

Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme

Part 8 Report

Meath County Council

March 2022



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Contents

Chapter	Page
1. Introduction	6
1.1. Scheme Overview	6
1.2. Scheme Benefits	7
1.3. Stakeholder Consultation	8
1.4. 2015 Public Consultation	8
1.5. 2020 Part 8	9
1.6. Current 2022 Part 8	9
1.7. Part 8 Planning Documentation	9
1.8. Works Extents	10
2. Purpose of the Scheme	11
2.1. Scheme Purpose	11
2.2. Scheme Objectives	11
3. Planning and Policy Context	12
3.1. Planning Policy	12
3.2. National Transport Policy	12
3.3. Regional Transport Policy	13
3.4. Development Plans & Local Area Plans	14
3.5. Ratoath Local Area Plan 2009 – 2015 (Incorporating Amendments)	15
3.6. Ratoath Written Statement – CDP 2021-2027	16
3.7. Design Guidance	16
4. Description of Proposed Routes	18
4.1. Route Overview	18
5.1. General	23
5.2. Scheme Options	23
6. Description of Proposed Scheme	25
6.1. Scheme Proposals	25
7. Appropriate Assessment	29
7.1. Screening Report	29
8. Environmental Impact Assessment	29
8.1. Screening Report	29
9. Construction Methodology, Compound Location and Works Phasing	30
9.1. Construction Methodology	30
9.2. Compound Location	30
9.3. Works Phasing	31
10. Impact of Proposed Scheme	32
10.1. Introduction	32
10.2. Traffic and Transport	32
10.3. Landscape and Visual	33
10.4. Ecology	34
10.5. Built and Cultural Heritage	35
10.6. Noise and Air Quality	36
10.7. Flood Risk	36
11. Submissions	37
Appendix A. Non-Statutory Public Submissions Summary	39

Tables

Table 3-1	MCC Development Plan 2013 - 2019 Relevant Policy	14
Table 3-2	Ratoath LAP 2009 - 2013 Relevant Policy	15
Table 3-3	Ratoath LAP 2009 - 2013 Relevant Policy	16

Figures

Figure 1-1:	Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Network	6
Figure 1-2:	Ratoath Cycle Network (Extract from CNP)	7
Figure 1-3:	Public Consultation Advertisement	8
Figure 4-1:	Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme	18
Figure 4-2:	R125 Dunshaughlin Road	20
Figure 4-3:	Main Street	20
Figure 4-4:	East of Main Street	21
Figure 4-5:	Existing Path adjacent Broadmeadow	22
Figure 4-6:	Route through Woodland Area	22
Figure 6-1:	Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme	25

Part 8 Report

Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme

1. Introduction

1.1. Scheme Overview

1.1.1. Background

Meath County Council (MCC) in partnership with the National Transport Authority (NTA) propose to deliver a high-quality Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme within Ratoath.

The proposed scheme consists of improvements and upgrades to the follow key routes:

- Town Centre Streets
- Approach Roads
- Distributor Roads
- Greenway
- School Access Roads

These routes are illustrated in Figure 1.1 below

Figure 1-1: Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Network

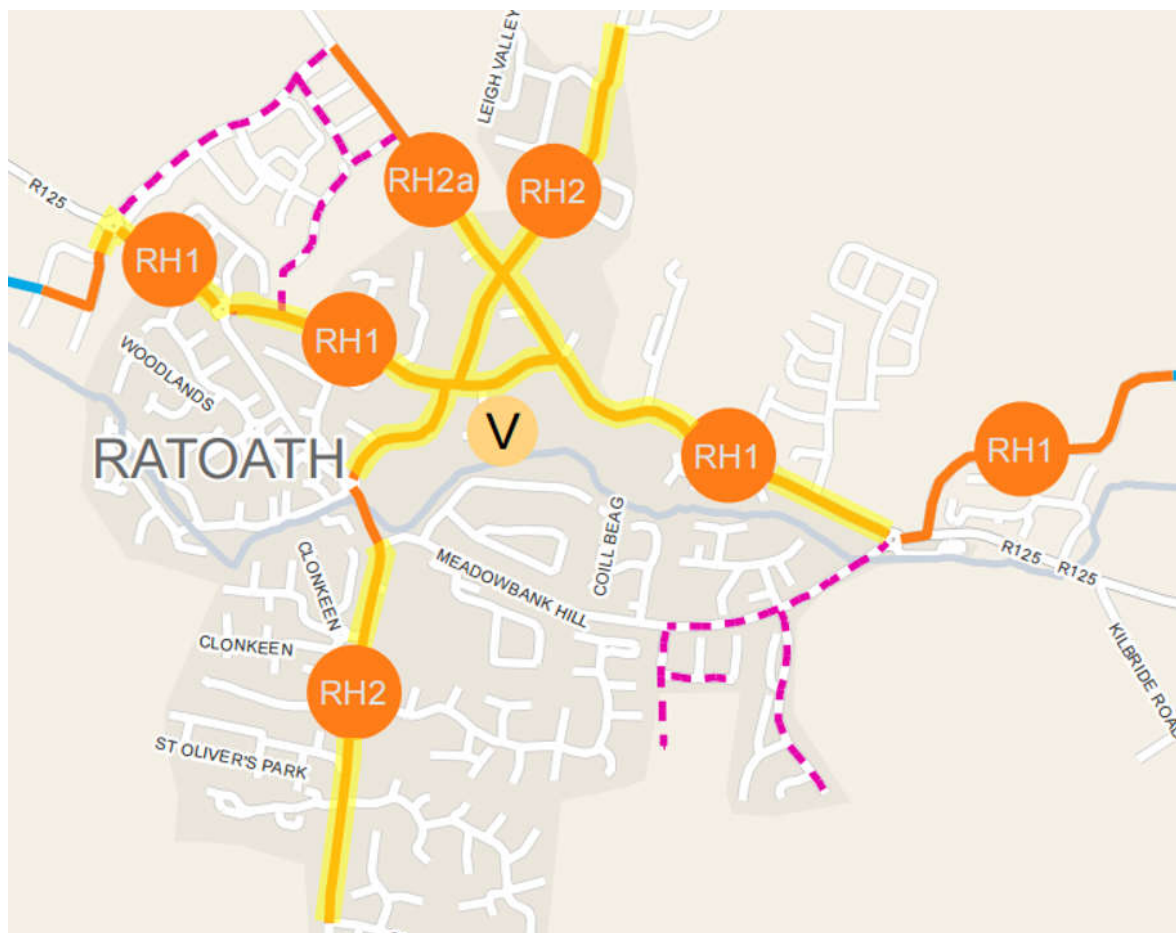


The Broadmeadow Bridge, Meadowbank Hill and The Avenue cycle routes which are indicated with a dashed line as these are already constructed. The remainder of the routes as indicated with a solid line therefore form the proposed Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme which are subject of this Planning Report and associated Part 8 planning application.

It should also be noted that the proposed Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme incorporates the Ratoath Cycle Network as developed by the NTA within the Cycle Network Plan (CNP) for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). The CNP implements policies as set out within the National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF).

The Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme encompasses Route RH1, RH2 and RH2a as illustrated in Figure 1.2 below.

Figure 1-2: Ratoath Cycle Network (Extract from CNP)



The CNP recognises Ratoath Town as an important population centre within the GDA with potential to become an exemplar cycling town that will facilitate a significant increase in cycling for all trip purposes

1.2. Scheme Benefits

The Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme will result in a high-quality pedestrian and cyclist network within the town of Ratoath that will create safe and comfortable routes between a number of large residential areas and key attractors such as the GAA Club, BMX Club, Soccer Club, Primary Schools, Secondary School and the town centre itself. There are a number of benefits which will be realised by all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and motorists through the implementation of the proposed scheme. These benefits include:

- Provision of a connected, safe, high quality pedestrian and cycle network;
- Provision of key facilities to encourage an uptake in cycling particularly within the school going age group.
- Improved bus facilities within the town centre including upgrades to shelters and the provision of bicycle parking;
- Improved operational safety for all road users at the R155 / R125 junction at Supervalu;

- Implementation of traffic management measures to encourage reduced vehicular speeds thereby improving road safety for all road users;
- Provision of pedestrian crossing points at key desire points and facilitating safe crossing locations particularly across side road junction;

The scheme is aligned with National Policy and is in keeping with the objectives of the Meath County Development Plan and Ratoath Local Area Plan

1.3. Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholder Consultation has been undertaken with the following key stakeholders;

- National Transport Authority
- Meath County Council – Relevant Departments
- Elected Members

Relevant bodies will be notified under Section 82 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended)

1.4. 2015 Public Consultation

Non-statutory public consultation has been undertaken with the public regarding the development of the pedestrian and cycle scheme. An advertisement requesting was placed in the Meath Chronicle on the 29th April 2015.

Figure 1-3: Public Consultation Advertisement

Ratoath Cycle Network & Bus Hub
Public Consultation

Meath County Council, in conjunction with the National Transport Authority, is preparing a plan for the development of cycle routes and a new bus hub in Ratoath. This plan is at the early stages of development and among the issues being examined are:

- Location, nature and type of cycle routes to be provided
- Integration with existing and planned developments in the town
- Location of Bus Hub
- Bus Hub facilities including seating, shelter, lighting, information etc.
- Environmental and ecological issues
- Traffic and road safety issues

Meath County Council hereby invites any interested parties to make submissions no later than 5pm on Monday May 18th 2015 in writing or by email as follows:

- In writing to Senior Executive Officer, Strategic Transportation Unit, Meath County Council, Buvinda House, Dublin Road, Navan, Co. Meath
- Email (insert email address)

In total 9 No. responses were received as part of this initial consultation exercise. The comments received have been considered and incorporated where feasible.

A summary of the public consultation submissions is contained in 11.Appendix A.

Meath County Council also carried out a public consultation in the summer of 2021 around proposed Design Options for the Pedestrian and Cycling Scheme, specifically between the Steeple Chase Hill Roundabout and the Sommerville Roundabout.

1.5. 2020 Part 8

The proposed scheme was previously the subject of a Part 8 Approval Process during 2020. That Part 8 proposal was displayed to the public from Thursday 8th October 2020 to Friday 6th November 2020.

In total there were 14 no. submissions that raised observations in relation to the proposed scheme. The majority of these observations were made in relation to the extent of tree loss proposed along the Woodlands Link.

In summary, the previous proposed scheme intended to remove 59no. trees out of a total of 69no along the existing verge of the Woodlands Link resulting in 10 no. being retained. In total 52no. new trees were to be planted at alternative locations adjacent to the Woodlands Link and the R125 Dunshaughlin Road, which would have resulted in a net loss of only 7no. trees.

On foot of the observations received during the display and submissions period, and in particular the concerns raised by the public in relation to the extent of tree removal along the Woodlands Link, Meath County Council undertook the decision to withdraw the Part 8 proposals.

1.6. Current 2022 Part 8

The current Part 8 proposals have addressed the issue of tree removal through the development of an alternative proposed design layout.

The alternative layout manages to avoid the vast majority of trees contained in the verge along the Woodlands link. In all only 5 no. trees are proposed for removal along the Woodlands link to facilitate the proposed scheme. Please refer to section 10.4.3 'Arborist Report' for more detail.

In addition to the scheme amendment on Woodlands link there are a further two additions to the proposed scheme. These include an extension to the footpath along the Curraghera Road as far as the access to the Ratoath Rugby Club grounds and an extension of the shared path facility along the Fairyhouse Road to tie-in with the future junction of the Ratoath Outer Relief Road.

Please refer to Chapter 4 for more detail on these scheme updates.

1.7. Part 8 Planning Documentation

This Part 8 Planning Report has been prepared in accordance with Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended. This report should be read in conjunction with the following complementary documentation contained under separate report heading:

- Book of Drawings
- Drawing 5139451/HW/0000: Cover Sheet
- Drawing 5139451/HW/0001: Site Location Plan
- Drawing 5139451/HW/0002: Site Extents Key Plan
- Drawing 5139451/HW/0003: Site Extents (Sheet 1 of 3)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/0004: Site Extents (Sheet 2 of 3)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/0005: Site Extents (Sheet 3 of 3)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/800: General Layout Key Plan

- Drawing 5139451/HW/801: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 1 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/802: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 2 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/803: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 3 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/804: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 4 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/805: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 5 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/806: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 6 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/807: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 7 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/808: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 8 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/809: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 9 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/810: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 10 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/811: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 11 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/812: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 12 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/813: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 13 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/814: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 14 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/815: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 15 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/816: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 16 of 17)
- Drawing 5139451/HW/817: Site Layout Plan (Sheet 17 of 17)
- Appropriate Assessment Screening Report;
- Ecological Constraints Assessment Report:
- Construction and Environmental Management Plan.
- Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report
- Arborist / Tree Survey Report
- Bat Assessment Report
- Archaeological Heritage Report

1.8. Works Extents

In summary the proposed works facilitate the implementation of improvements to pedestrian and cycle facilities and general traffic management within the town centre itself, along the Broadmeadow River and along the following major approach roads;

- Skryne Road
- Curragha Road
- Swords Road
- Fairyhouse Road
- Woodlands Link Road
- Dunshaughlin Road

The scheme incorporates a linear distance of 16.58km and a total area of 9.49ha.

The works will comprise the retrofitting of the existing road and street layout, to incorporate realignment of kerbs, widening of the pedestrian footpaths, provision of new uncontrolled and controlled pedestrian crossings, retrofitting existing priority, roundabout and traffic signal junction layouts, upgrade of existing bus stops, relocation, upgrade and installation of public lighting, and implementation of speed management measures to create a self-regulating street environment conducive to pedestrian and cyclist safety and comfort.

Certain sections of the works will also include the provision of appropriate street furniture and landscaping, removal of unnecessary street signage and furniture, installation of cycle parking and the resurfacing of road and footway pavements with appropriate materials.

2. Purpose of the Scheme

2.1. Scheme Purpose

Ratoath is situated on the intersection of the R125 and R155 regional roads in the south east of County Meath. The town has developed significantly over the last 20 years and acts as a commuter town with more than three quarters of the population travelling to work in Dublin. In this time the town's population has also grown significantly with a stated population of just over 1,000 inhabitants in 1996, compared to over 9,000 inhabitants per the 2011 census records.

The expansion of both residential and educational developments within Ratoath over this period has coincided with national policy to promote and encourage sustainable travel among all age groups with a particular emphasis on creating a walking and cycling culture among younger generations for the undertaking of short local short trip purposes. As such the need has arisen to provide improved pedestrian and cycle provision to form better connections between residential areas, schools, amenities and the town centre.

The proposed scheme will therefore aim to secure the development of pedestrian and cycle routes that will provide a high quality of service, whilst also ensuring that there remains an optimal balance of provision between the various competing transport modes within the town and its environs.

2.2. Scheme Objectives

The objectives of the proposed Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme are;

- Provide appropriate pedestrian and cycle facilities within the town centre, along the Broadmeadow river and on all key approach roads;
- To provide safe route link and crossing facilities for pedestrian and cyclists;
- To provide appropriate speed and traffic management within the town centre and on approach roads;
- To facilitate national and county level policies and objectives in relation to sustainable transportation;
- To facilitate the development of the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan;
- To comply with the design standards and principles advocated within the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and the National Cycle Manual.

3. Planning and Policy Context

3.1. Planning Policy

National, regional and local planning policy has been considered to ascertain compliance and is summarised below.

3.2. National Transport Policy

3.2.1. National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government’s high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of Ireland to 2040. By 2040 there will be roughly an extra one million people living in Ireland and it is imperative that the NPF is able to manage such growth to ensure that the population increase enhances the entire country.

The NPF has been developed to guide public and private investment, to create and promote opportunities for people across the country, and to protect and enhance the environment - from villages to cities. It is stated therein that it is important that communities are designed to encourage active travel which supports improved public health creating a variety of economic and social benefits;

“Communities that are designed in a way that supports physical activity, e.g. generously sized footpaths, safe cycle lanes, safe attractive stairways and accessible recreation areas, all encourage residents to make healthy choices and live healthier lives.

Countries with extensive cycle infrastructure report higher levels of cycling and lower rates of obesity. Healthy places in turn create economic value by appealing to a skilled workforce and attracting innovative companies”

The NPF contains a number of objectives that are aligned to the Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme as follows:

- National Objective 4 - Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.
- National Objective 6 - Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area.
- National Objective 27 - 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.

The proposed Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme will ensure that the town of Ratoath is a more attractive and prosperous place to live and visit, creating an integrated community through increased options for travelling on foot or by bike.

Improving connectivity through walking and cycling infrastructure supports the aspiration for a higher quality of life and wellbeing by rejuvenating local communities. The proposed Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme will increase the linkage and connectivity between local schools and local employment sites and local residential zones, thus supporting accessibility.

The NPF is underpinned by the National Development Plan 2021-2030 which sets out the overarching investment strategy and budget for the period 2021-2030. This includes investment of approximately €360 million per annum in active travel walking and cycling infrastructure in cities, towns and villages across the country, including Greenways. This investment has a transformative potential to substantially increase the numbers choosing to make active travel part of their daily life, improving personal health and mental well-being, making our city, town, and village centres more vibrant and people focused spaces, and significantly addressing Ireland’s climate action challenge.

The funding for urban active travel projects, including urban greenways such as that proposed along the Broadmeadow, is being allocated by the National Transport Authority and includes the Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme which incorporates the National Transport Authority's cycle network plan for the town.

3.2.2. Healthy Ireland Framework 2013-2025

Healthy Ireland, A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025 is the national framework for seeking to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland, as published by the Department of Health. The Framework identifies a number of broad inter-sectoral actions, one of which commits to the development of a plan to promote increased physical activity levels.

Get Ireland Active's aim is to increase physical activity levels across the entire population thereby helping to improve health and wellbeing. Get Ireland Active has developed a plan which seeks to ensure that no group is disadvantaged and recognises that targeted interventions are required to address and overcome barriers to participation which are experienced by some people.

Get Ireland Active acknowledges the role that cycling and walking can play in achieving physical activity targets. The plan highlights the importance of good planning to promote the use of cycling and walking, stating that the layout of the environment has a significant impact on the levels of physical activity undertaken across age groups.

"The built environment is an important determinant of physical activity behaviour. The way the built environment is designed, planned and built can also act as a barrier to being active and can reinforce sedentary behaviour and car dependence. Walking or cycling for transport or leisure is a form of physical activity that can easily be incorporated in to the daily activities for many people. Supportive environments for walking, cycling and recreational and outdoor physical activity have many benefits beyond the immediate physical activity gains"

The proposed Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme is a positive example of how the built environment can be developed to promote physical activity, improving the health and wellbeing of the local community and will present an ideal opportunity to increase physical activity through everyday local journeys.

3.2.3. Smarter Travel Policy

In February 2009, the Smarter Travel Policy document for achieving a sustainable transport system for Ireland was published. This document outlines a number of key policies to encourage a modal shift away from private car use and promote public transport, walking and cycling.

3.2.4. National Cycle Policy Framework

In April 2009, Ireland's first National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF) was issued. The vision of the policy is "all cities, towns, villages and rural areas will be bicycle friendly. Cycling will be a normal way to get about, especially for short trips". The aim of this framework is to encourage a culture of cycling to the extent that by 2020, some 10% of all trips will be completed by bicycle.

3.3. Regional Transport Policy

3.3.1. Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area

The Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) 2016-2035, as published by the National Transport Authority, provides a framework for the development and delivery of transport infrastructure and services in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), including Meath, over the next two decades.

An updated strategy has recently been developed in draft and was on public display during November and December 2021.

The purpose of the current strategy is to:

"Contribute to the economic, social and cultural progress of the Greater Dublin Area by providing for the efficient, effective and sustainable movement of people and goods"

3.3.2. Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan

The National Transport Authority has also published the GDA Cycle Network Plan which identifies the following cycle networks within the GDA:

- The Urban Cycle Network at the Primary, Secondary and Feeder level;
- The Inter-Urban Cycle Network linking the relevant sections of the Urban Network and including the elements of the National Cycle Network within the GDA. It shall also include linkages to key transport locations outside of urban areas such as airports and ports; and
- The Green Route Network being cycle routes developed predominately for tourist, recreational and leisure purposes.

The Ratoath Cycle Network includes the following routes as outlined in Section 1.1 above:

- RH1 R125 Dunshaughlin Road, Main Street and Swords Road
- RH2 R155 Fairyhouse Road & Curragha Road
- RH2a L1006 Skryne Road.

3.4. Development Plans & Local Area Plans

In terms of provision for pedestrians and cyclists, the routes have been planned in line with the policies and objectives set out within the Meath County Development Plan.

3.4.1. Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 was adopted on the 3rd November 2021. The Development Plan seeks to develop and improve, in a sustainable manner, the social, economic, environmental and cultural assets of the County.

The county occupies a land area of over 230,000 hectares and is the second largest county in Leinster. It adjoins Dublin to the south and this geographical proximity and the strong functional relationship between the two counties results in Meath being a vital component of the Greater Dublin Area. Meath has a population of over 195,000 people, accommodated in a network of attractive towns, villages and the countryside.

The County Development Plan recognises cycling and walking to be healthy, safe, ecologically-sound and socially-just forms of movement. Walking and cycling are the most sustainable modes of transport available in terms of their low environmental impacts. A selection of relevant policies are as follows:

Table 3-1 MCC Development Plan 2013 - 2019 Relevant Policy

Policy Name	Policy Description
MOV POL 12	To support the implementation of recommendations presented in the NTA's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 and any subsequent reviews thereof. To ensure that design for cycle infrastructure for all relevant developments shall be carried out in accordance with the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan, other relevant design standards or any successors to these documents.
MOV POL 17	To identify and seek to implement a strategic, coherent and high quality cycle and walking network across the County that is integrated with public transport and interconnected with cultural, recreational, retail, educational and employment destinations and attractions.

Policy Name	Policy Description
MOV POL 19	To support the NTA in the development of a strategic pedestrian network plan for the main urban centres of the County.
MOV POL 20	To encourage, where appropriate, the incorporation of safe and efficient cycleways, accessible footpaths and pedestrian routes into the design schemes for town centres/neighbourhood centres, residential, educational, employment, recreational developments and other uses.
MOV OBJ 27	To implement, in conjunction with the NTA, the recommendations of the NTA strategy with regard to walking and cycling infrastructure.
MOV OBJ 28	To revise road junction layouts, where appropriate, to provide dedicated pedestrian and cycling crossings, reduce pedestrian crossing distances, provide more direct pedestrian routes, and reduce the speed of turning traffic.
MOV OBJ 29	To implement at appropriate locations pedestrian permeability schemes and enhancements.
MOV OBJ 31	To implement at appropriate locations pedestrianisation schemes, particularly in central areas of high pedestrian footfall, such as core retail areas.
MOV OBJ 32	To continue the development of a network of Greenways in the County in accordance with the Department of Transport Strategy for Future Development of Greenways.
MOV OBJ 35	To support the installation of appropriate traffic management measures on a case by case basis on the approach roads to all schools throughout the county in the interest of road safety.

3.5. Ratoath Local Area Plan 2009 – 2015 (Incorporating Amendments)

The Local Area Plan (LAP) was made in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006 and with the objectives of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. In terms of transport, the following were the policies and objectives of the LAP:

Table 3-2 Ratoath LAP 2009 - 2013 Relevant Policy

Policy Name	Policy Description
Infrastructure Policy 2	To regulate, control and improve signage throughout the town.
Infrastructure Policy 3	To provide for the future transportation needs of Ratoath and environs in a sustainable manner.
Infrastructure Objective 3	To provide traffic calming measures along the R125/Main Street to control traffic speeds particularly along curved sections of the road network.
Infrastructure Policy 9	To promote and facilitate the development of cycling and walking facilities in Ratoath.
Infrastructure Policy 12	To prioritise the movement of pedestrian and cyclists in proximity to public transport nodes.
Infrastructure Policy 13	To promote an attractive public realm of pedestrian footpaths/cycleways, street furniture and quality public lighting.

The LAP highlights that the River Broadmeadow has the potential to act as an attractive amenity feature in the centre of the town. The objectives of the LAP seek to protect and further enhance the

quality of the existing walkway alongside the river. In terms of open space facilities, it is an objective of Meath County Council:

Table 3-3 Ratoath LAP 2009 - 2013 Relevant Policy

Policy Name	Policy Description
SOC OBJ 15	To investigate the provision of riverside and pedestrian walkways in Ratoath.
SOC OBJ 16	To promote the development of a playground in the vicinity of the River Broadmeadow.
SOC OBJ 17	To provide and encourage further improvements along the banks of the River Broadmeadow.
SOC OBJ 18	To develop a system of linear parks and waterfront amenity areas with walkways and cycleways, subject to the availability of resources, along the banks of the River Broadmeadow.

3.6. Ratoath Written Statement – CDP 2021-2027

The vision of the Ratoath Written Statement is

‘To promote the sustainable consolidation of Ratoath, accommodating, significant expansion of employment opportunities, whilst consolidating growth of the town and reinforcing the town centre. In this context, the plan will promote and support employment growth and expansion of the international equestrian hub in support of the town centre; and will promote sustainable movement through the completion of the Ratoath Outer Relief Road.’

The following are two key opportunities identified in the statement.

- Implementation of the Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme will improve permeability throughout the town.
- Completion of the Outer Relief Road will reduce congestion.

The following are two key objectives identified in the statement.

- RA OBJ 7 - To facilitate the development of the Ratoath Outer Relief route in tandem with development.
- RA OBJ 8 - To further advance public footpath and cycle path upgrades in the town in accordance with the Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme.

The Ratoath Written Statement directly identifies the delivery of the Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme. Furthermore, the statement identifies the need to deliver the Ratoath Outer Relief Road. the extension of the proposed shared path south along the Fairyhouse Road will ensure that there is an appropriate connection between these two scheme sand that any development served by the Ratoath Outer Relief Road is appropriately connected with the key pedestrian and cycle infrastructure within the urban area of the town.

3.7. Design Guidance

Designs were developed in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and the National Cycle Manual (NCM).

DMURS is the national design guidance manual to be applied in cities, towns and villages, such as Ratoath, with a speed limit of 60kmh or less. A fundamental aim of these design guidelines is to put well designed streets at the heart of sustainable communities, creating a sense of place, protecting heritage and tourism potential and promoting civic confidence. DMURS recognises the higher priority of pedestrians and cyclists without unduly compromising vehicle movement. Encouraging increased levels of walking and cycling will encourage healthier lifestyles and greater levels of social interaction within Ratoath, thereby increasing quality of life across the entire community.

The cycle elements of the scheme are designed in accordance with the guidance set out in the National Cycle Manual (NCM).

4. Description of Proposed Routes

4.1. Route Overview

The below figure outlines the breakdown of routes which together form the Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle.

Figure 4-1: Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme



The scheme has been broken down into general sections to assist in describing the routes as simply as possible. These sections are as follows:

- Approach Roads;
- Town Centre Streets;
- Woodlands Link;
- Greenway.

The sections are presented below and further sub divided to reflect the relevant approach road.

4.1.1. Approach Roads

Skryne Road: The Skryne Road approach to Ratoath Town extends for approximately 600m from its boundary adjacent the western side of Steeplechase housing estate towards the Curragha Road / Skryne Road junction. The road is generally 6.0m in width with narrow footpaths to either side and public lighting to its north eastern side.

Traffic volumes are relatively low with an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volume in the order of 3800 vehicles and speeds comparable to the posted 50kmh speed limit, indicated by an 85th percentile speed of 51kmh. There is an existing segregated two-way cycle track on the western side

of the roadway emanating from the Steeplechase estate, however this stops some 275m short of the Curragha Road junction. The road provides access to a number of smaller residential developments, private houses, the pitch and putt club and Ratoath Harps soccer club.

R155 Curragha Road: The Curragha Road approach to Ratoath Town extends for approximately 990m from its boundary adjacent the Ratoath Rugby Club grounds to the Curragha Road / Skryne Road junction. The road is generally 6.5m in width with a narrow footpath on the eastern side and public lighting predominantly along its eastern side.

Traffic volumes are moderate with an AADT in the order of 4600 vehicles and speeds indicated by an 85th percentile speed of 64kmh, somewhat higher than the 50kmh posted speed limit. The road provides access to a number of smaller residential developments, three relatively large residential estates these being Foxbrook, Leigh Valley and Glebe Park.

R125 Swords Road: The Swords Road approach extends from the Moulden Bridge housing estate, through the R125 / Meadowbank Hill roundabout junction to just west of the Foxlodge housing estate.

Traffic volumes are relatively high with an AADT in the order of 10500 vehicles and speeds as indicated by an 85th percentile speed of 60kmh, somewhat higher than the 50kmh posted speed limit. This section of roadway is generally wide in the order of 6.5 – to 7.0m and there are existing footpaths and cycle tracks on both sides with public lighting along its southern side. The road has limited frontage or private accesses. The main developments accessing on the road are the Moulden Bridge housing estate and the Foxlodge housing estate. The street facilitates access by bus routes and incorporates associated bus stops.

R155 Fairyhouse Road: The section of R155 Fairyhouse Road included in the scheme is approximately 1.25km in length stretching from the future Ratoath Outer Relief Road junction with the R155 to the signalised junction with Meadowbank Hill. The carriageway is generally in the order of 7.0m wide however there are narrower sections particularly adjacent the BMX Park. Public lighting is provided on one side of the road, alternating between the east and west side. Traffic volumes are relatively high with an AADT in the order of 12250 vehicles.

Speeds on the initial approach just south of the BMX park are of the order of 64kmh, however on approach to the signalised junction with Meadowbank Hill speeds are lower, in the order of 33kmh. The posted speed limit is 50kmh. The road provides access to a number of private houses and residential developments such as Seagrave Hall, Fairyhouse Lodge, St. Oliver's Park, Seagrave Park, The Old Mill and Clonkeen. In addition, the road also provides access to the BMX Park, Ratoath National School and a petrol filling station.

R125 Dunshaughlin Road: This short section of the R125 stretches from the clubhouse and playing grounds associated with Ratoath GAA Club, through the western roundabout facilitating access to the Steeplechase housing estate towards the eastern roundabout facilitating access to the same housing estate. From the GAA grounds to the western roundabout there is a narrow footpath along the southern side of the road. Between both roundabouts there are footpaths on both sides of the road with a segregated cycle provision to the north of the roadway. Public lighting is provided along the south western side of the road.

Traffic volumes are moderate with an AADT in the order of 7350 vehicles speeds as indicated by an 85th percentile speed of 59kmh, higher than the 50kmh posted speed limit. The road provides access to the GAA Club and Brownstown and Steeplechase housing estates. The road facilitates access by bus routes and incorporates associated bus stops.

4.1.2. Distributor Road

Woodlands link: The Woodlands link is a distributor road stretching approximately 420m from the Steeplechase Roundabout to the Somerville Roundabout with no direct frontage development. This Woodlands Link is a main school access route. The roadway has a prevailing width of carriageway of 7.0m with 2.0m wide verges and 2.0m wide footpaths on both sides of the road. Public lighting is generally provided long the western side of the road.

The link experiences an AADT of approximately 4,000 and 85th percentile speeds in the order of 60km/h, higher than the 50kmh posted speed limit. The road provides access to a number of large

housing estates such as Woodlands, Woodlands Park and Somerville. The street facilitates access by bus routes and incorporates associated bus stops.

4.1.3. Town Centre Streets

R125 Dunshaughlin Road: This is the western approach to Main Street. The street is generally 6.5m wide with footpaths on both sides of the road and public lighting generally provided along the southern street side.

Figure 4-2: R125 Dunshaughlin Road



Traffic volumes are in the order of 5600 AADT and traffic speeds are in the order of 60kmh as indicated by the 85th percentile speed. The speed limit is 50kmh. The street provides access to a number of private dwellings directly fronting the street edge and some small housing estates such as Streamstown and Parkview and the Supervalu car park. The eastern extent of the street is formed by the intersection of the R125 and R155 regional routes. The street facilitates access by bus routes and incorporates associated bus stops.

Main Street: The Main Street forms the main commercial centre in Ratoath and extends from the R125 / R155 junction to the R125 / Skryne Road junction. The street is generally 6.5m wide with some narrow and wider locations. Footpaths and parking are generally provided along the extent of the street with public lighting generally provided along the southern street side.

Figure 4-3: Main Street



Traffic volumes are moderate to high in the order of 8150 AADT and traffic speeds are in the order of 42kmh as indicated by the 85th percentile speed. The speed limit is 50kmh. The street provides access to a number of on street commercial and residential developments, a petrol filling station and garage. The street facilitates access by bus routes and incorporates associated bus stops.

East of Main Street: This is the eastern approach to Main Street and extends from the R125 / Skryne Road junction to the Foxlodge housing estate. The street is generally 6.5m wide with footpaths on both sides of the road and public lighting generally provided along the southern street side.

Figure 4-4: East of Main Street



Traffic volumes are in the order of 11000 AADT and traffic speeds are in the order of 44kmh as indicated by the 85th percentile speed. The speed limit is 50kmh. The street provides access to a number of on street commercial and residential developments, the local church, Corballis Shopping Centre, Silverstream Nursing Home and the Village Green housing estate. The street facilitates access by bus routes and incorporates associated bus stops.

Curragha Road / Skryne Road junction to R125 / Skryne Road Junction: This short section of street is generally 6.0m to 6.5m wide with narrow footpaths on both sides of the street with parking on both sides near the Main Street junction. Public lighting is provided along its eastern side.

Traffic volumes are in the order of 3500 AADT and traffic speeds are in the order of 51kmh as indicated by the 85th percentile speed. The speed limit is 50kmh. The street provides access to the Paddocks housing estate and some private houses with direct frontage.

Curragha Road junction to R125 / R155 junction: This short section of street is generally 6.0m to 6.5m wide with narrow footpaths on both sides of the street. Public lighting is provided along its western side. Traffic volumes are in the order of 4500 AADT and traffic speeds are in the order of 47kmh as indicated by the 85th percentile speed. The speed limit is 50kmh. The street provides access to a number of private houses with direct frontage.

R125 / R155 junction to Somerville junction: This short section of street is generally 7.0m to 7.5m wide with narrow footpaths on both sides of the street. Public lighting is provided along its eastern side.

Traffic volumes are in the order of 6300 AADT and traffic speeds are in the order of 46kmh as indicated by the 85th percentile speed. The speed limit is 50kmh. The street provides access to a number of private houses with direct frontage, the Ratoath Inn car park and the Mruigtuaite housing estate.

4.1.4. Broadmeadow Pathways

There are a number of existing paved walking routes which extend along the Broadmeadow River in a west to east orientation. At the western extent of these paths, an existing path commences at the Meadowbank Hill in vicinity of its junction with the R155 Fairyhouse Road. The path proceeds along the southern river bank adjacent the back of the Meadowbank Hill housing estate, for approximately 150m where intersects with an alternative path choice. This alternative path crosses the river via a small masonry bridge and proceeds northeast uphill for approximately 250m before terminating at footpaths associated with the R125 Main Street. The original path (as per Figure below) proceeds past the bridge for approximately 280m along the right (south) bank of the river before arriving at another small masonry bridge. At this point the formal paved path ends.

Figure 4-5: Existing Path adjacent Broadmeadow



These existing paths are of varying surfacing, width and gradients. The Broadmeadow River itself is modest in channel width and the overall topography of the surrounding area slopes noticeably downwards to the river banks from the north and south.

There are two informal paths which proceed east from where the formal path ends. One proceeds south of the river through a wooded area for approximately 200m (as per Figure below) before joining up with the footpath network associated with the Jamestown Park housing estate with a route available through the estate to gain access back out onto Meadowbank Hill, in vicinity of its roundabout junction with the R125 Swords Road.

Figure 4-6: Route through Woodland Area



The other path crosses onto the northern bank of the river via the masonry bridge and proceeds east towards a laneway which provides access between the Sewage Treatment Works and the R125 Swords Road. At this point the path user can access onto the R125 or cross over the river on to its southern bank via a wooden pedestrian bridge and out onto Meadowbank Hill via the footpaths associated with the Jamestown Park housing estate.

5. Approach to Design

In terms of alternative options, pedestrians are catered for by footpaths which are either existing, upgraded or new to the specific route. As such this section of the report relates only to the potential options available for cycle facilities.

5.1. General

The cycling network in Ratoath consists of a series of links that must form a coherent and safe network that appropriately caters for all types of cyclists, in particular school children and other vulnerable users, whilst taking account of the constraints and opportunities that are evident from an engineering, environmental and land ownership perspective. In this context route options were developed both holistically, considering the entire network, and on a link by link basis.

The cycle network has been designed in accordance with the National Cycle Manual (NCM) and in particular the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS). It is also critical that the cycle route requirements are balanced with the needs of pedestrians and that the requirements for vehicular traffic movement and parking is appropriately considered.

There are two key considerations in the development of cycle route options. In the first instance traffic volume and speeds must be fully assessed as these are key characteristics of the road and street network. Traffic volumes and speeds have a direct impact on the second key consideration which is the provision of either an integrated or segregated cycling provision.

Integrated cycling provision requires cyclists interacting directly with vehicular traffic, either sharing the lane with traffic or in a cycle lane. In integrated provision it is critical for vulnerable cyclists that prevailing traffic speeds are low, preferably a maximum of 30kph but integrated provision can be considered up to 50kph. In this context roads and streets should operate as self-regulating environments wherein the layout of the street and the driver's visual and psychological interpretation of the street environment instinctively tell the driver the appropriate speed as opposed to a reliance on legislation and regulation such as posted speed limits.

Segregated cycling provision provides for physical separation of cyclists from motorised traffic and these can be provided in the form of cycle tracks, cycle paths or cycle ways. Depending on the volume of pedestrians and cyclists and available width, these segregated facilities can either be shared use with pedestrian and cycle or segregated from pedestrians. Shared provision is appropriate where the path width can adequately cater for the cyclist and pedestrian volumes and where movements are generally linear in nature i.e. people are generally not crossing and are not congregating on the path. In general these should be a minimum of 3.0m in width, with allowances for pinch points, and there should be no delineation marking between pedestrian and cyclist space.

Whilst segregated provision is most desirable for vulnerable or inexperienced cyclists, experienced cyclists will often choose to cycle in the traffic lane regardless of the whether there is a segregated cycle provision along a route. Indeed cyclists who may be travelling into Ratoath along longer distance rural cycle routes would be expected to remain on road and street within the town. Within Ratoath the provision for cyclists to cycle on street throughout the town has been appropriately considered in the context of the prevailing existing 50kph speed limit.

5.2. Scheme Options

In order to appropriately assess integrated or segregated route options along the designated cycle routes the network must be considered in its entirety in order that the network is designed as a coherent and legible network of cycle routes. At the same time each section of the cycle routes must be considered in terms of the appropriate and viable route options and preferred cycling provision.

Specific reference has been made to the traffic flow and speed data along the routes and in this context it was determined that the streets within the town centre should be design as a low speed self regulating environment to encourage speeds of 30kph or lower within which integrated shared street provision can be considered.

The introduction of a self regulating low speed environment is appropriate in terms of the traffic volumes and considered achievable in terms of the prevailing traffic speeds on each route, allowing for the introduction of appropriate traffic management measures where necessary and appropriate to ensure that the environment is self-regulating and that the 30kph speed limit will be the prevailing maximum traffic speed. The introduction of segregated cycling provision within the town centre would not be viable or appropriate, requiring road widening and associate significant land purchase in order to facilitate cycle tracks.

The introduction of the self regulating low speed environment within the town centre will have an anticipated effect of reducing traffic volumes through the town centre. It is expected that a proportion of through traffic travelling from west to east and vice versa between the Dunshaughlin Road and Swords Road would divert onto the route at Woodlands Link and Meadowbank Hill which has been constructed as a distributor route and therefore more appropriate for the carrying of through traffic around the town. It can be reasonably assumed therefore that the maximum traffic volumes within the self regulating low speed town centre environment would be substantially less than the 10,000 AADT threshold for integrated cycling provision at a 50kmh speed limit and inline with the AADT threshold of 5,000 for a 30kmh speed limit.

Outside of the town centre and within the 50kph speed limit area, generally integrated or segregated provision can be considered with due account taken of the prevailing characteristics of each route as set out in Chapter 4. However along the Woodlands Link it is evident that segregated provision would be the preferred option given the distributor road nature of this route and that this route would be a primary route serving the schools in the south of the town. Furthermore the potential to divert through traffic from the town centre along this route would be consistent with a segregated provision.

6. Description of Proposed Scheme

6.1. Scheme Proposals

The proposed pedestrian and cycle scheme subject to this Part 8 Panning Report and Application is illustrated below.

Figure 6-1: Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme



The proposed scheme drawings (drawings 5139451/HW/0000 to 5139451/HW/0005 and drawings Drawing 5139451/HW/800 to Drawing 5139451/HW/817) are contained in the Book of Drawings presented under separate cover and accompanying this planning approval submission.

It should be noted that the Town Centre Streets denoted by the grey line in the above map reflect the 30kmh speed limit area proposed for the Ratoath. Please refer to section 6.1.3 of this report for further detail.

The description of the proposed pedestrian and cycle facilities for each section is as follows.

6.1.1. Approach Roads

Skryne Road: The proposed pedestrian and cycle facilities along this section of the scheme consist of an existing 2.0m wide footpath on the western side of the road which will be re-designated as a shared use pedestrian and cycle path. This width of this combined pathway would be appropriate in this location which serves a limited quantum of residential development. This path will connect with existing pedestrian and cycle facilities at the Silverstream Housing estate and also connect with the facilities proposed on the Curragha Road and the town centre streets. Raised uncontrolled crossings are provided at side roads and a raised controlled crossing is provided to connect with the Pitch and Putt course and Ratoath Harps Soccer club.

R155 Curragha Road: The proposed pedestrian and cycle facilities along this section of the scheme consist of a new 2.0m footpath along the eastern side of the road from the grounds of Ratoath Rugby Club to the traffic signal junction with the Skryne Road. The road will therefore be narrowed to 6.0m and designated as a shared street with a number of traffic management measures implemented. These measures consist of raised junction tables at the entrances to Lee Valley and Glebe Park and recurrent shared street cycle symbols painted onto the carriageway. In addition, a 50kmh driver feedback sign is to be introduced at the approach to the posted 50kmh speed zone.

Minor improvements in the form of kerb realignment, footpath upgrade and tactile paving will be introduced at the Curragha Road / Skryne Road traffic signal junction.

The section from the Lee Valley housing estate to the Ratoath Rugby Club will require some minor realignment of the road on approach to the Rugby Club where the available verge space to accommodate the footpath moves from the eastern side of the existing road carriageway to the western side of the carriageway.

R125 Swords Road: The proposed pedestrian and cycle facilities along this section of the scheme consist of the upgrade of the existing footpath / cycle track located on the southern side of the road from the sewage works access lane to the controlled crossing due east of the junction with the Foxlodge Woods housing estate to a shared path. From this crossing to the roundabout, the existing footpaths and one-way cycle tracks on both sides of the road will be reconstructed to suit proposed alignment. The existing bus lane entry to the roundabout will be removed and associated bus stops on both sides of the road realigned and reconstructed as per the proposed plans. Crossings on the roundabout will be widened to a 4.0m whilst a raised zebra crossing will be introduced on the western arm.

The southern arm of the roundabout will tie in with pedestrian and cycle facilities proposed as part of the Meadowbank Hill upgrade, subject of separate planning approval process. From the roundabout to the Moulden Bridge housing estate a two-way shared pedestrian and cycle path will be introduced on the northern side of the roadway and will gain access to the estate which via a permeability access point through the existing boundary wall. Pedestrians will cross the Bourne Road via a raised uncontrolled crossing. Existing footpaths and cycle tracks to the south and southwest of the roundabout will be resurfaced and designated as a shared pedestrian and cycle path. Raised tables will be implemented at the junctions of Foxlodge Woods and the access lane to the sewage works.

R155 Fairyhouse Road: The proposed pedestrian and cycle facilities along this section of the scheme consist of a shared pedestrian and cycle path to be developed as a reconstruction of the footpath on the eastern side of the road which will include widening of the path, thereby reducing the carriageway width to 6.0m. The path will extend from the proposed RORR (Ratoath Outer Relief Road) junction north towards Gláscainn Lane directly opposite Ratoath BMX Club at the south of the town, and continue northwards towards Ratoath National School and the traffic signal junction with Meadowbank Hill where it will tie with facilities as part of the proposed Meadowbank Hill upgrade subject to a separate planning permission. The proposed path between Gláscainn Lane and Fairyhouse Lodge housing estate is a minimum of 2.5m wide while the remainder of the path is a minimum of 3.0m. Raised uncontrolled crossings are provide at all side road accesses on both sides of the road.

R125 Dunshaughlin Road: The proposed pedestrian and cycle facilities along this section of the scheme consist of a 3m wide shared use pedestrian and cycle path on the southern side of the roadway from the entrance to Ratoath GAA Club to the south eastern roundabout intersecting with the Woodlands link and providing access to Steeplechase Hill. Kerb lines are slightly modified and raised zebra crossings are provided on all arms of this roundabout whilst raised zebra crossings are provided on the southern and eastern arms only of the Brownstown / Steeplechase Wood roundabout. The proposed crossings will connect to existing pedestrian and cycle facilities on the northern side of this road. The eastern extent of this section includes removal of a certain number of trees and replacement with new tree planting. This proposal is illustrated within the Arborist Report contained under separate cover. The existing bus stop will be retained. The eastern extent of this section will connect with proposals on the Woodlands Link and the Dunshaughlin Road town centre street.

6.1.2. Distributor Road

Woodlands Link: The proposed pedestrian and cycle facilities along this section of the scheme predominantly consist one-way cycle tracks on both sides of the road adjacent to the existing footpaths. The proposed scheme predominantly avoids the removal of trees by utilising the verge to the back edge of the existing footpath to accommodate the proposed footpath provision whilst the existing footpath is to be reallocated as the proposed cycle track. This extends along the western side of the Woodlands link from the Roundabout with the R125 Dunshaughlin Road to the housing access junction into the Woodlands Estate.

The design changes again from this housing estate access to the Somerville Roundabout. A toucan crossing is provided just south of the Woodlands Estate access junction to facilitate the crossing movements onto a shared pedestrian and cyclist path on the eastern side of the Woodlands Link. The existing boundary wall to the Woodlands Park estate on the eastern side of the road is repositioned 1.0m back from its current location and a minimum width 3.0m shared facility is provided along the entire extents of this section to tie in with the proposed upgrades, subject of an approved Section 38 process, to the Somerville Roundabout and the Broadmeadow bridge link. The trees within the verge along this section are full retained.

In total only 5 no. trees are proposed to be removed to accommodate this revised design.

6.1.3. Town Centre Streets

The proposed pedestrian and cycle facilities along the town centre streets of the scheme generally incorporate traffic management measures predominantly consisting of raised platforms at uncontrolled and controlled crossings, raised junction tables and revised signage and road markings. The streets which are covered under the town centre designation are as follows and all of these streets will operate within a self-regulating 30kph speed limit:

- R125 Dunshaughlin Road
- Main Street
- East of Main Street
- Curragha Road / Skryne Road junction to R125 / Skryne Road Junction
- Curragha Road / Skryne Road junction to R125 / R155 junction
- R125 / R155 junction to Somerville junction

The above measures are proposed to encourage a low speed environment and to deter general eastbound / westbound traffic from the town centre and to encourage such through traffic to utilise the southern distributor route provided by the Meadowbank Hill and Woodlands Link. The proposed measures and resultant potential reduction in traffic speeds and volumes will assist in promoting a shared street mixed traffic cycling regime within the town centre.

6.1.4. Broadmeadow Pathways

The proposals for the riverside greenway are predominantly straightforward. It is proposed to upgrade the existing path to a consistent standard in terms of width (3.0m minimum), surfacing and appropriate public lighting.

It is also proposed to provide an additional path north of the river which will provide access further east towards the Meadowbank Hill, increasing permeability and offering additional walking and cycling amenity within the town.

As part of the options assessed for the Greenway, consideration was given for a formal path through the wooded area to the south of the Broadmeadows River, which would allow for an alternative walking and cycling route to the east. This path would likely consist of either a low boardwalk type facility or 'no dig' bound path construction. However, based on the findings of the Bat Report undertaken during July 2018, it has been determined appropriate not to proceed with this route for the following reasons:

- Evidence of wooded area being a key location for feeding, roosting and commuting of bats
- Impact on bats due to significant tree removal

- Impact on bats due to Greenway lighting

Development of the route through the wooded area, regardless of construction type would require significant removal of trees. This is considered to have an unreasonable impact on the local bat population and given that an alternative route is already facilitated within proposed Part 8 scheme on the northern side of the Broadmeadow River, it is considered appropriate that the wooded section of the route is not included in this Part 8 application.

7. Appropriate Assessment

7.1. Screening Report

A Screening Report was produced to fulfil the requirements of EU Habitats Directive (92/34/EEC). The screening document provides the information required in order to establish whether or not the proposed greenway is likely to have a significant impact on Natura 2000 sites in the context of their conservation objectives and specifically on the habitats and species for which the Natura 2000 sites have been designated.

The proposed works located at Ratoath do not lie within or immediately adjoining any Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas. The nearest site located within 15km of the proposed works is the Rye Water Valley Carton SAC (001398), situated some 14km from the proposed scheme extents. However there exists no hydrological or ecological connection between the proposed development and this SAC.

The Broadmeadow River, which runs through Ratoath, however, is hydrologically linked with the Malahide Estuary SAC (000205) and Broadmeadow/Swords (Malahide Estuary) SPA (004025); these sites and are located some 19.5km from the proposed development sites when measured along watercourses. Notwithstanding this, the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, contained under separate cover, concludes that there are no material impacts arising from the proposed scheme on any Natura 2000 sites. It is therefore not necessary to progress to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

8. Environmental Impact Assessment

8.1. Screening Report

A EIA screening report was been carried out in accordance with the Planning and Development Regulations as amended 2001- 2022 (which give effect to the provisions of EU Directive 2014/52/EU), and the Roads Acts 1993-2021. The report assessed the impact of the Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme in conjunction with committed developments in the surrounding area.

Based on all available information, and taking account of the scale, nature and location of the proposed project it is our opinion that the preparation of an EIAR is not a mandatory requirement (under Section 50 of the Roads Acts 1993-2021). The project is deemed a sub-threshold development; hence the potential for significant environmental effects arising as a result of the proposed project has been evaluated, in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 7A and Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Acts 2001-2022.

Key findings are summarised as follows;

- Due to the limited nature of the works it is considered that there will be no significant cumulative impacts with other developments in the general area;
- Limited noise, vibration and dust emissions may be generated during construction; however, this is anticipated to be minimal in effect and will cause no significant impacts;
- There will be no significant impact on biodiversity, groundwater, surface water or traffic; and,
- There will be no significant impacts on recorded monuments or historic features.

In summary, no significant adverse impacts to the receiving environment will arise as a result of the proposed scheme.

Accordingly, we consider that the preparation of an EIAR is not required for the Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme. However, the competent authority will ultimately determine whether an EIA is required or not.

9. Construction Methodology, Compound Location and Works Phasing

9.1. Construction Methodology

The construction methodology will be further informed once the detailed design stage of the project is completed. However, at this preliminary juncture the following describes the outline construction methodology to be employed for the works.

Works will commence with the clearance and off-site removal of redundant road signage, boundary treatment, surface materials and topsoil. The works will be undertaken using a combination of operatives using hand tools, mechanical excavators and dumper trucks. To facilitate the main works, underground utilities which conflict with the main works will be uncovered using mechanical excavators and hand digging where appropriate. The need for significant utility diversions is not envisaged as part of the works; instead a 'lower and protect' approach will be favoured. This is likely to be restricted to locations where the walking and cycling facilities cross or interface with public roads.

Following the diversion of utilities, the initial pavement and cycle track construction phase will be undertaken. This will include the excavation and removal of the existing stone, soil, concrete and bitumen materials along the route followed by the installation of new path and track base materials. Excavations will be largely undertaken by mechanical means, with any spoil arising to be removed off site or reused locally where testing confirms its suitability. The base layers of the pavement and track are to be made of compacted stone materials.

Drainage works, likely to run in tandem with the pavement construction phase, are considered to be minimal and restricted to areas where the scheme interfaces with the public road. The drainage works at these locations are likely to be limited to the relocation of existing road gullies. The works will also involve constructing the civil engineering elements required to facilitate the commissioning of the traffic signals and the public lighting elements at the latter stages of construction once all the heavy civil engineering works have been executed. Service chambers and underground duct sets will be laid within trenches and backfilled with granular material. Signal poles and public lighting columns will be erected, and duct connections will be made to the base of each pole unit. The final pavement surface course will be laid using an asphalt paving machine followed by compaction using a vibrating roller.

For soft landscaping areas topsoil profiles will be graded to tie into the new pavement levels followed by grass seeding. The top soiling and seeding will be undertaken using a combination of mechanical excavator, tractor unit drawing a rotavator / rake / seed spreader and also operatives using hand tools for areas where machinery access is unavailable.

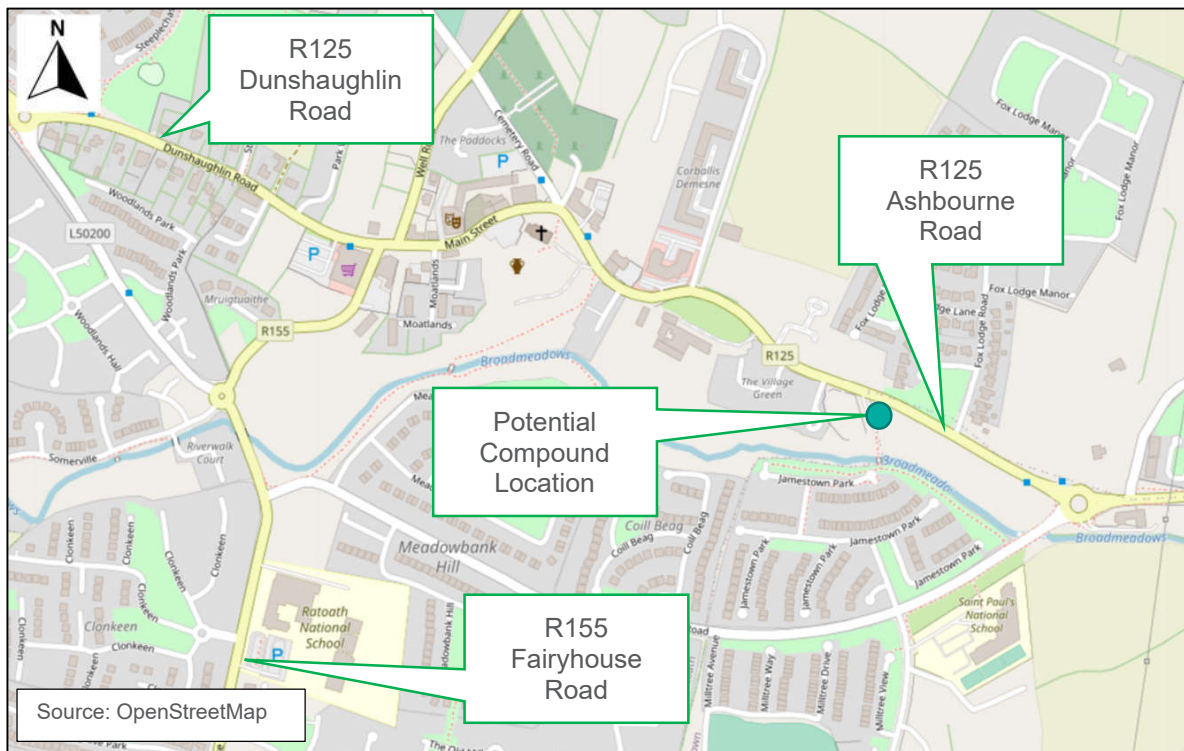
The project will involve the removal of redundant road signage. There will be no additional demolition works associated with this project.

9.2. Compound Location

The future contractor will commence the construction phase by mobilising the construction team on site. This will involve setting up a site compound in an area which will minimise potential impacts to the environment and public.

It is not feasible at this preliminary juncture to fully determine the location of the Contractor's compound; however, this should be sited away from any sensitive receptors (such as water courses, hedgerows etc.). The compound will comprise site offices and temporary self-contained welfare facilities.

A potential compound location has been identified off the R125 Ashbourne Road. This site is currently an unused maintenance depot under the control of Meath County Council. It is currently secured with palisade fencing and is paved fully in hard standing material. Please see site location below.



9.3. Works Phasing

Again, at this preliminary juncture, it is not possible to determine the potential phasing of the project as this will be subject to available funding streams at the time. However, it is certain that the works will be split up into manageable packages of works which would seek to lessen the disturbance to the traffic operation of the local road network in Ratoath. These packages of work would most likely be as follows:

- Town Centre streets (including sub phases)
- Woodlands Link
- Greenway
- Approach Roads
 - Dunshaughlin Road
 - Fairyhouse Road
 - Swords Road
 - Curragha Road
 - Skryne road

As the greenway works wont impact on the traffic of the local network there is potential that this element could be packaged in with other work packages. In addition, the works along the Skryne Road are minor and these could be amalgamated with the Town Centre package of works.

10. Impact of Proposed Scheme

10.1. Introduction

The following categories have been identified as factors which may impact on the environment and thus require further considerations:

- Traffic and Transport;
- Landscape and Visual;
- Ecology;
- Built and Cultural Heritage;
- Noise and Air Quality;
- Flood Risk.

10.2. Traffic and Transport

10.2.1. Impact on Vehicular Traffic

It is anticipated that the proposed traffic management measures introduced within the town centre will reduce eastbound and westbound traffic volumes along the R125 route through the town. As a consequence, it is also anticipated that traffic volumes will increase on the southern distributor route formed by the Woodlands Link Road, a short section of the R155 over the Broadmeadow River and the Meadowbank Hill road. Current volumes along this southern distributor route are low and it is considered that this distributor route has the capacity to take addition traffic volumes in line with its function as a relief road to the town.

The reduction in carriageway width and the introduction of traffic management measures where proposed will provide a significant benefit in terms of reduced speed and facilitating the ease of traffic movement from side roads.

10.2.2. Impact on Pedestrians

The proposed scheme will have an overall significant positive impact on pedestrians with a number of new footpaths and upgrades to existing footpaths including widening and resurfacing works and new crossings which will assist in providing a connected footpath network which links residential estates with key attractors such as the Rugby Club, GAA Club, BMX Club, Soccer Club, Primary Schools, Secondary School and the town centre itself.

The implementation of traffic management measures will reduce traffic speeds and give pedestrians further encouragement to cross the road and street network in a safe and secure manner at key crossing points and desire lines. The scheme environment will also be more convenient and easier to use for disabled users, children and the elderly.

10.2.3. Impact on Cyclists

The scheme will significantly improve facilities for cyclists within the town of Ratoath. The scheme will provide for high quality continuous and attractive cycle facilities particularly along all key routes to schools such as the Dunshaughlin Road, Swords Road, Woodlands Link and Fairyhouse Road and these facilities will connect with proposed cycle facilities on the Meadowbank Hill Road which are already constructed. The cycle facilities will encourage schoolchildren to take up cycling in a safe and comfortable environment and assist to build confidence and competence within this age group. Thus, helping to build a healthy future cycling culture and encouraging a long-term modal shift to sustainable forms of transport.

Facilities on other routes such as the town centre and the Skryne Road and Curragha Road incorporate traffic management measures that will reduce traffic speeds and give cyclists more priority to cycling along the road and street network in a safer and more comfortable environment.

10.2.4. Road Safety

The proposed works will reduce speeds and increase driver awareness of both their surroundings and other road user, in particular vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed works will also allow safer access and egress to and from side roads and particularly at the key intersection of the R155 / R125 junction at Supervalu.

The implementation of traffic management measures along the scheme resulting in reduced vehicular speeds thereby improved safety for all road users;

The scheme design will be subject to an independent Road Safety Audit and Road User Audit.

10.2.5. Construction Traffic

In general, during the construction phase, vehicular movement will increase in the immediate area, and temporary vertical elements such as hoarding or protective fencing, will be put in place. All construction impacts will be temporary, and will include the following:

- Site preparation works and operations;
- Site infrastructure works and vehicular access;
- Construction traffic;
- Dust and other emissions;
- Temporary hoardings or fencing;
- Temporary site lighting;
- Temporary site accommodation cabins and huts.

In terms of construction traffic impact, the impacts in this regard will be dependant on the phasing implement in constructing the scheme. However, all impacts will be temporary and will require some short-term traffic management measures including potential for lane closures, one-way systems and traffic signal shuttle systems. The Contractor will be required to develop and detail these measures in a Construction Traffic Management Plan.

Further management details in relation to the construction stage are contained in the Construction and Environmental Management Plan accompanying this Part 8 Report under separate cover.

Prior to commencement of the works, the Contractor should update the Construction Environmental Management Plan, inclusive of a Construction Traffic Management Plan, to confirm site specific measures to avoid and minimise potential impacts on sensitive environmental receptors that could potentially occur during the construction phase.

10.3. Landscape and Visual

All works will take place within the existing roadway cross section. There will be a reduction in vehicular road carriageway space along some sections of the proposed scheme which will be complemented by a significant increase in pedestrian and cycle provision. These measures will significantly reduce the vehicular dominant feel to the existing roadway.

The significant increase in the public footpath space provision particularly at the R155 / R125 junction at Supervalu, will create the opportunity to introduce additional street features such as cycle parking stands, seating, landscaping and other elements which will be determined at the detail design stage of the project. At the same time, redundant street furniture can also be identified and removed to reduce street clutter.

10.4. Ecology

10.4.1. Ecology Constraints Report

As noted within the Ecology Constraints Report, there are no habitats on site of greater than local value. No ecological features of regional, national or European importance will be directly impacted by the proposed development. Development of this site will not have any significant impact on bats using the site or on the terrestrial mammals or birds using the site. The effect of the habitat loss during the construction phase of the development will therefore be significant at Site level only.

Mitigation by avoidance is proposed for breeding birds; while strict adherence to on-site biosecurity measures would be implemented to prevent the spread of invasive species onto the site. Detailed measures to protect vegetation to be retained are set out as are measures to protect trees. Where it is necessary to fell trees, compensatory planting is required. Recommendations are included to remove ash trees on Fairyhouse Road which were found to be suffering from ash-dieback.

Enhancement proposals incorporated include the need to develop proposed measures by preparing a Landscape Plan for the proposed scheme in order to improve the biodiversity value of the site for groups such as bats, bird, and invertebrates and enhance the overall value of the site at a local level. Furthermore, bat boxes are to be provided on site in order to enhance bat roosting opportunities locally.

Overall, the residual impacts of the proposed development on ecology are likely to be slight negative impact at a site level and of short-term duration; as vegetation on site matures the residual impact would change to neutral to slight positive impact at a local level.

10.4.2. Bat Report

A Bat Report was undertaken during July 2018 on the route of the proposed Part 8 scheme along the Broadmeadow River. Development of the route through the wooded area, regardless of construction type would require significant remove of trees.

This is considered to have an unreasonable impact on the local bat population for the following reasons.

- Evidence of wooded area being a key location for feeding, roosting and commuting
- Impact on bats due to significant tree removal
- Impact on bats due to Greenway lighting

Given that an alternative route is already included in the proposed Part 8 scheme it is considered appropriate that the wooded section of the route is not included in this Part 8 application.

As the Bat Report pertains to an area where it was decided to avoid the construction of a path, the report is considered to be still valid and does not require to be updated.

The full Bat Report is contained under separate cover.

10.4.3. Arborist Report

An Arborist Survey was undertaken during November 2019 and later updated in March 2022. This survey was focused on the impact of the proposed scheme along the Woodland Link Road, the R125 Dunshaughlin Road and the R155 Fairyhouse Road (Drawing No. 5139451 / HW / 801, Drawing No. 5139451 / HW 802 and Drawing No. 5139451 / HW 816). A total of 75 No. individual trees and four tree groups were recorded as part of the survey.

Where assessment takes the form of a Tree Group – trees of arboricultural significance or relevance within these groups may also be identified individually. Every effort has been made to access all trees for inspection, however in some instances where site conditions prevent full access, some measurements may be visually estimated.

It is noted that the site contains a number of trees of significant maturity and size, every effort should be made to safely retain these as part of any development proposal. Where this is not possible replacement tree planting nearby is recommended to ensure a future canopy cover in the locality.

The proposed development will present an opportunity to implement additional new tree planting, both as part of a general landscape design scheme and also as part of a tree management program aimed at maintaining high quality diverse long-term amenity tree cover, in keeping with the setting and proposed site use.

In summary, of the 75 no. trees included in the survey, the following are recommended to be removed.

- Woodlands Link Road – 5 no. trees
- R125 Steeplechase Roundabout – 2 no. trees
- R125 Steeplechase Hill Roundabout – 2 no. trees
- Fairyhouse Road – 7 no. trees (at 4 no. of which have Ash Dieback disease) and one Tree Group

In total 16 no. individual trees and 1no. tree group are recommended to be removed and 58 no. trees are being retained.

At detailed design stage a landscape plan will be developed which will ensure that each tree being removed is replaced by at least 1 no. tree. The plan will identify suitable locations for three replacement trees. As such it is considered that the proposed tree removals and future landscape plan represent an appropriate proposal given the urban context of the proposed route along Woodlands Link and the Fairyhouse Road.

The report concludes with recommendations for protection measures to ensure the conservation of retention trees during any development.

Of note is the use of a no -dig solution along the Woodlands Link where traditional construction methods along sections where existing concrete footpath are to be replaced could damage the root system of adjacent trees.

All trees noted for removal are based on the scheme preliminary design stage. During the detailed design stage the design layout will be subject to minor amendments where appropriate in order to limit the quantum of tree removal.

A copy of the Arborist Report with recommendations is provided under separate cover. In addition, the following drawings are also included:

- Drawing No. 19277_T_101 Tree Clarification
- Drawing No. 19277_T_102 Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Drawing No. 19277_T_103 Tree Protection

10.5. Built and Cultural Heritage

For a review of National Monuments Sites, National inventory of Archaeological heritage sites and Records of Protected Structures please refer to the Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report and the Archaeological Report (summary provided below) as contained under separate cover.

10.5.1. Archaeological Report

An Archaeological Assessment Report was undertaken in November 2018 of the proposed scheme. The report notes the following general impacts. Many locations in the project are within the Ratoath Historic Town ME044-034 archaeological Zone of Notification and as such will require Notification to the National Monuments Service at least two months in advance of any works so that they can give an opinion on any required or proposed archaeological response. In general, the proposed works will be limited to the existing street / footpath surfaces and landscaping so there is only a small potential for uncovering archaeological deposits, features or stray finds. However, if there is associated drainage, cable ducting and digging out of soft spots, the works may descend into archaeological levels more connected with medieval Ratoath. Should such works occur, the results are likely to be more connected with old street surfaces, market areas and their previous drainage arrangements rather than buildings / settlements or graveyards. The two Bridges, Bridge 2 and Bridge 3 should be treated sympathetically regarding any upgrading for use as a cycleway/formal footpath and the Corbellis plaque on Bridge 2 should be retained and cleaned.

In terms of mitigation, the report notes that the construction works should be subject to a programme of archaeological monitoring and metal detecting of spoil. These works should be followed by a full archaeological report submitted to the National Monuments Service.

For further details please refer to Archaeological Assessment Report as provided under separate cover.

10.6. Noise and Air Quality

There are no negative impacts predicted in terms of noise levels and air quality. Improving pedestrian and cyclist provision creates the potential to reduce noise levels and improve air quality due to an increased level of uptake in these more sustainable modes of transport and a potential reduction in car travel.

10.7. Flood Risk

The proposed Part 8 scheme includes for the construction of a Pedestrian and Cycle scheme in Ratoath, part of which uses existing public / private roads and footpaths and part of which will be constructed through the riverside walk area of the town adjacent the Broadmeadow River.

With reference to the DOEHLG / OPW publication 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines for Planning Authorities' sections of the scheme proposed along existing public / private road is deemed to be local transport infrastructure and is thus classified as less vulnerable development. Sections of the scheme which are proposed adjacent to the Broadmeadow River are deemed amenity open space / recreation and thus classified as water compatible development.

With reference to the OPW CFRAM flood mapping and Meath County Council map info mapping for the relevant area, parts of the development close to the riverside walk are situated in Flood Zone A, where the probability of flooding is greater than 1% from fluvial flooding. As such these sections are at high risk of flooding. Areas on existing roads / footpaths are within Flood Zones B, where the probability of flooding is between .01% and 1% from fluvial flooding.

The 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines for Planning Authorities' state that proposed development such as the proposed Part 8 scheme are appropriate within these locations.

Whilst, the proposed Part 8 scheme is compatible at these locations, given that it is expected that there will be flooding on some parts of the proposed scheme particularly adjacent to the Broadmeadow River, the following measures should be implemented.

- Path to be constructed with a sealed finish to protect from erosion and scouring caused by flood waters and to allow for efficient cleaning of silt post flood event;
- Path to be constructed on a low causeway of 100mm above surrounding surface with appropriate crossfall and longitudinal fall to ensure paths emerges dry post flood event;
- Warning signs to be installed at all entry points to greenway to ensure public awareness to the potential of a flooded path. Repeat signs to also be installed along the route.
- Edge of path directly adjacent river bank to be delineated with appropriately spaced marker posts to reinforce spatial awareness of potential adjacent deep waters.

11. Submissions

Submissions with respect to the proposed development may be made in writing to:

Senior Executive Officer,
Strategic Transport Unit,
Meath County Council,
Buvinda House,
Dublin Road,
Navan,
Co. Meath

On or before the date and time specified in the Meath County Council notice.

Submissions should be headed: **Ratoath Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme**

All comments, including names and addresses of those making submissions in regard to this scheme will form part of the statutorily required report to be presented to the monthly meeting of Ratoath Municipal District. Accordingly, these details will be included in the minutes of that meeting and may appear in the public domain

Appendices

Appendix A. Non-Statutory Public Submissions Summary

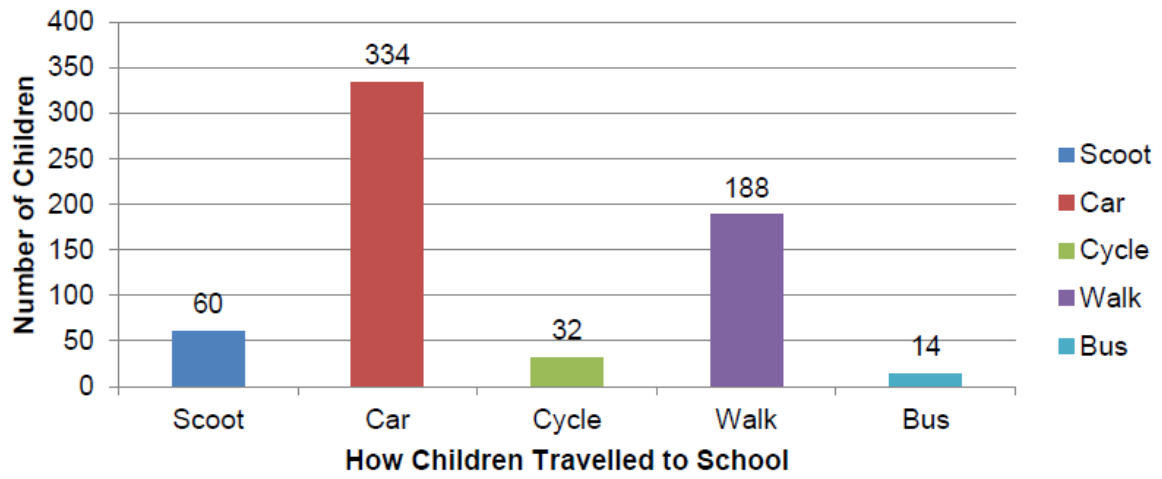
ID	Name	Comments
001	<p>Maria Lucia Macari (Owner of Macari's Take Away) marialuciamacari@hotmail.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 5 parking spaces outside of the take away which are in the ownership of Macari's Take Away which is also a family home. These parking spaces previously formed the front garden of a cottage which stood where the take away is today. • During construction of the take away in 2000 a provision was made in the planning process for these spaces. • Bus Eireann buses have been stopping outside the take away for some time preventing the owners, customers and deliveries from easily gaining access to the premises. • Any bus lane (stop/hub) should be a full length of a bus away from the premises to prevent the frontal aspect of the business being blocked and not to discourage any patron from entering the business. • Cycle lanes outside the premises would also cause access problems.
002	<p>Chris and Monica Maher (Fairyhouse Rd)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high volume of traffic on the Fairyhouse Road make it very dangerous for cyclists. • Children who cycle to the Primary and Secondary Schools are forced to use the footpaths where they are available which itself creates a danger for pedestrians. • It is suggested that the route starts at the junction of Fairyhouse Rd /Glascarn Lane and continue towards the village, turning right onto the Inner Ring Rd, roght again at the junction of Kilbride Rd/Glascarn and continue along Glascarn Lane to Fairyhouse Rd. • Wide ditches on Glascarn Lane present the opportunity to create cycle provisions. • A roundabout at the junction of Fairyhouse Rd and Glascarn Lane should be considered to reduce the speed of traffic on the approach to the school and the village.
003	<p>Kevin Tonks (Mill Tree Park)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be no impact to the existing green area that faces the houses of the residents of The Avenue • An impact assessment to the natural environment and trees should be undertaken • There should be no impact to the existing allocated parking opposite the houses of The Avenue • A traffic assessment of The Avenue and Meadow Bank hill road should be undertaken. The village is already impacted with the volumes of traffic queued to get up The Avenue.

ID	Name	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An assessment of the impact of placing a cycle lane directly outside the houses of the residents on The Avenue should be undertaken • The long term plan for phase 2 of Mill Tree Park should be taken in account. • A cycle and pedestrian access to the school should be created from The Old Mill Estate, the Fairyhouse Rd and Glascairn Lane.
004	Sue Murray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no official bus stops on the R125 from Ratoath to Ashbourne, buses currently stop on request along the road. The road would benefit from a bus stop/shelter in the vicinity of Baltrasna opposite Harlockstown Lane as several people get on at the same place between 7:20 – 7:40. There is a safety concern with the current arrangement, especially in winter.
005	Triona Keating Meath Co. Co. (On behalf of Ratoath MD meetings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an update on the Part VIII for the X junction in Ratoath.
006	Cllr. Damien O'Reilly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where is the proposed bus hub for Ratoath?
007	Bram and Anne Jansen Anne.jansen-willems@outlook.com bramjansen@gmx.net	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are scared to cycle on the road and thus cycle on the footpath instead. The suggested solution is to encourage more cyclists to use the road, making motorists more aware of cyclists. • Make it clear that cyclists are welcome on the road. Motorists in Ireland (outside of the cities) are not familiar with sharing the road with cyclists. The suggested solution is to introduce advisory cycle lanes with centre lines removed (similar to arrangement on page 58 of the National Cycle Manual). • Where roundabouts are present within the scheme cycle lanes should be provided on approach and circulating around the roundabout ensuring cyclists have priority to cars entering and exiting. • Cycle provisions should be provided heading west from the secondary school along The Avenue road and Meadowbank Hill. • Cycle provision should also be provided along the road in front of Woodlands. • The entire Sli na Slainte route for the town should be included in the design so people from all major estates can cycle to school on a continuous cycle path.

ID	Name	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding an extra stretch to and from the entrance of Glascairn Lane should also be included. • Remove the cycle paths that are unusable. The paths end without warning and are dangerous. There is no access provided to junctions in the form of a ramp, this gives the motorist priority and does not give drivers any warning that cyclists are crossing the junction. All of these issues prevent cyclists from travelling at a normal speed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The submission includes photos of the cycle provisions near the roundabout on the R125 where the issues listed in the above point can be seen. • Encourage motorists to leave their cars at home and use their bicycle for short distance by providing incentive: • Remove some of the car parking in front of the Corballis Shopping Centre and provide cycle parking. • Provide a cycle lane to the sports campus and provide bicycle parking also. • Prioritise cycling, providing continuous and safe cycle lanes to and from schools and main estates. • Encourage children to cycle in the hope the habit continues through their later years.
008	Sean Ryan (Son of owner of Homeworld, Main Street Ratoath)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request more information regarding the route, in particular the plans for the main street. Wish to be kept up to date with planned development.
009	Gillian Toole (Elected Member Meath Co. Co.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the local desire to Join up existing cycle lanes and create new lanes, narrow funnel effect approaching roundabouts, especially on the Fairyhouse road/ Tesco/ Sommerville area- pedestrians to and from school. • Attached is the St. Paul's Active Travel Survey results, it gives an indication of current travel trends for the primary school.

Whole School Results of Active Travel Survey

Daily Average for Week 2nd - 6th Feb



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