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**Proposed Derryadd Wind Farm
Amenity Plan**



January 2019

BORD^{NA}MÓNA
Naturally Driven

Table of Contents

1 The Process 2

2 The Strategic Context – Amenity and Tourism 3

3 The Planning Application 11

3.1 The Opportunity 11

3.2 The Amenity Plan – three distinct and linked walking/cycling loops 11

3.3 In Summary 15

Appendix A

Detail of Derryadd Amenity Layout

1 The Process

Deirdre Black Associates were engaged by Bord na Móna to assess the potential for amenity use of the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm site in Co. Longford and to prepare an Amenity Plan for the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm.

A number of steps fed into the preparation of this report:

1. An initial familiarisation meeting with Bord na Móna to understand the technical, geo-technical, landscape, social, wider context and historic aspects of the site, as well as an update on the consultations to date with the local community.
2. Preparation and circulation of a number of amenity specific questions to the Derryadd Community Engagement Forum;
 - What kind of access to the bog have the local communities enjoyed to date (physical and visual) – e.g. turf cutting, walking parts of the site, views and viewpoints etc.?
 - Where are the best views of the landscape?
 - Are there any particular routes through the site that people remember being used historically?
 - Are the walks along the Royal Canal being well used, what are the most popular parts?
 - What places would benefit from being linked with walking routes?
 - Where would looped walks be most used by local people?
 - Are there any particular locations that should be avoided when considering walking routes?
 - Are there any other activities that local people would like to see happen on the site?
3. A number of detailed responses were received, covering topics in relation to access and trails, facilities, tourism and recreation project ideas, opportunities arising from other nearby tourism projects and landscape restoration. These ideas informed the preparation of a draft Amenity Plan.
4. A draft Amenity Plan was presented to the Community Engagement Forum on 28th March 2017 in the Bord na Móna Mounddillon Works Offices near Lanesborough. A discussion followed and the comments raised were incorporated into this final version of the Amenity Plan.
5. A network of walking and cycling routes through the application site are set out in this report as part of the planning application. Consultation with the Community Engagement Forum generated amenity ideas for various locations within and around the proposed wind farm site and it is envisaged that other amenity related projects are potentially feasible, should the planning application be successful.

2 The Strategic Context – Amenity and Tourism

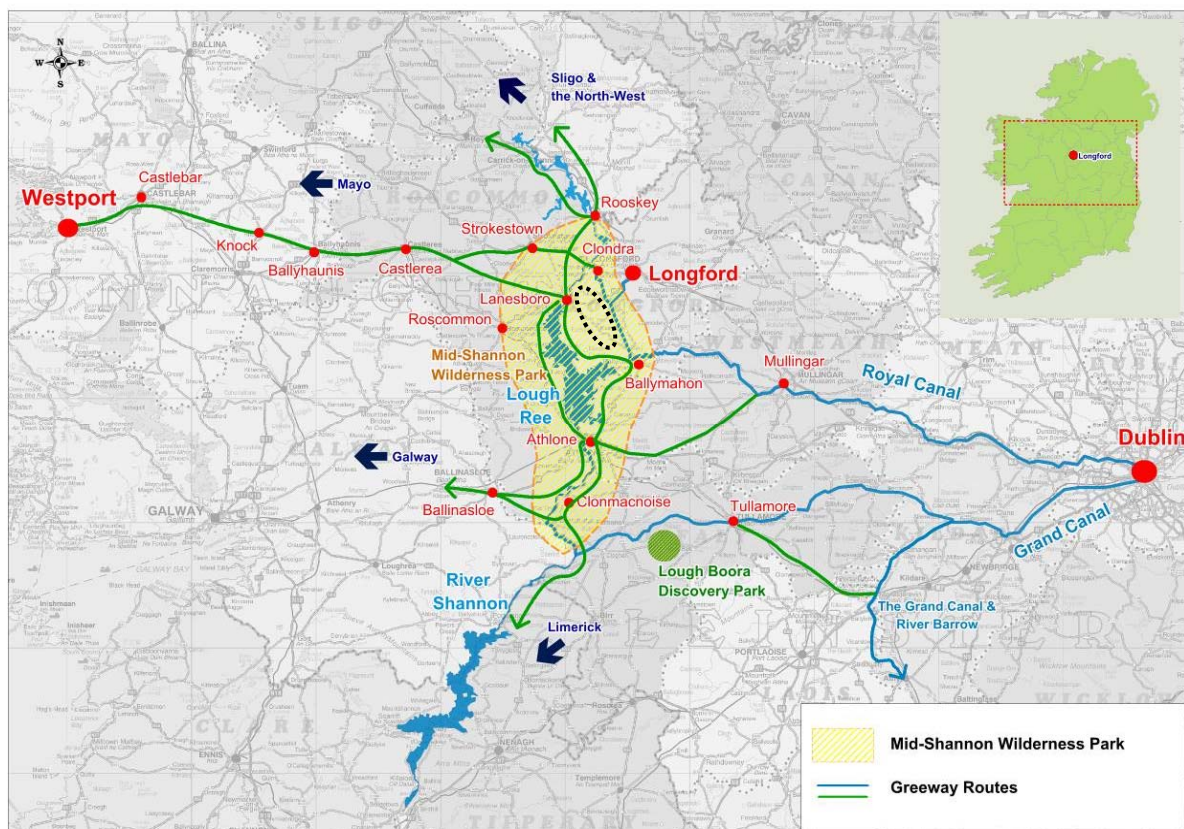
The Derryadd Wind Farm site is located within a broader context of existing and emerging amenity and tourism infrastructure. The Shannon and its hinterland are an established and growing tourism and amenity resource and the new national tourism experience brand for the Midlands, *Ireland's Hidden Heartlands*, being progressed by Fáilte Ireland brings a new focus to the river, its lakes and lakeshores and the walks and trails through the region.

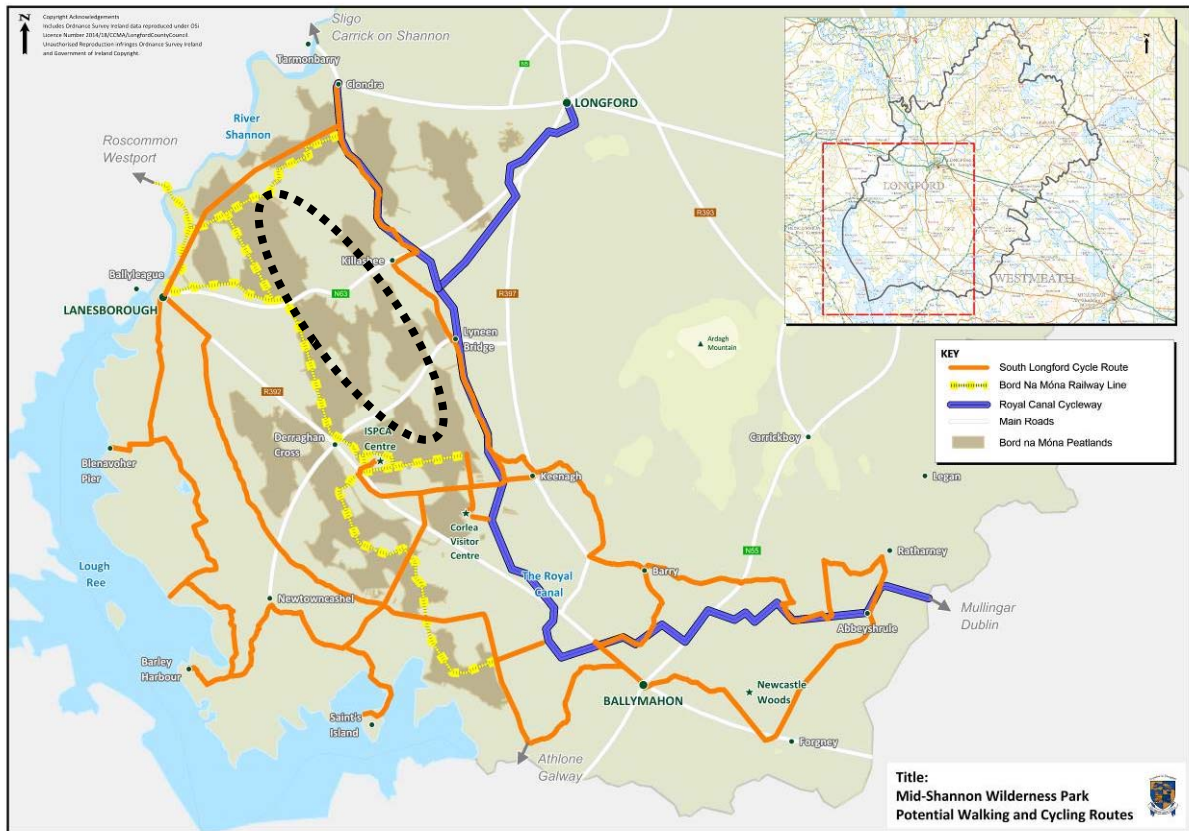
Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park

The Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park project forms part of the strategic statutory planning for Co. Longford and is described in Annex 6 of the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021.

Potential walking and cycling routes have been identified as part of this project which pass through the Derryadd Wind Farm site – the current Wilderness Park proposals suggest the use of the existing bog railway systems within the site. Many of these railways are still in use as part of peat harvesting operations, but will potentially become available for amenity purposes in the longer term as peat extraction reduces over the coming years.

The proposed Derryadd Wind Farm site in the context of the Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park is indicated by a dashed oval. As can be seen below, the wind farm site has the potential to form key links across cutaway peatland, connecting settlements and forming loops off the longer distance Greenway and Blueway network.





Current proposals put forward by Longford County Council for potential walking and cycling routes across the Bord na Móna landholdings within and around the proposed wind farm site

In summary - the proposed access roads for the wind farm have the potential to fulfil the off-road connectivity aspirations of the Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park, connecting with existing walking and cycling routes and opening up access to peatland landscape to local communities and visitors.



Walking and cycling routes along wind farm access roads at Bord na Móna's Mountlucas Wind Farm, Co. Offaly

Corlea Visitor Centre

A visitor centre has been developed immediately to the south of the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm site, telling the story and showing preserved remains of the ancient bog boardwalk discovered at Corlea. A short walk leads from the centre across the bog on a modern boardwalk. Further funding was received in 2017 and a new walkway has recently been installed by Bord na Móna.

The Corlea Visitor Centre features on a number of itineraries on Fáilte Ireland's *Ireland's Ancient East* website.

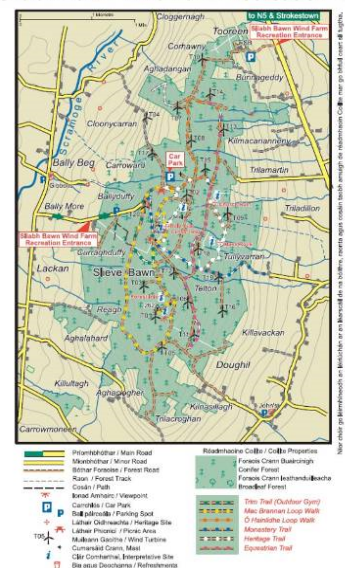


Slieve Bawn

Sliabh Bawn Power DAC (a JV project between Bord na Móna and Coillte) has developed a series of walks at Sliabh Bawn Wind Farm in County Roscommon, to the north west of the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm. The project includes a trim trail for fitness, an equestrian trail, looped walks, a raised viewing platform, additional car parking and a new picnic area and amenity works.



Sliabh Bawn Wind Farm Recreation Plan



Ireland's Regional Experience Brands



Ireland's Hidden Heartlands is the recently launched experience brand for the Midlands with the Shannon and Beara Breifne Way as key itineraries and a focus on being “active in nature”.

The *Ireland's Ancient East* marketing initiative uses Ireland's layers of history, themed into accessible stories and a series of suggested itineraries to promote the eastern part of the country. The Corlea trackway currently features as part of suggested itineraries.



Longford Tourism

The Longford County Tourism Statement of Strategy and Work Programme 2017-2022, sets out the strategic approach to developing tourism in the county.

As well as the county wide plans, specific attractions are also planned for the near future. A new Distillery and Visitor Centre is planned for Lanesborough to open in early 2019. The construction of a new Centre Parcs in the county will also bring visitors to the area.

Other walks and cycles

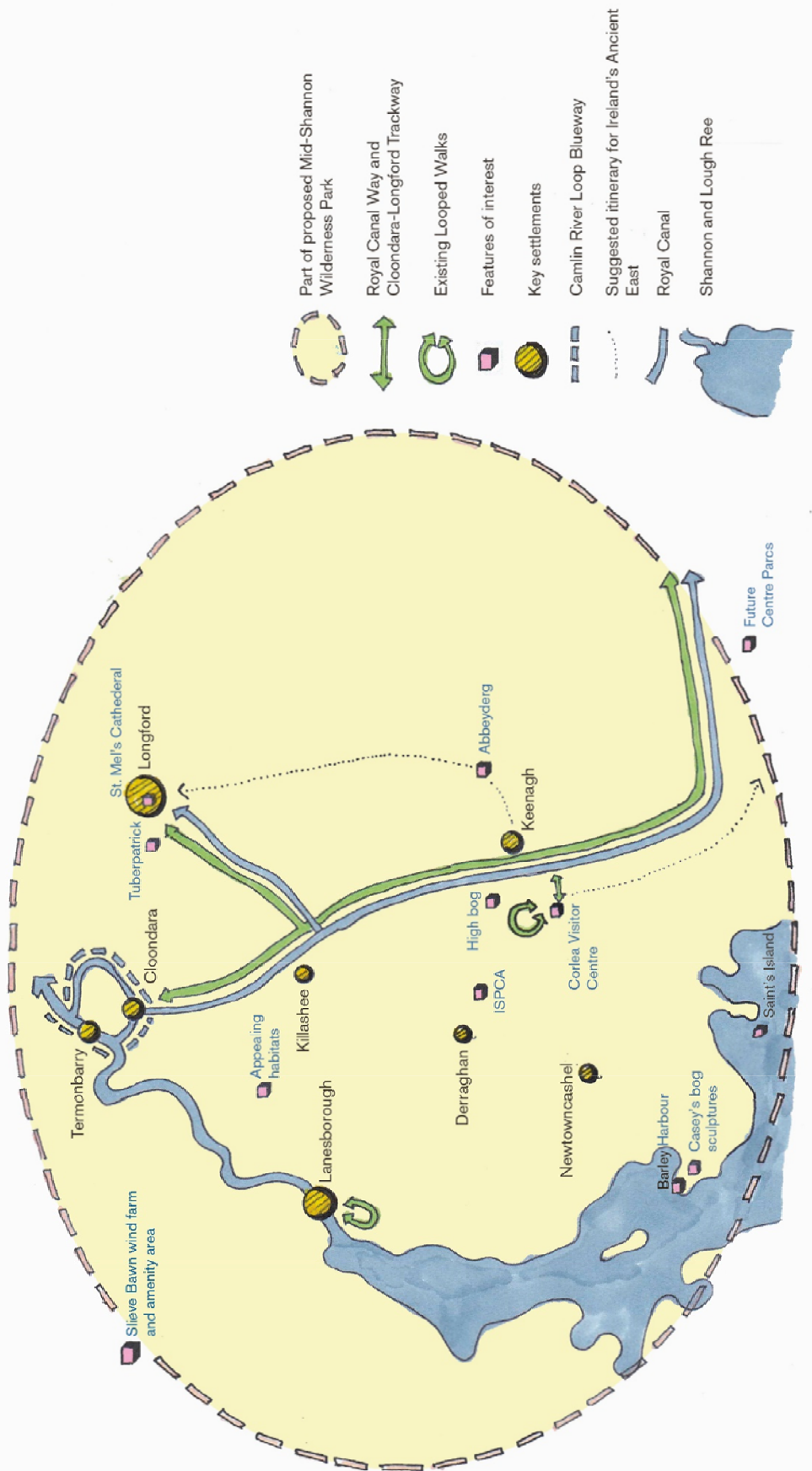
A number of way-marked local walks such as the Commons North Woodland Walk south of Lanesborough provide amenity to local communities. The South Longford Cycle route is signed along roads in the vicinity of the proposed wind farm and follows the routes of the Royal Canal Way in parts.

Other quiet local roads are used locally for walks as well as trails within community-led initiatives in the wider area such as at Kiltreevan Bog.

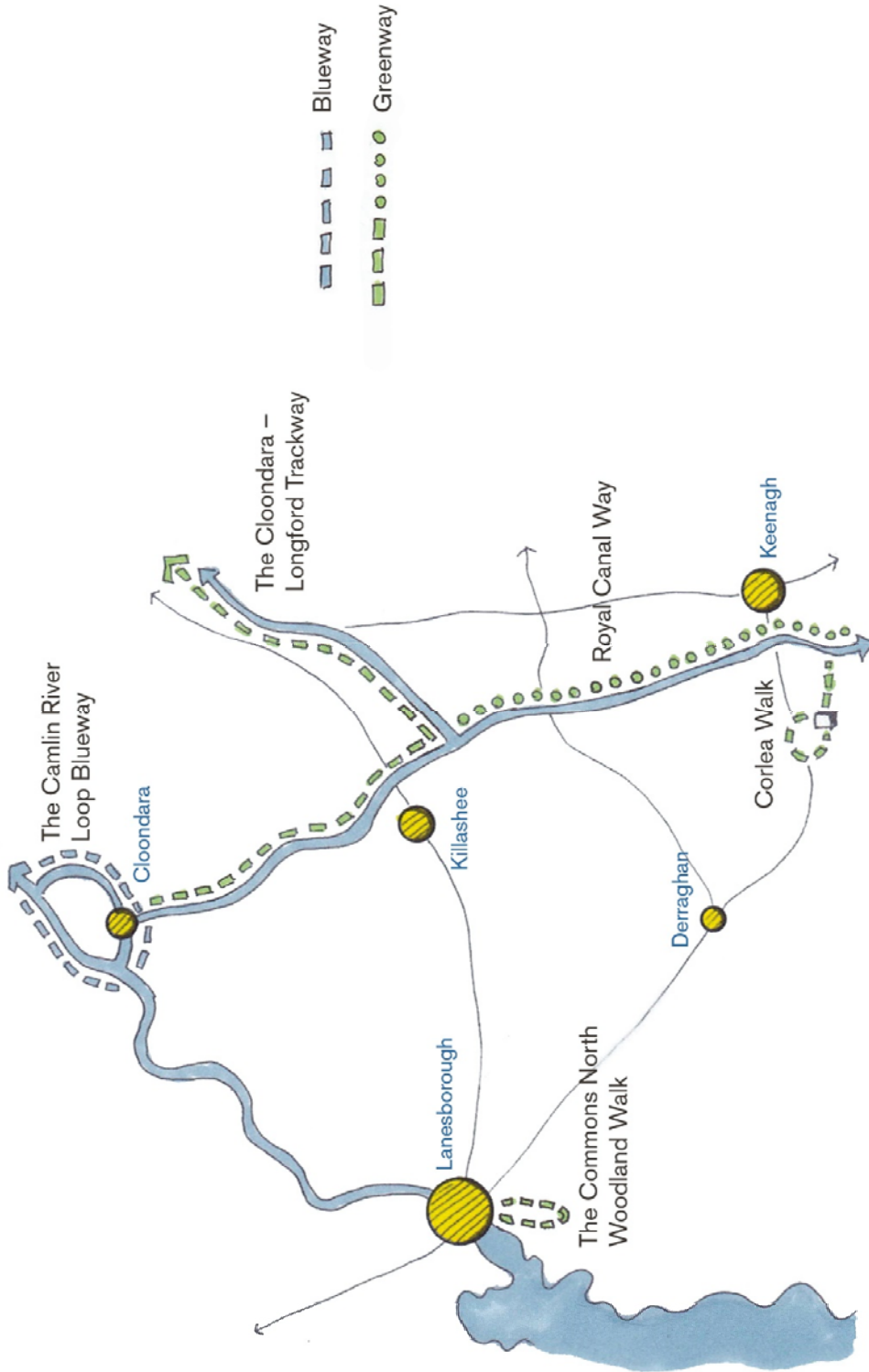


In summary – the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm site is very well positioned to feed into and support existing amenity infrastructure and initiatives in the surrounding area as illustrated in the following maps.

THE BIG PICTURE



THE EXISTING BLUEWAYS AND GREENWAYS



3 The Planning Application

3.1 The Opportunity

The proposal to construct a wind farm on the Derryadd, Derryrogue and Lough Bannow bogs, and more specifically, the construction of a network of roads to develop and access the wind farm provides an opportunity to:

- make accessible the history and natural features of the site,
- tie into the wider network of trails and greenways, and
- provide a new local amenity for off road walking and cycling.

3.2 The Amenity Plan – three distinct and linked walking/cycling loops

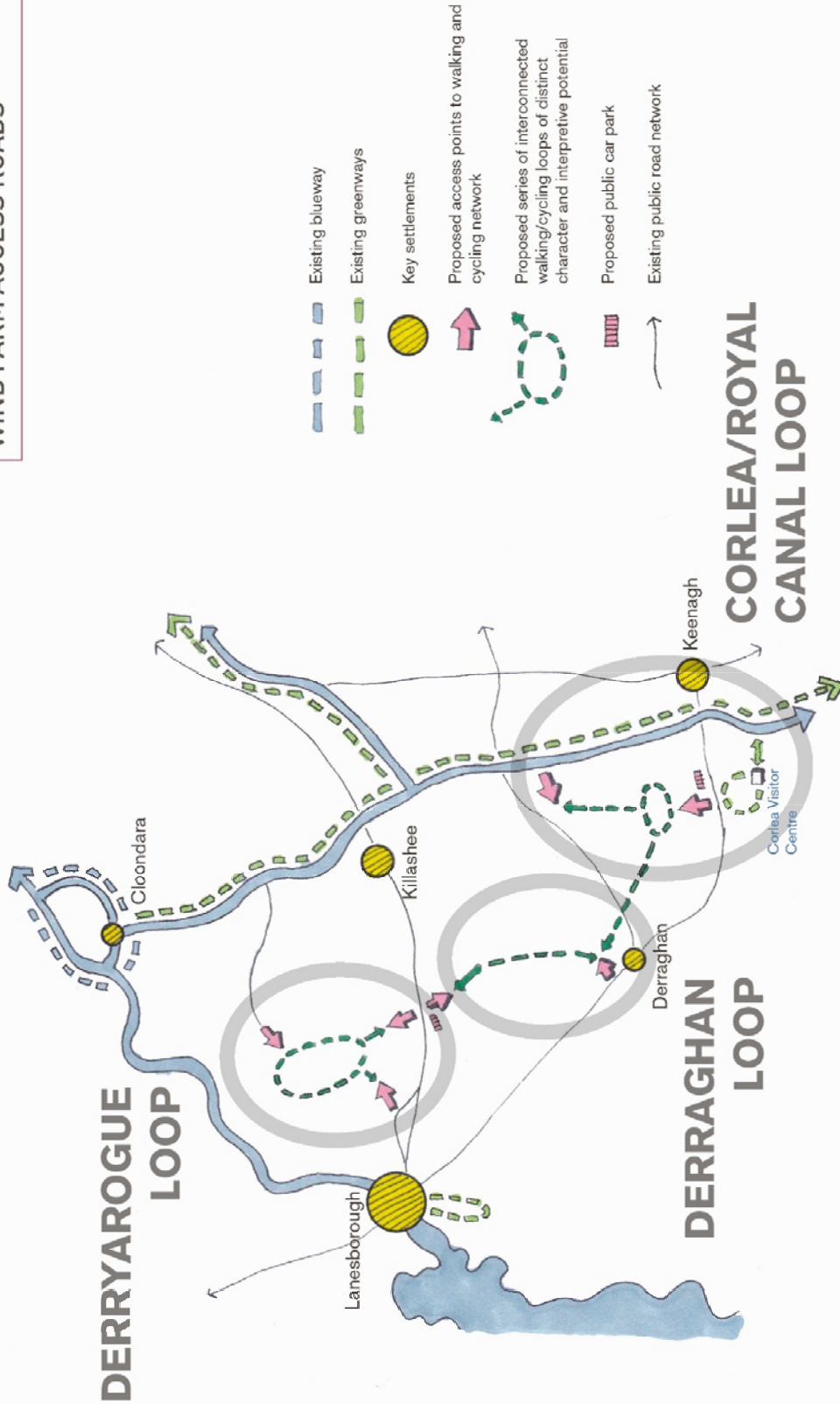
Following an analysis of the proposed wind farm layout, ideas generated by the Community Engagement Forum, feedback on the draft presentation of March 28th and an appraisal of the wider amenity and tourism context - three distinct walking and cycling loops are proposed as part of this wind farm planning application. An overview of the approach to amenity is set out in the following pages and the detailed layout of the Amenity Plan is set out in Appendix A.

This Amenity Plan focuses on the potential public access arising from the construction of the network of new wind farm access roads. In the longer term, it is recognised that there is potential to expand this network as Bord na Móna bogs come out of production and the bog railway network is less required for industrial purposes up to 2030.

This potential has been assessed in light of the broader greenway/blueway context and the fact that loops are more likely to be regularly used than longer distance linear connections. Connections with settlements are made where possible, in order to maximise the potential for local use and for enterprise opportunities.

In general, the internal network of wind farm access roads will be 6m wide and will be finished with clause 804 stone. The proposed additional roads which will facilitate connectivity to the internal network will be circa. 3m wide and will be constructed of 50mm quarry dust/fine stone material on 300mm of Clause 804 on geogrid/geotextile (if required). See Appendix A for details of Amenity Plan layout. Appropriate safety interventions at traffic/trail/canal interfaces would be required at detailed design stage.

**NEW WALKING AND CYCLING LINKAGES
AND LOOPS MADE POSSIBLE BY PROPOSED
WIND FARM ACCESS ROADS**



1. The Corlea/Royal Canal/Keenagh Loop

This loop connects the Corlea Visitors Centre and Royal Canal Way via an existing locally developed walk, then continues the connection into the Bord na Móna land holding and wind farm application site using the proposed wind farm access roads to pass near an area of high bog and areas of traditional turf-cutting to link back with the Royal Canal Way.

The route will facilitate views of intact, cutaway and rehabilitating peatland landscape and pass along an historic canal. An almost continuous public footpath connects a Royal Canal existing picnic site and car park to Keenagh village. A new car park is proposed at the wind farm site at this location for users of the loop. Appropriate safety interventions at traffic/trail interfaces would be required at detailed design stage. A shorter walking loop would be possible within the wind farm site at this location using the proposed access roads.

For users seeking a longer walk/cycle, this loop connects via wind farm roads to the Derraghan loop.

2. The Derraghan Loop

This trail can form part of a long distance walk/cycle from the Royal Canal, or a stand alone looped walk from near Derraghan village linking with the Derrarogue loop further north or the Corlea/Royal Canal/Keenagh Loop to the south. The historic connection between the bog and the village is evident by the Bord na Móna houses and there are panoramic views available from green amenity spaces in the village due to its relative high point in relation to the low lying boglands.

This trail would use wind farm roads to bring visitors close to the bog islands of Annaghmore and Annaghbeg and across areas of regenerating bogland.





3. The Derryarogue Loop

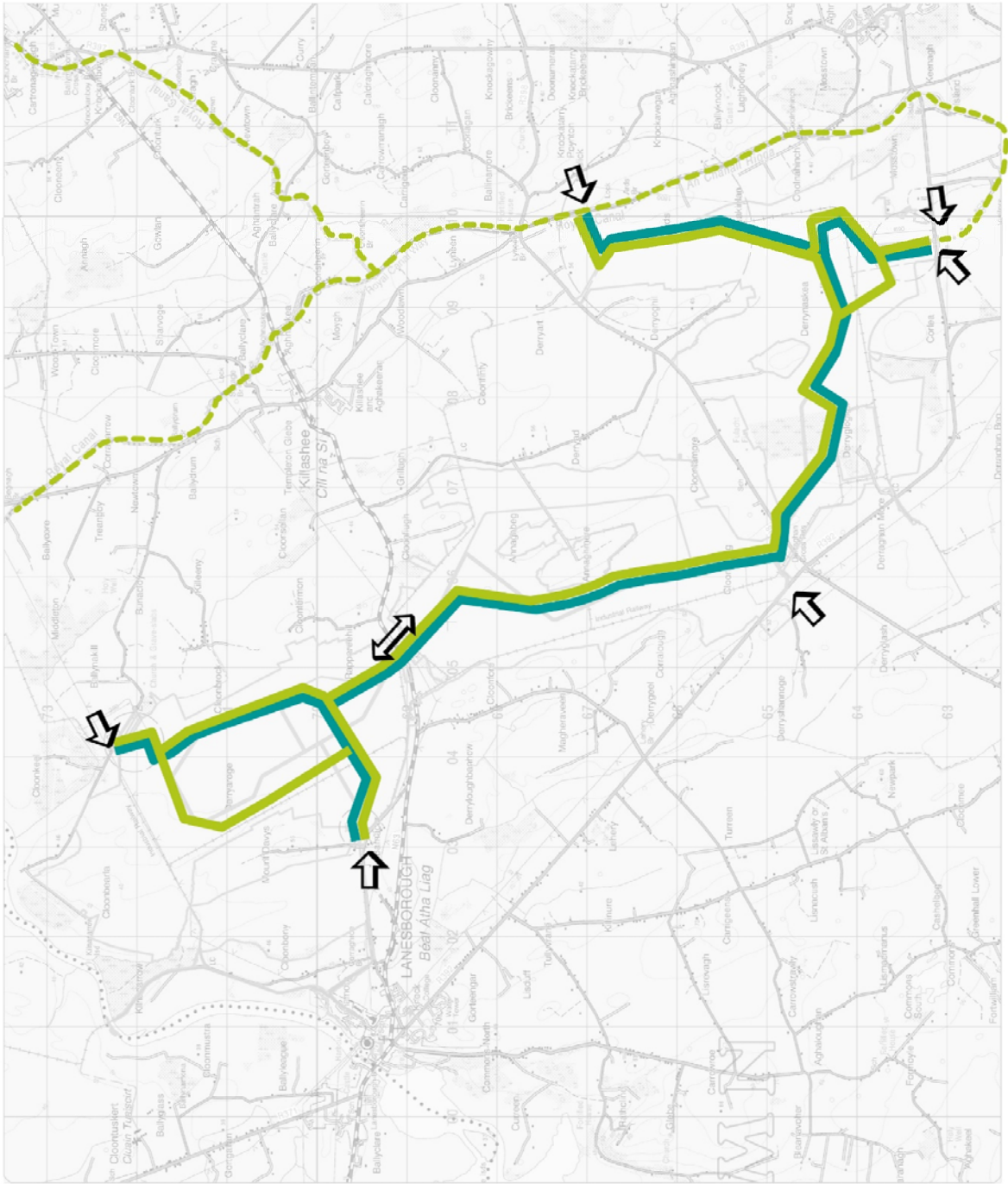
Using the proposed wind farm roads, the trails would cross the N63 close to the current Bord na Móna works into the northern part of the site. Appropriate safety interventions at the traffic/trail interface would be required at detailed design stage. A new car park here would provide access to the looped walk which would bring visitors through areas of regenerating bog and interesting habitats due to the presence of mineral soil in this location. Coillte lands bound the northern part of the site – and there is potential, beyond the scope of this project, to explore further connections through these lands.

An on-road walking link to the Royal Canal at Ballydrum Bridge is potentially feasible from this location along quiet public roads.

Beyond the network provided by the wind farm access roads, the proposed wind farm design will facilitate a direct link from the proposed wind farm to Lanesborough along an existing laneway. There are also potential direct links that could be developed in the future to Cloondara and across the Shannon as Bord na Móna bogs come out of production, and the bog railway network becomes less required for industrial use up to 2030.

DETAILED LAYOUT OF PROPOSED WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES ALONG WIND FARM ACCESS ROADS

-  Existing Royal Canal Way and Cloondara-Longford Trackway
-  Proposed cycleway/walkway
-  Proposed walkway
-  Public access points to new routes



3.3 In Summary

In summary – the new wind farm road network presents an opportunity to create a series of walking and cycling loops, linking to settlements along public roads, and to the broader network of Blueways and Greenways in this part of Longford. The planning application includes three distinct walking/cycling loops along the proposed wind farm roads, passing through differing landscape character, accessed by three new public car parks and presenting opportunities to tell the story of the landscape and of the people who live and work here.

These connections can potentially be extended in the future as peat extraction winds down over the coming years and other parts of the Bord na Móna landholdings potentially become available for amenity use.

Appendix A

Detail of Derryadd Amenity Layout

