and sustainable practices (Waterways Ireland, Draft Heritage & Biodiversity Plan 2030).

The plan encourages strong partnerships with stakeholders and supports research to deepen understanding of biodiversity and heritage sites. Key objectives with which the Proposed Greenway align with, and support include:

- Work with local authorities to support the development and implementation of green infrastructure strategies and the achievement of green infrastructure objectives by local authorities, in recognition of the importance of the inland waterways as green corridors to local towns and villages as well as compliance under Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.
- Work in partnership with relevant agencies and local angling groups in order to maintain the inland waterways under our jurisdiction as sustainable fisheries.
- Encourage an integrated, measured approach to heritage interpretation at all heritage sites that is sensitive to the special significance of the place (i.e. promote built, natural and cultural heritage aspects of all sites where possible).
- Support efforts to promote heritage-related sustainable tourism and eco-tourism, both domestically and abroad, and seek to meet the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas standards.

5.2.8 National Cycle Network Study 2010

The strategic importance of the Proposed Development is reflected in its long-standing identification within national and international cycling networks. The Royal Canal Greenway corridor was first identified in the National Cycle Network Scoping Study (2010) as part of a strategic cycle route linking Dublin and Galway (Transport Infrastructure Ireland, 2010). The Proposed Development forms part of this route and contributes to the delivery of EuroVelo Route 2, a trans-European cycling corridor connecting Ireland with the wider European cycle network.

EuroVelo promotes the development of high-quality long-distance cycling routes that support sustainable tourism, active travel and local economic development. A key objective of the network is to encourage tourism in a manner that protects environmental resources, supports local communities and promotes sustainable travel choices, including integration with public transport.

The Proposed Development will contribute to these objectives through the delivery of a high-quality greenway that enhances connectivity, supports sustainable mobility and provides an attractive recreational and tourism asset within the wider Royal Canal corridor. The scheme will form an important link within both the national Greenway network and the broader EuroVelo route network, thereby supporting regional accessibility, sustainable tourism and active travel objectives.

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Figure 5-2 Trans-European EuroVelo Routes

5.2.9 National Cycle Network Plan 2023

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), on behalf of the Department of Transport, has prepared the National Cycle Network (NCN) Plan, which builds on the National Cycle Network first identified in the 2010 Scoping Study (Transport Infrastructure Ireland, 2023). The Plan identifies a strategic network of 85 cycling corridors extending for approximately 3,500km and connecting more than 200 settlements across the State (Figure 5-3). The objective of the NCN is to establish a coherent national cycling network that supports everyday journeys and leisure trips, while improving access to employment centres, educational facilities, transport hubs, tourism destinations and recreational amenities.

The NCN is intended to complement existing and planned cycling infrastructure, including the NTA's CycleConnects programme, EuroVelo routes, national and regional Greenways and other strategic cycling networks. In doing so, it provides a framework for the continued expansion of cycling infrastructure and supports greater uptake of cycling and walking for commuting, education, recreation and tourism purposes.

Implementation of the NCN is being progressed on a phased basis to 2040 (Table 5-2), with route prioritisation informed by a multi-criteria assessment considering factors such as potential demand, network coherence, safety, corridor function and wider social benefits. As part of the wider National Cycle Network and the Dublin–Galway strategic corridor, the Proposed Development will contribute to the delivery of a connected and high-quality cycling network that supports sustainable mobility, active travel and regional accessibility objectives.

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Table 5-2 National Cycle Network Plan – Phasing plans

	Phase 1 (2023–2025)	Phase 2 (2026–2030)	Phase 3 (2031–2040)
Approx. Kilometres Delivered	330 km	660 km	2,510 km



Figure 5-3 National Cycle Network (TII, 2023).

The proposed Royal Canal Urban Greenway project has been identified in Corridor 74 – Celbridge to Dublin. The Celbridge to Dublin Corridor has two options, Option A via the Grand Canal and Option B via Tallaght. Option A is the preferred corridor due to its integration with the Grand Canal Greenway.

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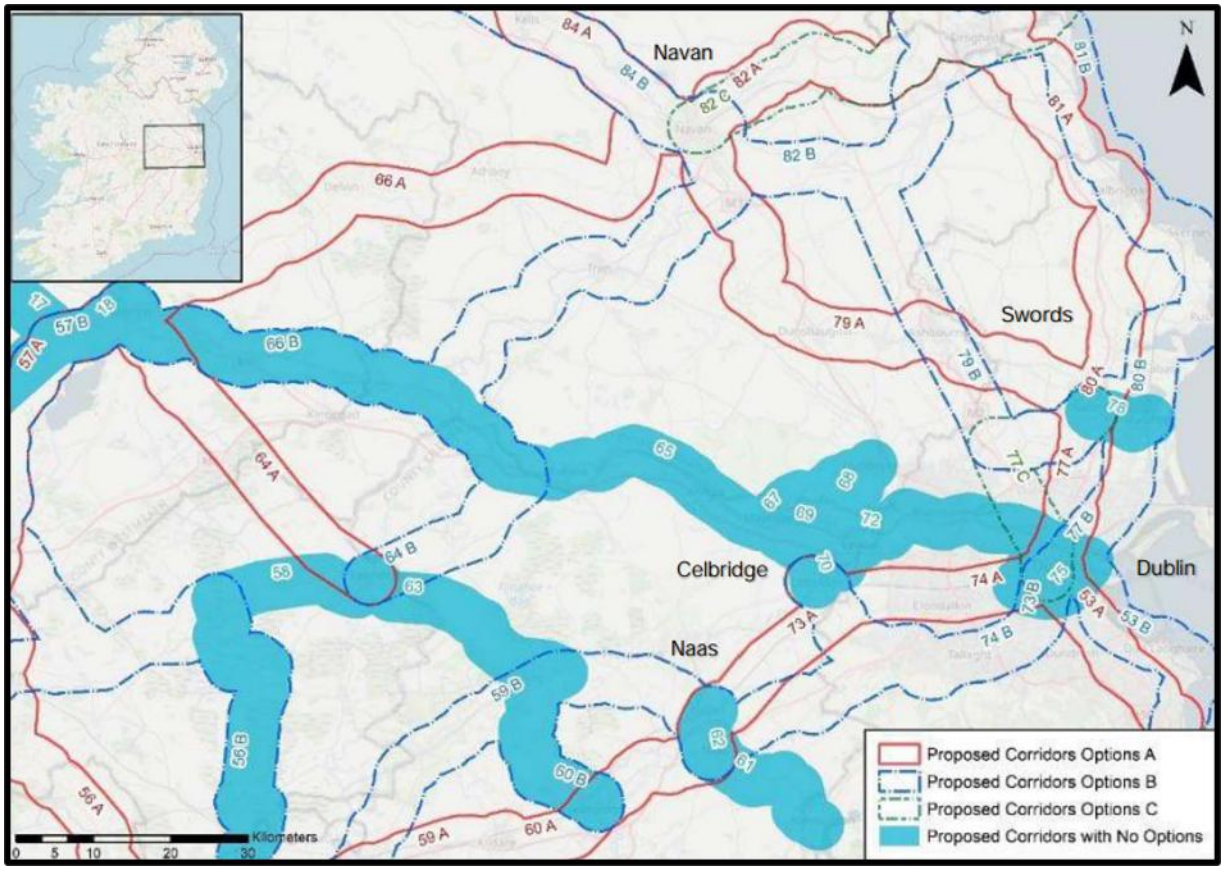

Figure 5-4 Corridor 74 Celbridge to Dublin; Source: National Cycle Network Plan 2023 (TII, 2023)

The Proposed Development will also strengthen connections between existing and planned active travel infrastructure, public transport services, employment areas, educational facilities and recreational destinations, thereby supporting the core objectives of the NCN Plan to increase cycling participation and provide a viable alternative to private car travel.

5.2.10 National Physical Activity Framework 2024-2040

The National Physical Activity Framework 2024–2040 seeks to create environments that support active lifestyles and increased participation in physical activity. The Framework recognises walking and cycling as important forms of everyday physical activity and promotes the delivery of safe, accessible and attractive active travel infrastructure. The Proposed Development supports these objectives by providing a high-quality Greenway that encourages walking and cycling for both recreation and transport purposes while supporting public health, wellbeing and social inclusion.

5.3 Regional and Sectoral Policies

5.3.1 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region provides the strategic planning and economic framework for the Region and supports the delivery of the National Planning Framework and National Development Plan (Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly, 2019). The Strategy promotes a range of integrated regional objectives centred on climate action, healthy placemaking, sustainable mobility and economic development, recognising the importance of high-quality active travel infrastructure in achieving these outcomes.

The RSES is supported by the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP), which establishes a long-term planning and investment framework for the Dublin Metropolitan Area and promotes the coordinated delivery of strategic transport infrastructure, active travel networks and metropolitan-scale green

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infrastructure. The MASP identifies the importance of integrating growth with sustainable transport investment, including rail, public transport and cycling infrastructure. It highlights "a number of strategic development areas to be delivered in tandem with Metrolink, DART and LUAS expansion programmes, Bus Connects and the Greater Dublin Metropolitan Cycle Network, along with the provision of metropolitan scale Green Infrastructure and amenities."

Of particular relevance to the Proposed Development, the RSES expressly supports the completion of strategic Greenway projects, including the Royal Canal Greenway and the Dublin–Galway EuroVelo Route, recognising their role in enhancing regional connectivity, supporting sustainable mobility and improving access to recreation and tourism opportunities. The Strategy also highlights the importance of cross-boundary coordination in delivering strategic active travel and green infrastructure projects.

> *"Cross boundary co-ordination of future development will support enhanced rail services on the Dublin-Sligo line including DART to Maynooth and* ***completion of greenways along the Royal and Grand Canals, including the Dublin to Westport Greenway and Dublin to Galway Eurovelo Route,*** *along with planned upgrades to the national road network including the M/N4 and development of the cross border A5 route to the N/M2."*

The RSES further recognises Greenways as important elements of regional green infrastructure and identifies their contribution to climate resilience, biodiversity, recreation, tourism and economic development. The Strategy notes that Greenway development can strengthen rural and urban economies through the creation of distinctive tourism assets while also promoting health, wellbeing and access to natural amenities.

The Proposed Development directly supports these objectives through the delivery of a strategic section of the Royal Canal Greenway, completing a key element of the wider regional and national active travel network. The development will enhance connectivity between communities, public transport services, employment locations and recreational destinations, while supporting modal shift, healthy placemaking, climate action and sustainable tourism objectives in accordance with the overarching policy direction of the RSES and MASP.

Of particular significance is the explicit recognition within the RSES of the role of the Royal Canal Greenway and associated EuroVelo connections as regionally important infrastructure. The completion of missing links within these strategic routes is identified as a means of enhancing regional accessibility, sustainable mobility, recreation and tourism. The Proposed Development directly contributes to this objective.

5.3.2 Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022 - 2042

The Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) 2022–2042 provides the statutory framework for transport planning and investment across the Region over the next two decades (National Transport Authority, 2022). The Strategy seeks to deliver a sustainable, integrated and efficient transport system that supports compact growth, climate action, improved accessibility and enhanced regional connectivity. A key objective of the Strategy is to increase the proportion of journeys undertaken by walking, cycling and public transport while reducing reliance on private car travel. Greenways are recognised as an important component of the active travel network, providing safe, attractive and accessible routes for commuting, recreation and tourism.

The Strategy incorporates the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan (2022), which establishes the strategic framework for the phased delivery of cycling infrastructure throughout the Region. The Plan identifies a hierarchy of Primary, Secondary, Feeder, Greenway and Inter-Urban routes and includes sections of the EuroVelo 2 (Dublin–Galway) trans-European cycle route. The objective is to create a

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coherent and interconnected cycling network linking communities, employment locations, educational facilities, transport hubs and recreational destinations across the GDA.

The Royal Canal Greenway is identified as a strategic corridor within the GDA Cycle Network and forms part of the wider Dublin–Galway corridor and EuroVelo 2 network. The Proposed Development represents a critical section of this route and will contribute to completing a continuous active travel corridor between Dublin City, Fingal, Kildare and the Midlands. The scheme is identified within the GDA Cycle Network Plan for Dublin North-West and will play an important role in connecting County Dublin and County Kildare along the Royal Canal corridor.

As illustrated in Figure 5-5, the Proposed Development is designated as a Greenway–Utility Route and is also partially classified as a Secondary Route within the GDA Cycle Network. This reflects its dual function as both a strategic commuter corridor and a recreational route. The scheme will strengthen connectivity between residential communities, employment areas, educational facilities, recreational destinations and public transport services while supporting the wider active travel network across the Region.

The Proposed Development will therefore make a significant contribution to the delivery of the Transport Strategy and Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan by enhancing active travel infrastructure, supporting modal shift, reducing dependence on private car travel and improving accessibility. It will also strengthen the strategic Royal Canal Greenway corridor and support the wider National Cycle Network and EuroVelo 2 route.

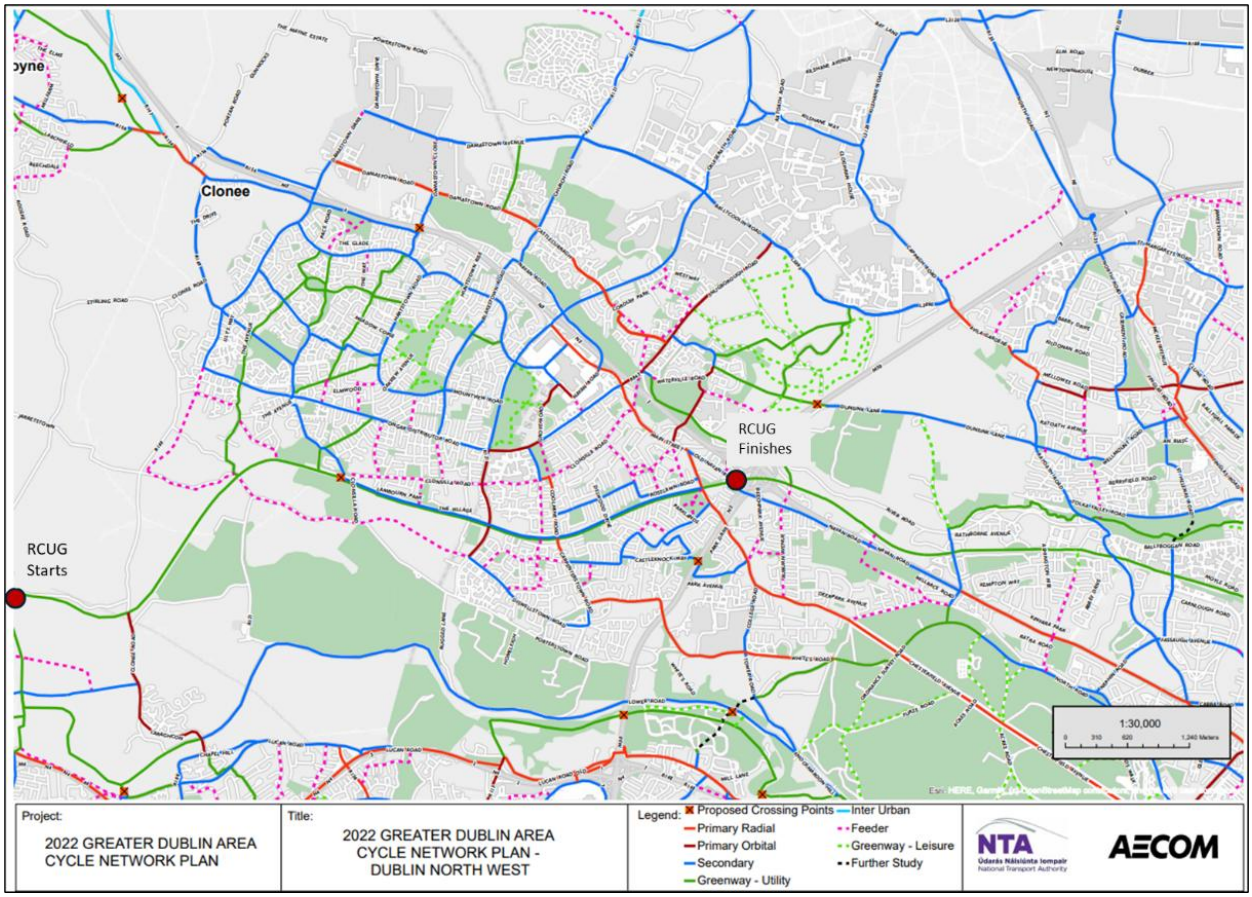

Figure 5-5 Proposed Scheme in GDA CNP (NTA, 2022)

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5.4 Local Policy

5.4.1 Fingal County Development Plan 2023 – 2029

The Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029 provides the statutory framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of the county during the Plan period (Fingal County Council, 2023). The Plan's vision is to deliver healthy placemaking, climate resilience, economic prosperity and sustainable communities through the provision of high-quality infrastructure, enhanced connectivity and the protection and enhancement of Fingal's natural, built and cultural assets.

The Proposed Development strongly supports the vision of the Development Plan through the delivery of an approximately 8.1km Greenway connecting the Kildare County boundary with the Old Navan Road (12th Lock). The scheme will provide a strategic active travel and recreational corridor along the Royal Canal, enhancing connectivity between established and emerging communities, public transport facilities, schools, employment areas and key local destinations. In doing so, it will support climate action objectives, healthy placemaking, social inclusion, sustainable mobility and the continued development of the Royal Canal as a key green infrastructure and amenity asset within Fingal.

The development makes a positive contribution to the cross-cutting themes underpinning the Development Plan, namely:

- Climate Action;
- Healthy Placemaking and Sustainable Development;
- Social Inclusion;
- High-Quality Design; and
- Resilience.

The Proposed Development directly supports the Plan's climate action objectives through the provision of high-quality active travel infrastructure that encourages a shift from private car use towards walking and cycling. By providing a safe, attractive and convenient alternative to fossil fuel-based transport, the Greenway supports reduced transport emissions and contributes to the transition towards a low-carbon and climate resilient county.

The scheme also represents a significant healthy placemaking intervention. It will provide a dedicated, accessible and attractive environment for walking, cycling and recreation, improving public health and wellbeing while creating stronger connections between communities, schools, employment centres, public transport services, recreational amenities and the wider Royal Canal corridor.

A core principle of the design is inclusivity. The Greenway has been designed in accordance with universal design principles to ensure accessibility for people of all ages and abilities. The development therefore supports the social inclusion objectives of the Development Plan by providing equitable access to a high-quality public amenity and sustainable transport corridor.

The proposal is also consistent with the Development Plan's emphasis on high-quality design. The scheme has been carefully integrated into the Royal Canal setting through sensitive landscape design, public realm enhancements, biodiversity measures and the use of high-quality materials. The result is a development that strengthens local character and sense of place while respecting the environmental, ecological and heritage sensitivities of the canal corridor.

Finally, the Proposed Development supports resilience through its multifunctional role as transport infrastructure, recreational amenity, green infrastructure corridor and tourism asset. The scheme will contribute to social and community resilience through enhanced accessibility and health outcomes, environmental resilience through biodiversity maintenance and sustainable drainage measures, and economic resilience through increased visitor activity and improved connectivity.

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The proposal directly supports a range of Strategic Objectives of the Development Plan, including:

- **Strategic Objective 2** – Development of well-connected and sustainable neighbourhoods;
- **Strategic Objective 5** – Enhancement of placemaking and public realm;
- **Strategic Objective 7** – Delivery of high-quality design and universal accessibility;
- **Strategic Objective 9** – Reduction in car dependency and prioritisation of walking, cycling and public transport;
- **Strategic Objective 11** – Protection, enhancement and connectivity of green infrastructure networks; and
- **Strategic Objective 13** – Support for tourism and recreation development.

Of particular relevance, the Development Plan provides strong support for active travel and Greenway infrastructure through:

- **Policy CMP7** – Pedestrian and Cycling Network;
- **Policy CMP8** – Greenway Network;
- **Policy CMP9** – Prioritisation of Pedestrians and Cyclists;
- **Objectives CMO6, CMO7, CMO8, CMO11, CMO12 and CMO13** relating to active travel, connectivity, integration with public transport, green infrastructure and tourism;
- **Objective HCAO49** relating to the protection and enhancement of the Royal Canal;
- **Objectives GINHO9 and GINHO30** requiring biodiversity net gain in Greenway and infrastructure projects;
- **GIM Objective 9** seeking the development of the Royal Canal as a significant public amenity; and
- **GIM Objective 28** supporting the establishment of an amenity and wildlife corridor between the River Liffey and the Royal Canal.

The Proposed Development aligns strongly with the strategic vision of the Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029 and contributes directly to the delivery of its core themes of climate action, healthy placemaking, social inclusion, high-quality design and resilience. Through the provision of an approximately 8.1km off-road walking and cycling route, the scheme will facilitate a modal shift towards active travel, improve accessibility between existing and planned communities, enhance connections to schools, employment centres, public transport facilities and recreational amenities, and strengthen the role of the Royal Canal as a strategic green infrastructure and amenity corridor.

A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Planning Stage Note has been prepared by JBA Consulting Ireland Ltd. on behalf of Fingal County Council to qualitatively assess the Proposed Development's anticipated biodiversity outcomes, drawing upon the findings of the EIAR, ecological surveys, landscape proposals and proposed habitat management measures. The assessment applies the principles of the mitigation hierarchy and concludes that, notwithstanding localised habitat losses within the Royal Canal corridor, the Proposed Development incorporates a comprehensive suite of biodiversity mitigation, habitat enhancement and habitat creation measures, including native woodland, meadow and hedgerow planting, long-term habitat management measures, ecological connectivity enhancements and offset woodland planting within St. Catherine's Park.

The assessment identifies the creation of approximately 2,456m² of woodland habitat, 6,841m² of meadow and shrub planting, 619 metres of native hedgerow and approximately 7,000m² of offset woodland planting at St. Catherine's Park. These measures will contribute to maintaining and strengthening ecological connectivity along the Royal Canal corridor and between the Royal Canal and River Liffey catchments. The planning stage BNG assessment concludes that the Proposed Development is expected to deliver a positive biodiversity outcome and an overall biodiversity net gain,

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consistent with Objectives GINHO9 (Greenways and Net Gain) and GINHO30 (Infrastructure and Net Biodiversity Gain) of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029.

Taken together, the active travel, recreational, green infrastructure and biodiversity benefits of the Proposed Development demonstrate strong alignment with the strategic objectives and policy framework of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029. The Proposed Development directly supports Strategic Objectives relating to sustainable neighbourhoods, placemaking, active travel, green infrastructure, recreation and tourism, while delivering the objectives of Policies CMP7, CMP8 and CMP9 and furthering the Council's ambition to develop the Royal Canal as a significant recreational, ecological and sustainable transport asset within Fingal.

The Proposed Development also incorporates Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) measures including over-the-edge drainage, infiltration to surrounding soils and vegetation, and filter drains where appropriate. The drainage strategy is designed to maintain existing runoff patterns, provide treatment and attenuation of surface water runoff, minimise impacts on the receiving environment and integrate with the Greenway's wider green infrastructure and landscape objectives, as detailed in the Preliminary Design Report submitted with this application.

Land Use Zoning

The Proposed Development is located on lands predominantly zoned as ‘OS – Open Space’, the objective of which is to “Preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities” (Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029). The Proposed Greenway is consistent with this zoning objective.

Permitted in principle uses within the OS zoning include community facilities, open space and recreational/sports facilities, all of which are reflected in the multifunctional nature of the Proposed Development. The scheme will provide a high-quality public amenity and active travel corridor that facilitates walking, cycling and recreation, while enhancing access to and enjoyment of the Royal Canal corridor. In addition, the Greenway will strengthen connectivity between surrounding communities, public transport services, employment areas and recreational destinations, thereby contributing to the provision of accessible open space and sustainable mobility infrastructure in accordance with the zoning objective.

While the route is predominantly located within OS-zoned lands, limited sections of the Proposed Development intersect or adjoin lands zoned GB – Green Belt, HA – High Amenity, RA – Residential Area and RS – Residential. The compatibility of the Proposed Development with these zoning designations has been assessed having regard to the zoning objectives and land use matrix contained within the Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029 and is summarised in Table 5-3 below.

Figure 5-6 shows the interaction with land-use zonings along the route. Table 5-3 outlines how the Proposed Greenway development aligns with the relevant zoning objectives.

Section 1

In addition to the predominant OS – Open Space zoning, lands surrounding Section 1 of the Proposed Development are designated as GB – Green Belt and HA – High Amenity. Lands adjoining the route to the south-east are primarily zoned HA – High Amenity and GB – Green Belt. A small section at the western extent of Section 1, near Allenswood and the Kildare County Council boundary, is located at the southern boundary of the Green Belt zone. The Proposed Development also passes through a small area of RA – Residential Area zoned land near Hansfield Wood. In addition, a small section of the route near St Joseph's Close passes through lands zoned RS – Residential. The northern boundary of a small section of Section 1 adjoins lands within the Barnhill Local Area Plan (LAP 13A) area.

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Section 2

Lands surrounding Section 2 are predominantly zoned OS – Open Space, with adjoining areas also zoned RA – Residential Area, RS – Residential, and HA – High Amenity. Limited sections of the route pass through lands zoned RA – Residential Area, most notably in the vicinity of Village Road, Porterstown.

The southern side of the route adjoins lands within the Kellystown Local Area Plan (LAP 13B) area. The northern side of Section 2 is adjacent to lands zoned TC – Town and District Centre and, in part, adjoins the Hansfield Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) lands.

Section 3

The study area surrounding Section 3 is predominantly zoned OS – Open Space, with surrounding lands largely designated for residential uses. The predominance of OS zoning along this section reflects the established role of the Royal Canal corridor as a strategic recreational, amenity and green infrastructure asset within the urban area.

Overall, the Proposed Development is compatible with the prevailing land use zoning pattern along the route and supports the objectives of the surrounding zoning designations, local planning frameworks and strategic growth areas through the provision of active travel, recreation and green infrastructure benefits

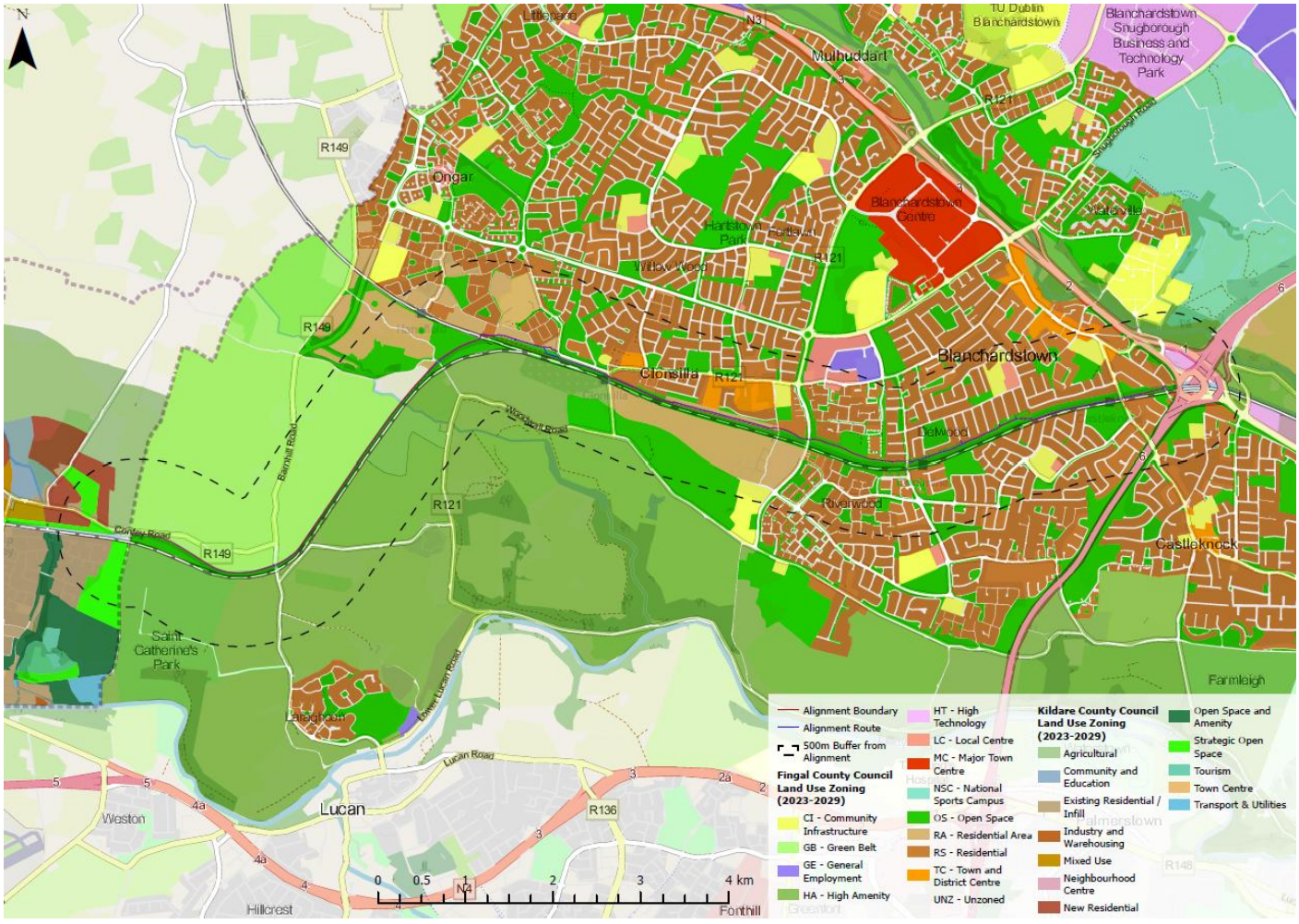

Figure 5-6 Zoning Map as per Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029

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Table 5-3 Interactions with adjoining land uses

Land Use Zoning Interactions - Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029		
Zoning Category	**Objective**	**Compatibility Assessment**
Open Space - OS	Preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities	The majority of the Proposed Development is located within lands zoned OS – Open Space. The Greenway reinforces the function of the Royal Canal corridor as a strategic recreational, amenity and green infrastructure asset, while providing a high-quality active travel route and public open space consistent with the zoning objective. Permitted in principle use classes that the Proposed Development aligns with include "community facility", "open space" and "recreational/sports facility".
Greenbelt – GB	Protect and provide for a Green Belt	A small section of the route adjoins lands zoned GB – Green Belt. The Proposed Development is fully compatible with the zoning objective in that it supports recreation, sustainable movement and connectivity while maintaining the open character and amenity value of the corridor. The limited interaction with GB lands occurs within an established transport and canal corridor and will not undermine the open character of the Green Belt. Permitted in Principle land uses including "community facility" and "recreational/sports facility" demonstrate that recreational and amenity-based uses are envisaged within this zoning.
High Amenity- HA	Protect and enhance high amenity areas	The Proposed Development adjoins lands zoned HA – High Amenity along parts of the route. The Greenway will improve access to and enjoyment of the Royal Canal corridor while respecting the landscape, environmental, biodiversity and heritage sensitivities that underpin the zoning designation. The design has been informed by detailed ecological, landscape and heritage assessments and includes mitigation measures to avoid, minimise and manage potential impacts. "Open Space" is identified as a Permitted in Principle use within the HA zoning category and the Proposed Development is considered compatible with the objective of protecting and enhancing areas of high amenity value.
Residential Area – RA	Provide for new residential communities subject to the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructure.	Limited sections of the Proposed Development pass through lands zoned RA – Residential Area. The Greenway provides strategic active travel and recreational infrastructure serving existing and future residential communities and will improve connectivity to schools, community facilities, employment areas and public transport services. Permitted in Principle uses for RA-zoned lands include "community facility" and "open space", both of which are consistent with the nature and function of the Proposed Development.
Residential - RS	Provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity.	The Proposed Development adjoins established residential communities and will enhance residential amenity through the provision of a safe and accessible walking and cycling route, improved connectivity and increased access to recreation and open space. Permitted in Principle uses within the RS zoning include "open space" and "community facility", both of which are consistent with the recreational and community function of the Proposed Development.

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Overall, while the Proposed Development is predominantly located within lands zoned OS – Open Space, its limited interaction with GB, HA, RA and RS lands is considered compatible with the objectives of those zoning designations. The Proposed Development does not conflict with the intended function of any zoning category and instead provides strategic active travel, recreation and green infrastructure benefits that support the achievement of the Development Plan's broader objectives for sustainable mobility, placemaking, recreation and environmental enhancement.

Old School House Masterplan, Clonsilla (2025)

The Old School House Masterplan, Clonsilla was prepared by Fingal County Council in accordance with Policy CSP7 of the Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029. The Masterplan establishes a long-term vision for the sustainable development of the residentially zoned lands adjoining the Royal Canal, centred on the restoration and active re-use of the protected Old School House building. The Masterplan promotes a coordinated pattern of development incorporating residential uses, community facilities, public open space, pedestrian and cycle connections, and enhanced access to the Royal Canal corridor. The delivery of the Royal Canal Urban Greenway is identified as a key element of the overall vision, supporting sustainable mobility, recreation and connectivity within the area.

Hansfield Strategic Development Zone (SDZ)

The Hansfield Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) provides the statutory planning framework for the development of a major new residential and mixed-use community in Dublin 15, centred on Hansfield Railway Station. The SDZ promotes a transit-oriented pattern of development comprising new homes, schools, community facilities, neighbourhood services, employment uses, parks and open spaces supported by high-quality public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure. A key objective of the Planning Scheme is the creation of a well-connected and sustainable urban community, with strong emphasis on active travel, public realm, green infrastructure and integration with surrounding neighbourhoods. Sections of the proposed Royal Canal Urban Greenway adjoin the Hansfield SDZ area and support the SDZ's objectives by enhancing strategic walking and cycling connectivity and improving access to existing and future communities.

Barnhill Local Area Plan (LAP 13A)

The Barnhill Local Area Plan provides a framework for the sustainable development of lands at Barnhill, Barberstown and Passifyoucan in Dublin 15. The Plan promotes the creation of a connected residential community supported by green infrastructure, open space, community facilities and high-quality walking and cycling connections. The LAP places particular emphasis on integrating development with the Royal Canal corridor, protecting environmental assets and delivering a coherent green infrastructure network. The western section of the Proposed Development adjoins the Barnhill LAP area and supports the Plan's objectives for sustainable movement, recreation and green infrastructure.

Kellystown Local Area Plan (LAP 13B)

The Kellystown Local Area Plan provides the statutory framework for the development of a new residential community in west Dublin 15. The Plan seeks to deliver housing, schools, community facilities, neighbourhood services, public open space and supporting infrastructure within a highly accessible and sustainable urban environment. A key objective of the LAP is the promotion of active travel and enhanced connectivity, including improved pedestrian and cycle links across the wider area. The Proposed Development interfaces directly with the Kellystown LAP area and supports the delivery of these objectives through the provision of strategic walking and cycling infrastructure along the Royal Canal corridor.

Clonsilla Framework Plan (LAP 13C)

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The Clonsilla Framework Plan has been prepared to guide the future development of Clonsilla as a vibrant and distinctive community focused on placemaking, accessibility and sustainable growth. The Framework Plan seeks to enhance the village centre, improve public realm quality, support active travel, strengthen community and recreational facilities, protect environmental assets and promote health and wellbeing. The Royal Canal and the proposed Royal Canal Urban Greenway is identified as important assets which can contribute to the area's identity, connectivity and recreational offering. The Proposed Development therefore supports the vision and objectives of the Framework Plan through the enhancement of active travel infrastructure and the canal corridor.

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6.0 Planning Assessment

6.1 Need for Development

The need for the proposed Royal Canal Urban Greenway is firmly established by a broad range of national, regional and local policy objectives relating to sustainable mobility, compact growth, climate action, recreation, tourism, public health and quality of life. The scheme represents a strategically important piece of active travel infrastructure that will make a significant contribution to the delivery of these objectives by providing a high-quality, safe, attractive and environmentally sensitive pedestrian and cycle route based on an integrated and sustainable transport network that is inclusive and accessible to all users.

The Proposed Development will deliver a major new amenity for local residents and for communities across Dublin 15, the wider Dublin Metropolitan Area and east Kildare, enhancing quality of life, promoting healthy and active lifestyles, facilitating sustainable travel choices and supporting social inclusion. The Greenway will strengthen connectivity between existing and planned residential areas, employment centres, schools, public transport services and recreational destinations, providing a viable alternative to private car use and helping to reduce transport-related emissions.

The need for the development is further reinforced by its role in implementing the objectives of the National Planning Framework, National Sustainable Mobility Policy, Climate Action Plan, Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways and the Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029.

As part of the wider Royal Canal Greenway and National Cycle Network, the scheme will also enhance access to the Royal Canal corridor as a significant recreational, environmental and heritage asset, while acting as a tourism attractor with associated economic benefits for the area. The Proposed Greenway therefore represents essential strategic infrastructure that will support the sustainable growth and long-term resilience of the Dublin Metropolitan Area while delivering substantial environmental, social and economic benefits.

The key objectives of the Proposed Development are as follows:

- **To deliver a high-quality, safe and accessible active travel corridor comprising a shared walking and cycling route that meets existing and future commuter and recreational demand.**
- **To transform the Royal Canal corridor into an attractive and welcoming public space, enhancing local amenity, recreation and quality of life, including the provision of a pocket park at Hansfield.**
- **To improve connectivity and permeability between communities, key destinations and public transport infrastructure, including rail stations, DART+ West and the wider regional active travel network.**
- **To promote walking and cycling as attractive, viable and sustainable transport choices, supporting healthier lifestyles, reducing reliance on private cars and contributing to reduced traffic congestion.**
- **To support tourism, local economic activity and community wellbeing through the provision of a high-quality Greenway and active travel facility.**
- **To protect and enhance the environmental, ecological, heritage and landscape value of the Royal Canal corridor, while respecting existing uses and operational requirements.**
- **To ensure the Greenway is planned, designed and delivered in accordance with relevant national guidance, statutory requirements and stakeholder objectives, including the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures identified through environmental assessment.**

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The need for the Proposed Development is further reinforced by the significant population growth that has occurred and is planned within the Royal Canal corridor and wider Dublin 15 area. A review of planning activity undertaken as part of this report identified 1,838 residential units granted planning permission within 500m of the route since 2020, in addition to substantial planned growth associated with the Hansfield SDZ, Barnhill Local Area Plan and Kellystown Local Area Plan areas The continued delivery of housing and population growth in these locations requires the parallel provision of high-quality active travel, recreation and green infrastructure in order to support sustainable communities, enhance accessibility and reduce reliance on private car travel. In this regard, the Proposed Development represents essential strategic infrastructure which will provide sustainable connectivity between existing and emerging communities, schools, employment locations, local services, public transport facilities and recreational amenities throughout the corridor.

There is a clear, compelling rationale for development of the Proposed Greenway along the Royal Canal. As demonstrated in Section 5 Policy – there is widespread support across a broad range of national, regional and local policy for quality Greenway transport corridors with recognition of the benefits for sustainable mobility, transport and accessibility, contribution to the climate agenda, economic benefits including for tourism, and as quality-of-life enablers, recreational and amenity assets.

6.2 Compatibility with Land Use Zoning Objectives

As set out in Section 5, the Proposed Development is consistent with the zoning objectives of the Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029. While the route traverses a range of land use zonings, it is primarily located within lands zoned OS (Open Space), where the objective is to preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities. The provision of a high-quality walking and cycling corridor, together with associated landscaping and public realm enhancements, is directly aligned with this objective and supports the amenity, movement, green infrastructure and connectivity functions envisaged across the wider zoning context. The scheme will enhance access to and enjoyment of the Royal Canal corridor, strengthen connections between communities and key destinations, and reinforce the canal's role as an important environmental, heritage and recreational asset. Accordingly, the Proposed Development is considered compatible with the surrounding land use context and the intended function of the zoned lands.

6.3 Socio-Economic and Community Benefits

Dublin 15 is an area experiencing significant growth and expansion. The Proposed Development will provide a major new active travel corridor that supports sustainable mobility and recreation while enhancing access to the amenity value of the Royal Canal and broadening opportunities for recreation and social interaction. Its delivery will support sustainable growth by providing an attractive alternative to private car travel and enhancing accessibility to public transport infrastructure, particularly the rail stations along the route.

Economy

Increased footfall and cycling activity will enhance the viability of local businesses and may support additional employment opportunities within the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. Increased visitor activity may also generate demand for ancillary services such as bicycle hire, repair facilities and guided tours.

The tourism offer of the area will be strengthened, with the Greenway functioning as a key destination and visitor attractor. This has the potential to increase visitor numbers and overnight stays, generating positive economic benefits for local hospitality and accommodation providers.

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Residential Amenity
The Proposed Development will deliver significant residential amenity benefits for existing and future communities in Castleknock, Coolmine, Clonsilla, Hansfield and the wider Dublin 15 area by providing a safe, attractive and accessible walking and cycling corridor connecting neighbourhoods with schools, employment areas, public transport facilities and recreational amenities. The scheme will substantially enhance access to the Royal Canal corridor as a recreational and open space resource while improving permeability and sustainable travel options for residents. The importance of the Greenway is further reinforced by the significant residential growth planned and permitted within the corridor, with substantial new housing development occurring within the study area. The Greenway will provide essential supporting infrastructure for these existing and future communities, promoting active lifestyles, reducing dependence on private car travel and contributing positively to quality of life, health and wellbeing.

Health and Wellbeing
The proposed Royal Canal Urban Greenway will make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of existing and future communities in Castleknock, Clonsilla, Coolmine, Hansfield and the wider Dublin 15 area by providing a safe, accessible and attractive route for walking, wheeling and cycling. The scheme will encourage increased levels of physical activity and active travel, supporting healthier lifestyles and improved wellbeing outcomes. In addition to its transport function, the Greenway will provide an important recreational and social amenity, creating opportunities for exercise, leisure and community interaction within a high-quality canal-side environment.

Safety
The proposed Royal Canal Urban Greenway will deliver a significant improvement in safety and user experience for pedestrians and cyclists. At present, many sections of the canal towpath are narrow, unsurfaced and inaccessible for a wide range of users, with particular constraints occurring within the Deep Sinking section between Porterstown and Castleknock, where the existing path is characterised by pinch points and steep canal-side embankments. These conditions limit accessibility and reduce the attractiveness of the route for everyday walking and cycling. The proposed development will address these deficiencies through the provision of a high-quality, purpose-built Greenway that delivers a safe, accessible and comfortable route for users of all ages and abilities.

Concerns relating to personal safety and the potential for anti-social behaviour, raised through the public consultation process, were considered during the design of the scheme. In response, the design seeks to maximise passive surveillance through improved visibility along the route, carefully located access points, and the provision of lighting in appropriate urban sections of the corridor. The scheme also incorporates boundary treatments, landscaping and other design measures to protect residential amenity while maintaining clear sightlines and an open, welcoming environment for users.

By providing a continuous and well-designed active travel corridor, improved access points, enhanced natural surveillance and a consistently high level of service, the scheme will promote safer walking and cycling for both recreational and commuter users while encouraging greater use of the Royal Canal corridor as a sustainable transport and amenity asset.

A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been undertaken in respect of the Proposed Development and is submitted with the application. The audit considers the safety implications of the proposed design, including at access points, crossings and interfaces with the existing road network.

Accessibility and Social Inclusion
The scheme has been subject to an Infrastructure Equality Audit undertaken in accordance with the National Transport Authority's Infrastructure Equality Guidance, which considered the needs of a broad range of users, including older persons, people with disabilities, families and children.

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The audit accompanies the application and should be read in conjunction with the Preliminary Design Report and associated drawings.

The proposed Royal Canal Urban Greenway will deliver significant accessibility and social inclusion benefits by providing a safe, high-quality and universally accessible walking and cycling route for people of all ages and abilities.

With 15.4% of Fingal's population aged 60 years and over and 19% of the population identifying as having a disability, the provision of inclusive and accessible public infrastructure is increasingly important (CSO, Census 2022). The Greenway has been designed in accordance with universal design principles, incorporating appropriate widths, accessible gradients, step-free access, signal-controlled toucan crossings, tactile paving, handrails and boundary treatments where required, and will provide opportunities for rest and recreation, including seating areas within the proposed Hansfield pocket park and at various points along the route (see Figure 6-1 which shows rest points along the route).

The scheme will improve access to local services, amenities, public transport and open spaces while creating opportunities for recreation, active travel and social interaction. Well-designed public spaces with high levels of activity, such as the Proposed Greenway, can help strengthen community networks, reduce social isolation and promote social cohesion.

The Proposed Development will also provide a safe and comfortable route connecting key destinations while maintaining users' proximity to the Royal Canal and its associated landscape and amenity value, creating an attractive and welcoming environment for children, older persons, people with disabilities and the wider community.

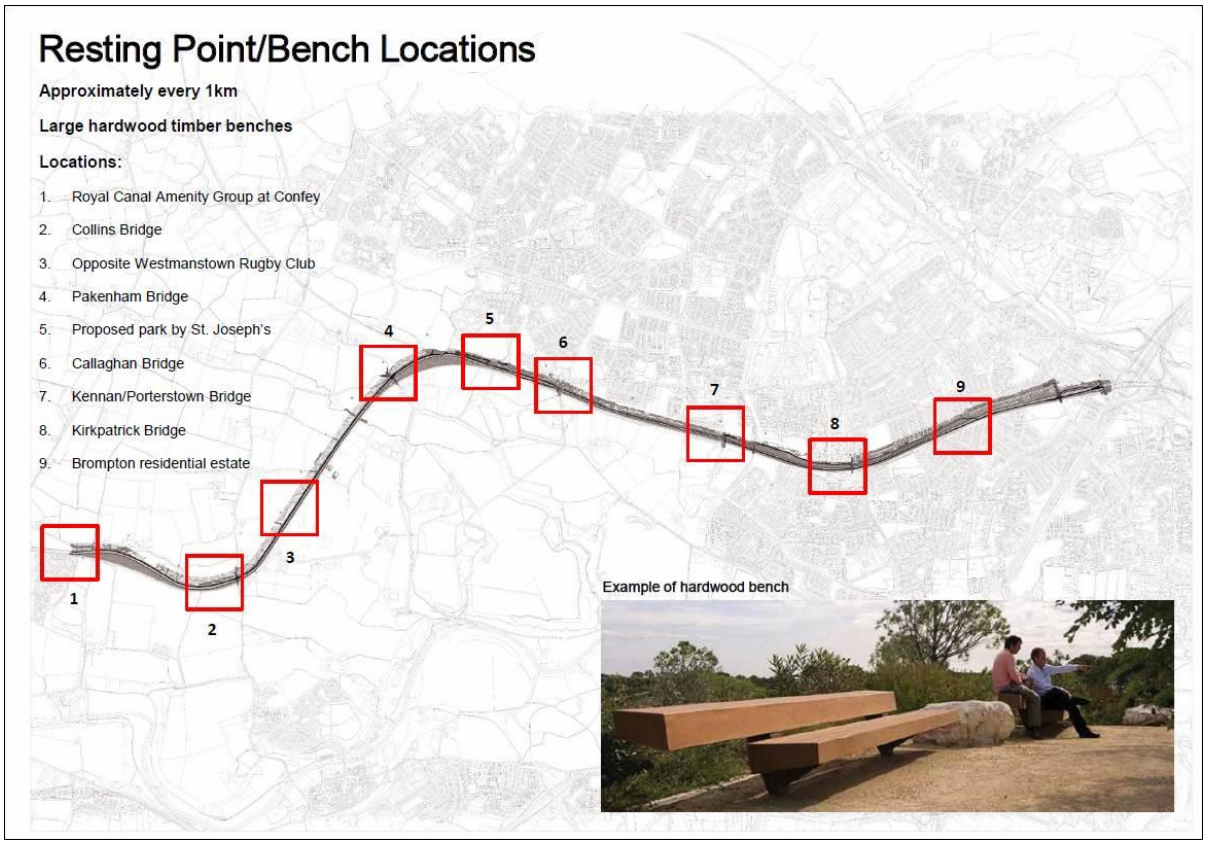

Figure 6-1 Resting points along the proposed route

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6.4 Urban Design, Public Realm and Structures

The Proposed Development will deliver a significant enhancement to the quality of the public realm along the canal corridor by transforming underutilised and inaccessible sections of the towpath into a high-quality, attractive and multifunctional public amenity.

The scheme will create a continuous and welcoming environment for walking and cycling, incorporating new landscaping, improved access points, seating and rest areas, and enhanced connections between surrounding residential communities and the Royal Canal.

New public lighting will be installed from Hansfield to the Old Navan Road (Talbot Bridge) (largely comprising Section 2 and 3), as detailed in the Preliminary Design Report prepared by DBFL Consulting Engineers and associated drawings.

The Preliminary Design Report identifies the key design standards and guidance that informed the Proposed Development, including DMURS (DMURS, 2019; National Transport Authority, 2023; TII, 2025), the Permeability Best Practice Guide (2015), the NTA Cycle Design Manual (2023), and TII's Rural Cycleway Design (Offline and Greenway) (DN-GEO-03047, 2025). These standards have guided the delivery of a safe, accessible and high-quality public realm.

Aside from the main sections of greenway, new structures are required at various locations along the route. These are detailed in the Preliminary Design Report, the Construction Methodology Report and associated drawings. In summary, the structures required include the following:

- Embankments and retaining structures particularly in the Hansfield area
- A portion of cantilevered boardwalk from Clonsilla Road Bridge to the west and Porterstown Road Bridge to the east.
- An elevated steel deck boardwalk at Dr. Troy Bridge and Delwood Area.
- Bridge structure crossing an existing quarry along the northern banks, referred to as Quarry Bridge.
- Landmark Bridge – steel bridge crossing the canal near Granard Bridge.
- Underpass beneath Castleknock Road on the southern side of the Granard Bridge.

The Proposed Development will be implemented subject to detailed engineering design and the mitigation measures arising from the environmental assessment process, as detailed in the EIAR accompanying this application. A Ground Investigation Report is also submitted in support of the proposed structural and earthworks elements of the scheme.

6.5 Connectivity and Accessibility

The Proposed Development forms part of the wider Royal Canal Greenway, a strategic national active travel corridor linking Dublin City to the River Shannon and ultimately the west of Ireland, while also facilitating future connections with the proposed Canal Loop Greenway. The 8.1km scheme will complete a critical missing section of the route, connecting the existing Kildare Greenway at the county boundary with the completed Ashtown Greenway at Talbot Bridge.

At a local level, the scheme will significantly improve connectivity and accessibility for communities across Dublin 15, including Clonsilla, Coolmine and Castleknock. The Greenway will provide a safe, attractive and largely traffic-free walking and cycling route linking residential areas with schools, public transport facilities, employment centres, recreational amenities and community services. The provision of 19 access points along the route will ensure convenient integration with surrounding neighbourhoods, with over 7,000 residents located within a five-minute walk of an access point (as per Census 2022 population figures) – Figure 6.2.

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The Proposed Development addresses a recognised deficiency in active travel infrastructure within the area, where many walking and cycling trips currently rely on the existing road network. While offering substantial recreational and leisure benefits, the Greenway will also function as an important strategic commuter corridor, improving access to rail stations and providing sustainable travel links to Dublin City Centre, Leixlip and Maynooth. In doing so, the scheme will support modal shift from private car use to walking and cycling, contributing to improved public health, enhanced connectivity, reduced transport-related emissions, improved air quality and noise reduction, while strengthening connections between local communities and the Royal Canal's natural, recreational and heritage assets.

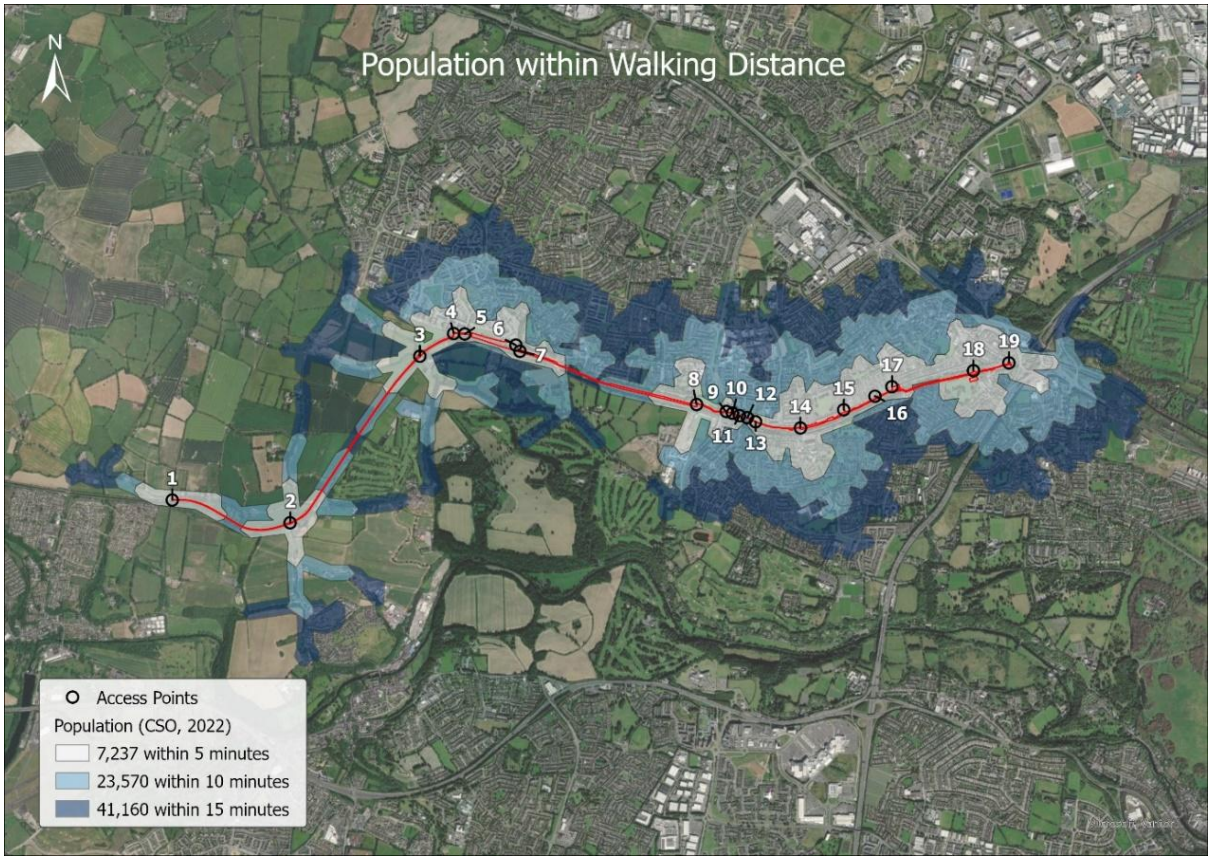

Figure 6-2 Population within walking distance (CSO, Census 2022)

6.6 Landscape and Visual Integration

The Landscape and Urban Realm Strategy for the Proposed Development has been prepared by Áit Urbanism + Landscape and forms an integral component of the overall scheme design. The landscape proposals have been developed to create a high-quality, attractive and multifunctional public realm that responds sensitively to the character of the Royal Canal corridor whilst enhancing its recreational, ecological and visual value. Wherever practicable, landscaped areas have been designed to perform multiple functions, incorporating engineering, ecological and amenity benefits through the integration of sustainable drainage features (SuDS), habitat enhancement measures, high-quality surface treatments, lighting and the careful design of structural elements.

The landscaping proposals are designed to integrate, where appropriate, with neighbouring lands enhancing accessibility and quality of the local environment for residents of existing and planned developments. Particular emphasis has been placed on enhancing key arrival points and areas of community activity such as Pakenham Bridge (Figure 6.3). Another key location is the approach to Hansfield (as shown in Figure 6.4), where a woodland planting strategy comprising native and naturalised species will strengthen landscape character and provide a distinctive sense of place. The

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proposals in this location incorporate a pocket park with seating and informal gathering spaces, creating opportunities for rest, recreation and social interaction for Greenway users and local residents.

In areas adjoining residential lands, planting and landscape interventions will also provide an important screening function, helping to safeguard and enhance residential amenity whilst creating an attractive interface between the Greenway and neighbouring communities.

To compensate for unavoidable vegetation removal associated with the development, the Landscape Plan includes significant new planting comprising a diverse mix of native and naturalised trees, woodland species, hedgerow planting and ecological enhancements which will contribute to increased canopy cover, habitat connectivity and the long-term resilience of the corridor. Collectively, these measures will transform the Royal Canal corridor into a high-quality linear park and public realm asset that supports recreation, active travel, biodiversity and placemaking objectives.

Further details of the proposed hard and soft landscaping measures, including planting schedules, boardwalk treatments and street furniture specifications, are contained within the accompanying Landscape Report and drawings. The landscape and visual effects of the scheme are assessed in detail in Chapter 10 of the EIAR accompanying this application.

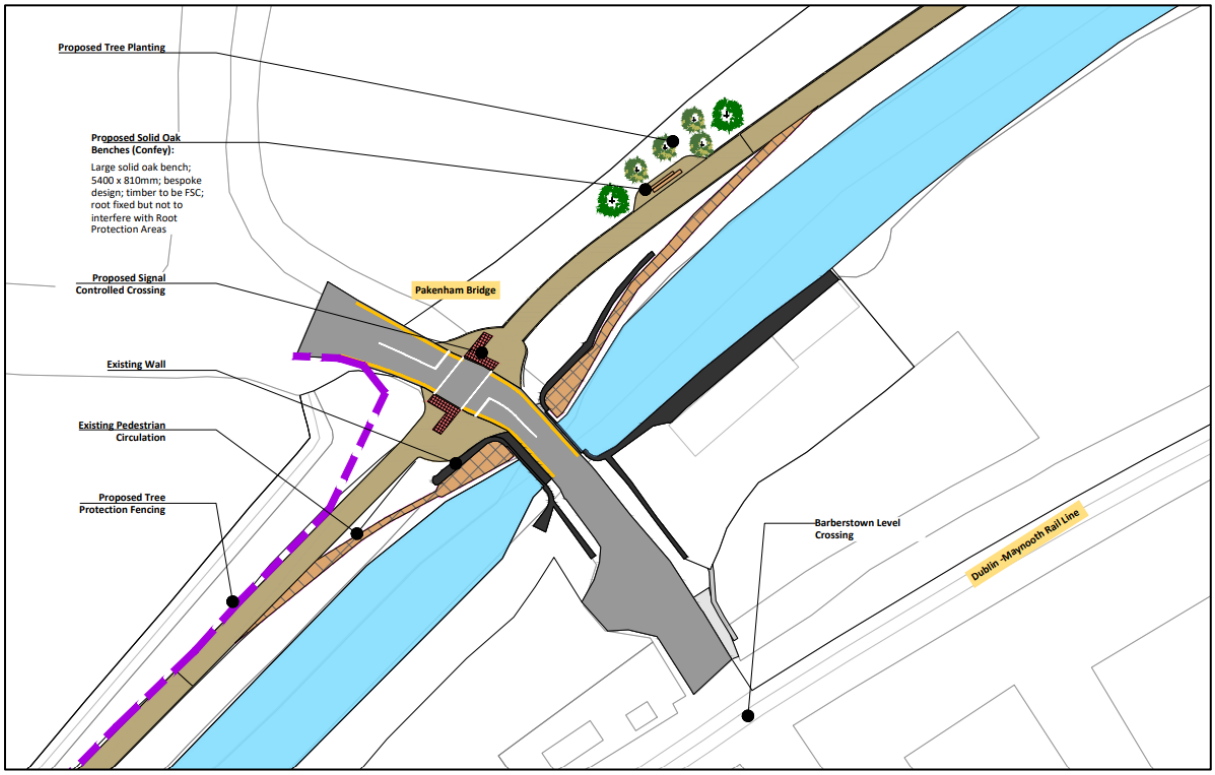

Figure 6-3 Proposed landscaping at Pakenham Bridge (Extract from Landscape Drawing No. 18FG01-DR-0212)

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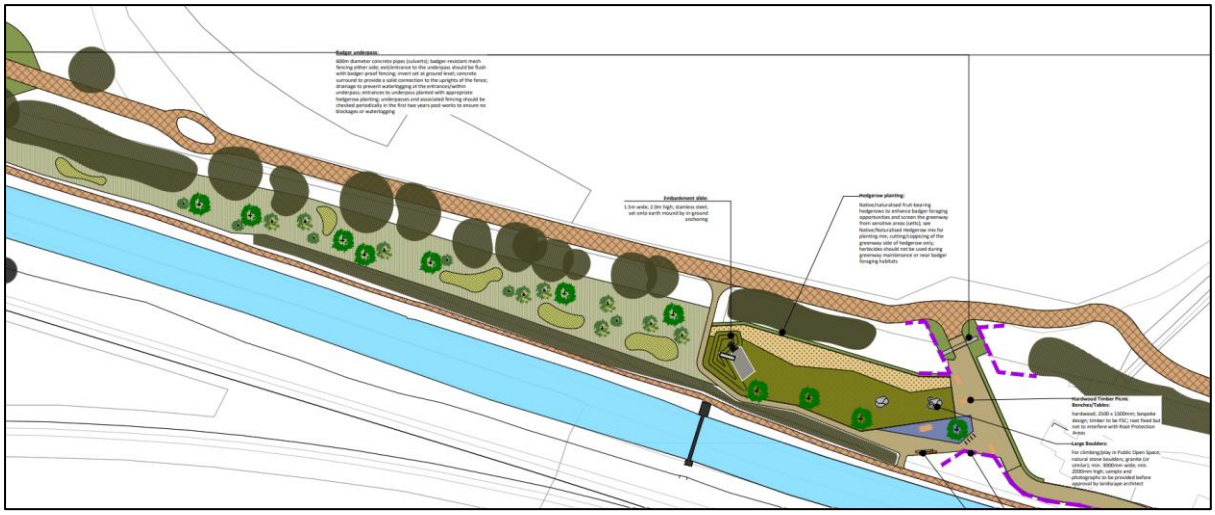

Figure 6-4 Proposed landscaping along route close to Hansfield (Extract from Landscape Drawing No. 18FG01-DR-0214)

The application is supported by an Arboricultural Report, Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement, which address the existing tree resource, anticipated impacts, tree protection requirements and proposed management measures. These documents should be read in conjunction with the Landscape Design Drawings, Tree Survey Drawings and Chapter 8 and Chapter 10 of the EIAR.

6.7 Climate and Sustainability

Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021) requires relevant bodies, including local authorities, to perform their functions in a manner consistent with the most recent approved climate action plan, the national climate objective, and the furtherance of that objective. As a public body within the meaning of s.15, Fingal County Council is subject to this statutory duty. The Proposed Development directly supports the Council's performance of its obligations under s.15 by providing active travel infrastructure that contributes to the decarbonisation of the transport sector in accordance with the sectoral emissions ceiling and carbon budget for the second carbon budget period (2026–2030).

The Proposed Development will make a significant contribution to climate action and sustainability objectives by encouraging a shift towards active and sustainable transport modes and reducing reliance on private car travel. The scheme will provide a safe, attractive and accessible alternative for everyday commuting and recreational journeys, supporting reductions in transport-related greenhouse gas emissions while contributing to improved air quality and healthier lifestyles.

The Proposed Development incorporates sustainable design principles through the integration of green infrastructure, native planting and sustainable drainage measures, which will contribute to climate resilience, biodiversity and improved surface water management.

The proposal is therefore consistent with the objectives of the National Planning Framework, Climate Action Plan, National Sustainable Mobility Policy and the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy, all of which seek to prioritise active travel and support the transition to a low-carbon future. Furthermore, the environmental assessments undertaken as part of the EIAR conclude that the scheme will deliver significant positive effects in relation to population and human health through increased opportunities for active travel and recreation (as set out in Chapter 13 Population and Human Health). In addition, Chapter 6 (Climatic Factors) identifies the scheme as supporting national and regional climate mitigation

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objectives through the promotion of sustainable transport and associated reductions in future transport emissions.

6.8 Biodiversity

The Proposed Development has been developed through an iterative design and environmental assessment process which has sought to avoid, minimise and mitigate potential effects on biodiversity and ecological receptors associated with the Royal Canal corridor.

A detailed assessment of biodiversity and ecological effects is provided in Chapter 8 of the EIAR. Biodiversity considerations have informed the design and alignment of the Proposed Development through route selection, habitat retention and the incorporation of embedded mitigation measures. Chapter 8 identifies the potential effects of the Proposed Development on designated sites, habitats, flora, fauna and protected species and sets out the mitigation, monitoring and licensing measures applicable to the Proposed Development. Chapter 8 is informed by extensive habitat and species surveys undertaken between 2022 and 2026, including surveys relating to bats, otter, badger, breeding birds, freshwater molluscs, Glutinous Snail and aquatic macroinvertebrates.

A derogation licence has been applied for from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in respect of the identified otter holt located within the zone of influence of the proposed works. The Proposed Development will be implemented in accordance with the requirements of that licence and any associated mitigation, monitoring and ecological supervision measures.

Biodiversity matters have been comprehensively assessed through the EIAR process and should be read in conjunction with the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and supporting ecological documentation submitted with the application.

6.9 Archaeology, Architectural and Cultural Heritage

A detailed assessment of the potential effects of the Proposed Development on archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage is provided in Chapter 9 of the EIAR. The assessment considers the Royal Canal, associated locks, bridges and canal infrastructure, together with nearby recorded monuments, Protected Structures and cultural heritage assets associated with the Royal Canal corridor, including the Royal Canal Way and National Famine Way. Chapter 9 concludes that, following the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, the Proposed Development will not give rise to significant adverse residual effects on the archaeological, architectural or cultural heritage resource. The assessment further concludes that the scheme will enhance public access to, appreciation of and engagement with the Royal Canal corridor and its associated heritage assets, while protecting their special interest and significance.

6.10 Land Acquisition and Property Requirements

The Proposed Development has been developed through an iterative route selection and design process which sought, where practicable, to avoid or minimise impacts on existing land uses, private property interests and residential amenity. Alternatives considered included a range of route alignments, design solutions and access arrangements, with land acquisition, impacts on residential properties, land use character and future development potential forming key assessment criteria within the route options appraisal process. The preferred route was selected having regard to environmental, engineering, safety, accessibility, heritage, ecological and land use considerations.

Notwithstanding these design refinements, limited land acquisition is required to facilitate the delivery of the Proposed Development. Land acquisition will be progressed separately to the Section 51 approval process through the statutory compulsory acquisition procedures available under Section 52 of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended), which applies the provisions of Part XIV of the Housing Act 1966 (as amended) for the acquisition of land required for road development.

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In total, approximately **1.36 ha** of land will be permanently acquired, together with approximately **0.21 ha** of land required on a temporary basis to facilitate construction works, boundary treatments and tie-in works. Full details of the land requirements are provided in Chapter 17 of the EIAR and the accompanying land acquisition drawings and schedules.

The Proposed Development also requires the removal of two existing Fingal County Council-owned dwellings (not subject to compulsory acquisition) and associated ancillary structures in the Hansfield area to facilitate the preferred route alignment and the delivery of the associated greenway and pocket park infrastructure. Ancillary accommodation works, including localised alterations to boundary treatments and streetscape infrastructure, will also be required in certain locations as part of the Proposed Development.

The requirement for these acquisitions and demolitions arises from the need to provide a continuous, safe and accessible active travel corridor while avoiding more significant impacts on the Royal Canal corridor, environmentally sensitive areas, residential lands, the operational railway corridor and other identified constraints. Alternative route options and design solutions were considered during the route selection process; however, they performed less favourably having regard to the overall environmental, engineering, land use, accessibility and safety objectives of the scheme.

The necessity for land acquisition has therefore been minimised as far as practicable through the design development process. The resulting land requirements are considered proportionate to the strategic objectives of the Proposed Development and the public benefits arising from the delivery of a continuous active travel and recreational corridor along the Royal Canal. Details of the assessment of land acquisition, land use and property effects are set out in Chapter 17 of the EIAR.

6.11 Services, Utilities, Drainage and Flood Risk

The Preliminary Design Report prepared by DBFL Consulting Engineers, identifies potential interactions with existing utility infrastructure along the route and sets out the design approach for accommodating these services, including the euNetworks strategic fibre network, electricity, water, foul and surface water drainage, gas and telecommunications infrastructure. It also provides information on the sustainable urban drainage strategy based on SuDS principles.

A detailed assessment of utilities and other material assets is also provided in Chapter 16 of the EIAR. The assessment identifies existing utility infrastructure within and adjacent to the Proposed Development. While a number of utility crossings and interfaces occur along the route, particularly at bridge locations, the majority of services are located within the adjacent road network. Chapter 16 concludes that there will be no significant residual impacts on utilities during either the construction or operational phases of the Proposed Development.

Chapter 12 (Water) of the EIAR presents the hydrological and hydrogeological assessment of the Proposed Development, identifying potential impacts arising during the construction and operational phases, the mitigation measures required to address those impacts, and the residual effects following mitigation.

A Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment has also been prepared and accompanies the application. The assessment considers the interaction of the Proposed Development with the identified flood risk environment and should be read in conjunction with the Water Framework Directive Assessment, the Preliminary Design Report and Chapter 12 of the EIAR.

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7.0 Statement of Effects on Environment and European Sites

7.1 Environmental Impact Assessment

The requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment is mandatory on specified project types which have a high likelihood of impacting the receiving environment. These projects are listed in detail in the Annex I to the EIA Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 (codifying Directive 85/337/EEC), as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 referred to as the EIA Directive). The EIA Directive is transposed in Ireland through sector-specific legislative regimes. For the Planning and Development Act regime, Directive 2014/52/EU is transposed by the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018. For the Roads Act regime, the relevant transposing instrument is the European Union (Roads Act 1993) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 (S.I. No. 279 of 2019).

Additionally, for the purpose of road development, the EIA Directive has been transposed into Irish legislation by the Roads Act, 1993 (as amended), the Roads Regulations 1994 (S.I. No. 119 of 1994, as amended) and the European Union (Roads Act 1993) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 (S.I. No. 279 of 2019). Section 50 and Section 51 of the Roads Act provide the legal basis and thresholds for EIAR preparation and EIA procedure for road developments.

The threshold for EIA, is set out in Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994 (Road development prescribed for the purposes of S.50(1)(a) of the Roads Act, 1993), as follows:

> *"The construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realignment or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500 metres or more in length in an urban area; or*
> *The construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100 metres or more in length"*

The Proposed Development includes the Landmark Bridge between Kirkpatrick Bridge and Granard Bridge in 'Section 3'. The bridge will be approximately 235 metres in overall length, with a maximum single span of approximately 30 metres. As its overall length exceeds 100 metres, the bridge meets the threshold prescribed under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations 1994.

In any event, having regard to the nature, scale and location of the Proposed Development and the potential for significant effects on the receiving environment, Fingal County Council determined that the Proposed Development should be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment.

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) therefore accompanies this application. The EIAR identifies, assesses and evaluates the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development, and sets out the measures required to avoid, reduce or mitigate those effects. A list of environmental topics covered in the EIAR is set out in Table 7-1.

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Table 7-1 List of EIAR Chapters

Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	Background to the Proposed Development
Chapter 3	Policy Context
Chapter 4	Alternatives Considered
Chapter 5	Air Quality
Chapter 6	Climatic Factors
Chapter 7	Noise & Vibration
Chapter 8	Biodiversity
Chapter 9	Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage
Chapter 10	Landscape & Visual
Chapter 11	Land, Soils & Geology
Chapter 12	Water
Chapter 13	Population and Human Health
Chapter 14	Material Assets: Traffic and Transportation
Chapter 15	Material Assets: Waste Management
Chapter 16	Material Assets: Utilities
Chapter 17	Material Assets: Land Use and Property
Chapter 18	Interactions
Chapter 19	Summary of Mitigation and Monitoring Measures

The EIAR has considered the likely direct and indirect, significant, effects of the proposed project on the receiving environment. Mitigation measures are included to reduce impacts on the environment, where considered necessary. Mitigation measures have also been incorporated into the design of the Proposed Development to avoid or reduce the effects on the environment, as appropriate.

The EIAR concludes that the principal adverse effects of the Proposed Development will arise during construction and will generally be temporary and localised, including effects associated with construction traffic, noise and vibration, dust, vegetation and habitat removal, earthworks, water protection, waste generation, utility interfaces and temporary disturbance to adjoining land uses and amenity. These effects will be managed through the embedded design measures and the mitigation and monitoring commitments set out in the individual EIAR chapters, the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan and Chapter 19 of the EIAR.

During operation, the Proposed Development will provide long-term positive effects in relation to active travel, accessibility, recreation, population and human health, connectivity and sustainable mobility. The EIAR also identifies residual effects associated with particular environmental receptors, including local biodiversity and landscape and visual effects, which are assessed in the relevant specialist chapters. Cumulative effects with existing, permitted and reasonably foreseeable projects, together with interactions between environmental factors, have been assessed within the individual chapters and consolidated in Chapter 1, 18 and 19 of the EIAR.

Accordingly, the findings of the EIAR demonstrate that the likely environmental effects of the Proposed Development have been identified and assessed and that appropriate measures have been incorporated to avoid, prevent, reduce and, where appropriate, offset adverse effects.

7.2 Appropriate Assessment

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, as transposed by Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), requires that a plan or project not directly connected with the management of a European Site be screened for Appropriate Assessment.

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An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, prepared by JBA Consulting Engineers and Scientists Ltd., accompanies this application. The screening assessment considered the potential for likely significant effects on European sites, both alone and in combination with other plans or projects, having regard to the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites. The assessment concludes, on the basis of objective scientific information, that the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site. Accordingly, the report concludes that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement are not required.

The Appropriate Assessment screening determination is a matter for the competent authority under section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), as applied to development under section 51 of the Roads Act 1993.

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8.0 Conclusion

The proposed Royal Canal Urban Greenway is strategic active travel infrastructure that will deliver significant and wide-ranging benefits at local, regional and national level. The scheme responds directly to Ireland's policy objectives for sustainable mobility, compact growth, climate action, public health, accessibility, and tourism, and aligns with the national, regional and local planning policies addressed in Section 5, including the National Planning Framework, the National Cycle Network Plan, the Climate Action Plan, the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, and the Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029.

Extending for approximately 8.1km, the Greenway will provide a high-quality, safe, attractive and accessible walking and cycling corridor connecting communities across Dublin 15 and beyond. It will enhance permeability between residential areas, schools, employment centres, transport hubs and recreational amenities while offering a viable, low carbon alternative to private car use. The scheme will also strengthen access to the Royal Canal as an environmental and heritage asset, while respecting its ecological sensitivities through carefully considered design and mitigation.

The project has been informed by a multi-criteria route options assessment, extensive consultation with the public, landowners, statutory bodies and key stakeholders, and detailed environmental and engineering assessments. The design minimises impacts on landowners, environmental features and heritage assets, while delivering substantial community gain through improved safety, amenity, recreation enhancements, and integration with existing and future transport infrastructure.

Overall, the Proposed Greenway will play a transformative role in supporting sustainable travel, improving health and wellbeing, enhancing local identity and landscape quality, and contributing to the long-term resilience and attractiveness of Dublin 15 and the wider region.

Having regard to the planning policy context, the findings of the EIAR and Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening, and the significant public benefits arising from the scheme, it is considered that the Proposed Development will contribute positively to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and that approval for the Proposed Development should be granted.

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