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Meath County Council Newtown Road Trim Active Travel Scheme

PART 8 Planning
Volume 1 - Particulars

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NEWTOWN ROAD TRIM ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Part 8 Planning: Volume 1 - Particulars

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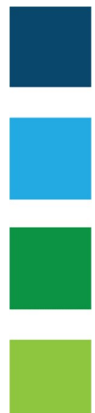


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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHEME

1.1.1 Background

TOBIN Consulting Engineers have been commissioned by Meath County Council to provide design consultancy services for the Newtown Road Active Travel Scheme. Design and Environmental Assessments that have been carried out for the Newtown Road Active Travel Scheme for Part 8 Planning. This project includes the provision of new/improved pedestrian facilities along the Newtown Road (L8017) and a section of the Link Road (L8016) in Trim, connecting the R161 Navan Road to existing pedestrian infrastructure on the L8016 Link Road (Figure 1-1). The proposed scheme will provide continuity of pedestrian facilities from the N161 to the R154 on the South and Eastern side of a large housing development on the outskirts of the town.

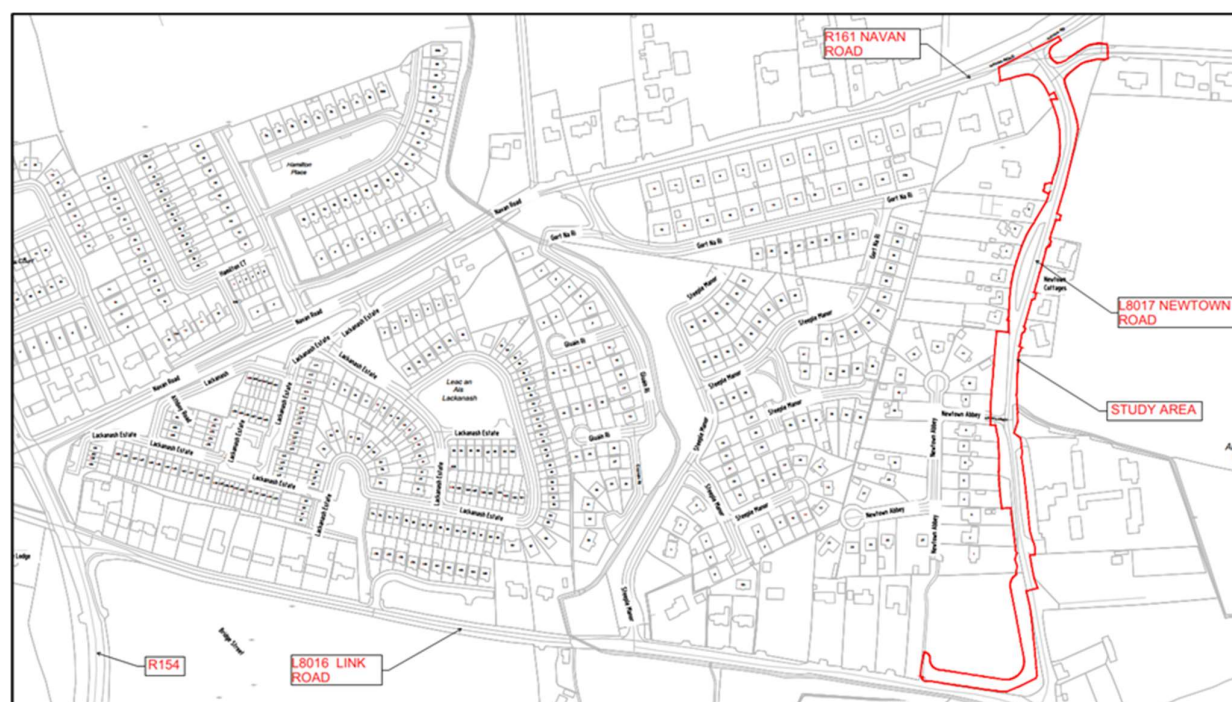


Figure 1-1 Proposed Scheme Extents

New infrastructure will aim to connect to existing on the R161 at the junction with the L8017 and will follow the L8017 south for a distance 470m. From this point the pedestrian facilities will be taken offline into a green field site on the Western side of the Newtown Road for a distance of 200m. The offline facilities will then connect into an existing path which provides pedestrian access to the Newtown Abbey Housing estate from the Link Road. The total length of the scheme is approximately 675m.

This scheme will deliver high quality pedestrian facilities along a busy section of road that has no, or substandard pedestrian facilities. It will improve safety for pedestrians by the provision of dedicated walking facilities with public lighting. It will create a sustainable mode of active travel access to the primary and secondary schools in the town and to local amenities. It will provide improved linkages to public transport on the R161 and the R154 and will encourage walking as a sustainable mode of transport for workers in the Town Centre and the Trim Retail Park. It is envisaged that most of the new walking facilities can be accommodated in the road curtilage, but additional lands will be required from private landowners.

1.1.2 Nature of the Works

Trim is identified for inclusion in the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund due to the high level of employment in the town. A range of enterprises are present in a compact attractive town centre, supporting employment opportunities. There are also enterprise zones at Oaktree Business Park, Scurlockstown Business Park and employment lands to the south of the Navan Road. Although it lacks direct access to a motorway or rail line, the town is proximate to the national road network, and closely linked to Navan and Dunshaughlin on the M3 corridor and to the M4 corridor in County Kildare to the south.

Meath County Council seeks to achieve the following objectives through the design proposal:

- Improved safety for pedestrians through the introduction of dedicated walking facilities
- Create a sustainable mode of active-travel access to the primary and secondary schools in the Trim area.
- Provide safe and convenient junction layouts for pedestrians.
- Improved linkages, connections, and access to public transport, especially by pedestrians
- Facilitate the future and continued sustainable growth and success of Trim.

The Newtown Road Trim Active Travel Scheme is in compliance with the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 policy for Trim POL 1 “To continue to support the consolidation of Trim as an attractive heritage town with a diverse modern economy and a vibrant centre complementing its nationally significant cultural heritage and picturesque setting”.

The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) is the reference document for road design in Ireland where a speed limit of 60Kph or less applies. The philosophy of DMURS is to encourage walking and cycling within town centres and outlying centres of population. There are a few issues with the current situation at this location that are in contravention of DMURS:

- There is no continuity of footpath provision along this road.
- Road widths vary throughout the length of Main St.
- Pedestrian footways fail to comply with DMURS requirements.
- Lack of safe crossing locations.

Figure 1-1 Proposed Scheme Extents shows the extents of the proposed works to address the issues identified and bring the study area into compliance with DMURS.

1.2 SCHEME OBJECTIVES AND DESIGN STRATEGIES

The Newtown Road Active Travel Scheme looks at providing quality pedestrian facilities along a busy section of road that has no, or substandard pedestrian facilities. It will improve safety for pedestrians by the provision of dedicated walking facilities with public lighting. It will create a sustainable mode of active travel access to the primary and secondary schools in the town and to local amenities.

The framing of objectives of the Newtown Road Active Travel Scheme has been undertaken in accordance with the guidance provided in the TII’s Project Appraisal Guidelines PAG Unit 12 (Minor Projects). That document includes a recommendation that project objectives are established which fall under the criteria included in the Common Appraisal Framework, inter alia:

- Economy;
- Safety;
- Environment;
- Accessibility & Social Inclusion;
- Integration; and
- Physical Activity (where applicable).

On the basis of the deficiencies of the existing corridor as outlined above, and responding to the aspirations policy documentation, a series of defined SMART¹ objectives have been developed and are presented here.

1.2.1 Economy

- To promote and enhance the sustainable economic growth of rural regions by improving access to centres of employment and residential housing as well as critical services related to education and healthcare and by introducing sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling.
- Provide an amenity that attracts more tourists to the area.
- Stimulate job growth and revenue in tourism, recreation, construction, and maintenance.
- Attract new businesses and homebuyers to Trim through provision of an improved town centre and infrastructure amenities.

1.2.2 Safety

- To improve the safety of vulnerable road users along the Newtown Road (L8017) and the Link Road (L8016) by the provision of dedicated walking facilities with public lighting.
- To improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists by providing cycle / pedestrian facilities to cater for recreational, tourist and commuters.

1.2.3 Environment

- Reduce fossil fuel emissions from traffic by promoting sustainable transport alternatives.
- Minimise the visual impact of the road.
- In terms of landscape and visual quality, biodiversity, archaeology and cultural heritage, water resources, soils and geology and land take, provide a scheme that minimises and avoids impacts on environmental sensitive aspects and areas within the locality.
- Promote modal shift by reducing car use and encouraging walking and cycling.
- Improve air and water quality and provide enjoyable and safe options for transportation, which reduces air pollution.

1.2.4 Accessibility and Social Inclusion

- Provide informal opportunities to meet and interact with neighbours and tourists, improving community connections and strengthening cultural identity.
- Make rural heritage and historic places more accessible and the focal point of the town.
- Improve accessibility and quality of service for mobility impaired users.

1.2.5 Integration

- To conform and complement existing national, regional and local plans and policies.
- Provide integration between transport modes allowing for multi-modal transport opportunities such as park and ride, park and share as well as opportunities for more sustainable transport modes.

1.2.6 Physical Activity

- Provide safe, convenient, accessible, inclusive and inexpensive space for physical activity, increasing opportunities for daily exercise.

On establishment of the project objectives, various options can be appraised against these objectives to determine the preferred option.

¹ S = Specific, M = Measurable, A = Attainable, R = Relevant and T = Timely

1.3 PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

This application is being made in accordance with the procedure outlined in Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended). Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), details the class of development that is prescribed for the purposes of Section 179 of the Act, and the relevant class of the proposed scheme is as follows:

- 80 (1) b) “the construction of a new road or the widening or realignment of an existing road, where the length of the new road or of the widened or realigned portion of the existing road, as the case may be, would be – (ii) in the case of a road in any other area, 1 kilometre or more”, and
- 80 (1) k) “any development other than those specified in paragraphs (a) to (j), the estimated cost of which exceeds €126,000, not being development consisting of the laying underground of sewers, mains, pipes or other apparatus”

Under Part 8 of the regulations, the Local Authority is required to make details of the proposed road development available for public inspection and comment and to prepare a report in relation to the proposal for consideration by the elected members of the local authority. This Part 8 Planning report contains particular information on the design and on the potential environmental impacts of the proposed scheme and will propose measures to avoid, reduce or remedy undesirable potential impacts as appropriate. It has been prepared in accordance with the information requirements of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), and the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended).

Following the publication in the press (Meath Chronicle dated 11th November 2023, see Appendix A), of the Council’s intention to submit this proposal to construct the above road improvement scheme, (in accordance with Part 8, Article 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations, (as amended), members of the Public and other interested Bodies may make a submission in writing. A copy of the Newspaper and Site Notices for the proposed development as required by the above Regulations is included in Appendix 1.

This Part 8 proposal is for the Newtown Road Active Travel Scheme and is based on the preliminary design. The design considerations presented at the Non-Statutory Municipal District Consultations have been taken into account as much as possible at this stage, along with consultation from relevant departments of Meath County Council on pre-planning requirements. Minor modifications may still occur at Detailed Design Stage. The following drawings, included in the Newtown Road Active Travel Scheme, Part 8 Planning Volume 2, should be read in conjunction with this document:

Table 1-1: Drawings included for the Part 8 Planning Submission

Drawing Number	Drawing Title
11587-2000	Location Map
11587-2001	Scheme Plan
11587-2002-2004	Area provided by employer
11587-2100-2102	Site Clearance
11587-2200-2202	Drainage Plan
11587-2300-2310	Geometric Design
11587-2420-2422	Kerbing and Paved Areas
11587-2500-2502	Traffic Signs and Road Markings
11587-2580-2582	Public Lighting
11587-2800-2802	Landscaping
11587-2900-2902	Earthworks

In addition to the above drawings listed, Photomontages of the proposed visualisation of the scheme as appended to this report should also be read in conjunction with this document.

Following the end of the submission period, the Chief Executive of Meath County Council will prepare a Part 8 Report which will summarise all the details of the submissions received and the Council's responses to same and present this report to a meeting of the Ratoath Municipal District Councillors. After consideration, the District Councillors may accept the Chief Executive's report, with or without modifications, and if so, the proposed Newtown Road Active Travel Scheme will proceed. Alternatively, the District Councillors may reject the recommendation of the Chief Executive and in this case the proposed scheme will not proceed.

2.0 BACKGROUND & REASONS FOR THE SCHEME

2.1 NEED FOR SCHEME

2.1.1 Existing Route Description

The extent of the Newtown Road Trim Active Travel Scheme is defined in Figure 4-1 below. The route of the proposed upgraded pedestrian facilities commences at the junction between the R161/L8017 and follows the Newtown Road South for a distance of 470m (Section 1). From this point the pedestrian facilities will be taken offline (Section 2) into a green field site on the Western side of the Newtown Road for a distance of 200m. The offline facilities will then connect into an existing path which provides pedestrian access to the Newtown Abbey Housing estate from the Link Road. The total length of the scheme is approximately 675m. The Entirety of the scheme is situated within an urban 50kmh speed limit.

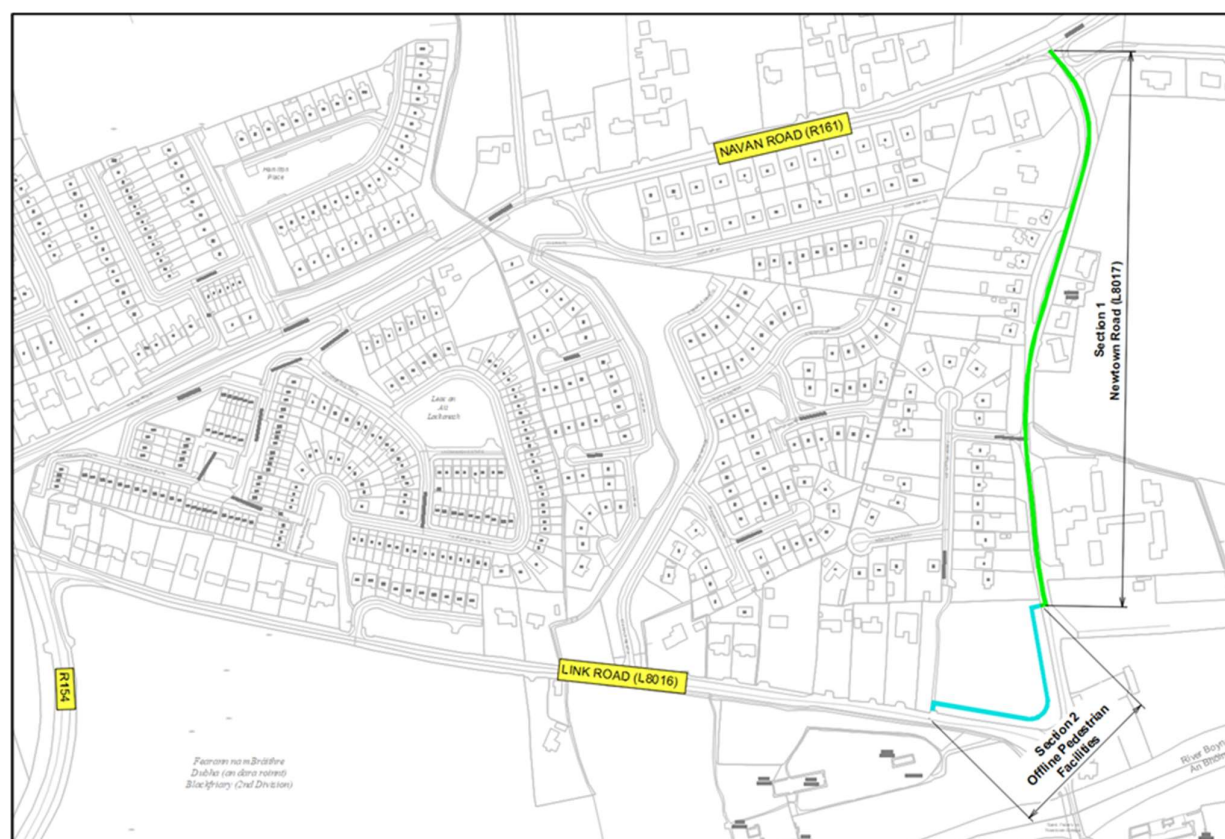


Figure 2-1 Scheme Extents

The Urban Zone is identified as that within the 50kph speed limit. For roads within the 50kph speed limit, the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) shall apply. The L8016 Link Road and L8017 Newtown Road primary function is to provide access from a large residential housing development to the R161 and R154. It will be infrequently used by larger vehicles given the weight restrictions over St. Peter's Bridge and presence of R161/R154 roads. The appropriate carriageway width would be between 5.5 and 6.5m in accordance with DMURS as shown in Figure 2-2.

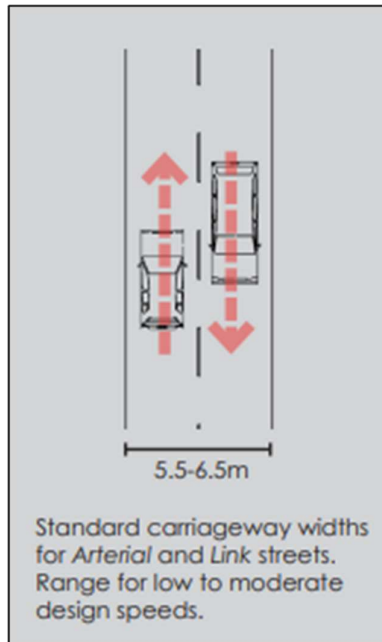


Figure 2-2 Figure 4.55 DMURS Extract

2.1.2 Existing Geometric Properties L8016 Link Road

The L8016 Link Road within the extents of the scheme has a varying cross section ranging between 5.2 and 6.0m. The L8016 contains multiple direct access to private dwellings and the Steeple Manor Housing Estate along the Eastbound Lane (Figure 2-3).



Figure 2-3 L8016 Link Road (Google Map imagery © 2021)

The L8016 Link Road currently does not have any cycling infrastructure (online or offline) with a footway along the eastbound side of width varying between 1.3m to 2.3m in places. The road carriageway varies between 5.2m and 6.0m. Within the Scheme extents, one signalised pedestrian crossing is provided approximately midway along this Section which provides access from the footway along the North of the road to amenities to the South of the road such as the Boyne Riverside Walking Trail, Porchfields and the Newtown Clonbun Parish Church (Figure 2-4).



Figure 2-4 Signalised Pedestrian Crossing (Google Map imagery © 2021)

2.1.3 Existing Geometric Properties Junction

The L8016 Link Road/L8017 Newtown Road junction is priority controlled. Priority is given to vehicles heading North on to the L8017 Newtown Road. The Junction has a right turn lane for vehicles heading South towards the signalised St. Peters Bridge crossing and the R154 (Figure 2-5). The junction is bounded by a substandard footway of approximately 1.0m width to the North and a carpark to the South. There are no pedestrian crossing facilities provided from the local carpark to the footway on the Northern side of the junction.

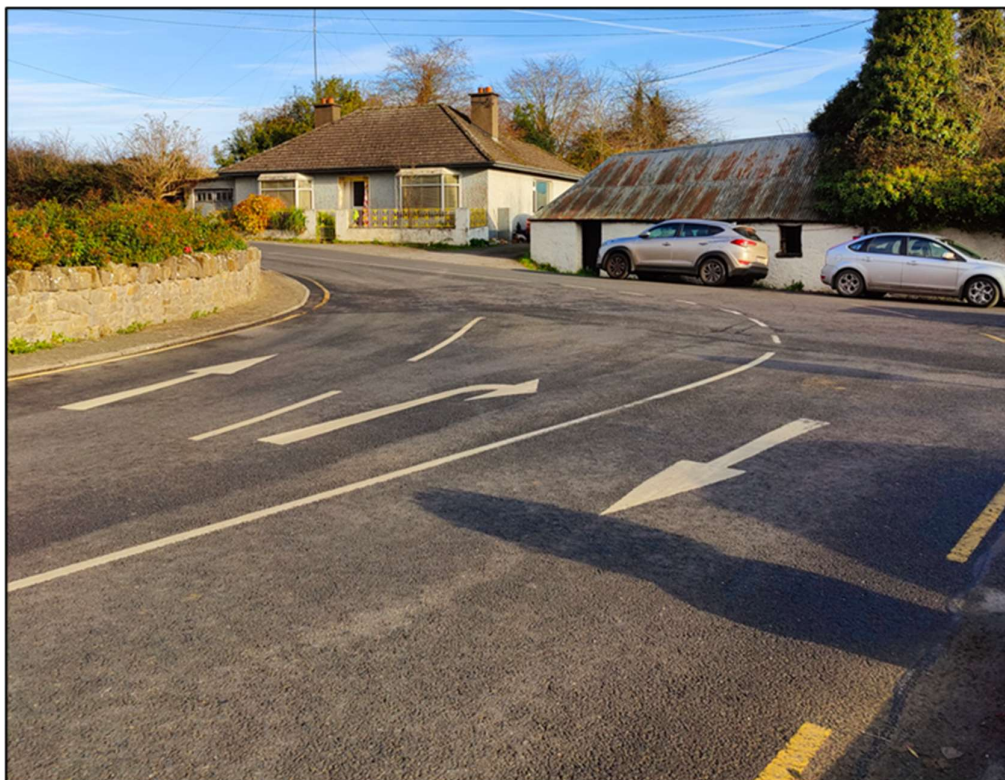


Figure 2-5 Section 2 – L8016/L8017 Junction (Google Map imagery © 2021)

2.1.4 Existing Geometric Properties L8017 Newtown Road

The L8017 Newtown Road within the extents of the scheme has a varying cross section ranging between 5.4 and 7.0m. The L8017 contains multiple direct access to private dwellings on both sides of the carriageway. There are direct accesses to the Newtownabbey Housing estate on the northbound side of the carriageway and access to Alfco Ltd and the OPW Workshop on the southbound side of the carriageway. There are limited sections of pedestrian facilities provided along the Newtown Road with only a short section at the entrance to Newtownabbey Housing Estate currently provided. Pedestrian and vulnerable road users are forced to walk along the edge of the carriageway. This safety issue is further compounded due to the substandard carriageway width in sections along the Newtown Road (Figure 2-6).

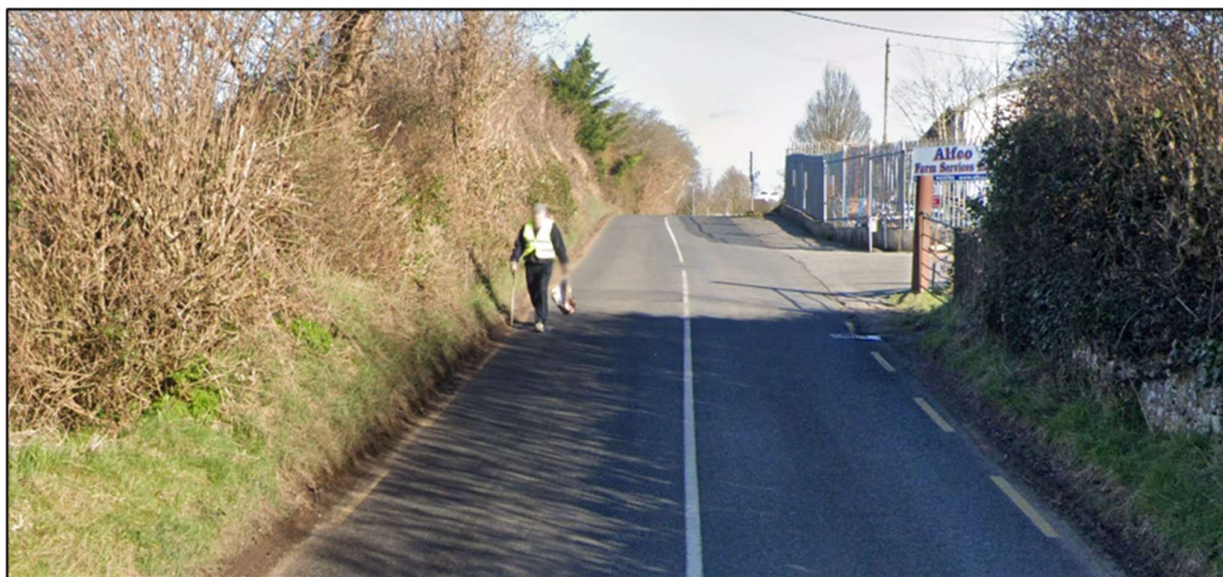


Figure 2-6 L8017 Newtown Road (Google Map imagery © 2021)

2.2 STRATEGIC FIT

The following sections describe a non-exhaustive list of European, National, Regional and Local Policy Documents and Guidelines which contain clear policy objectives to promote and develop sustainable transport and cycling initiatives which directly support the development of cycling / walking infrastructure projects such as the development described in this report.

2.2.1 European Policy and Guidelines

'Europe 2020 – A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth' puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Sustainable transport strategy is set out under the "sustainable growth" priority, through flagship Initiative: "Resource efficient Europe", which supports a shift towards a resource efficient and low carbon economy.

European Cyclists' Federation's EU Cycling Strategy: Recommendations for Delivering Green Growth and an Effective Mobility in 2030" is the result of a systematic review of all EU policies related to cycling. The central objectives of the plan are as follows:

- Cycling should be an equal partner in the mobility system.
- Grow cycle use in the EU by 50% at an average in 2019/2020-2030.
- Cut rates of cyclists killed and seriously injured by half (in km cycled) in 2019/2020-2030
- Raise EU investment in cycling to €3bn in 2021-27; and €6bn from 2028-34.

2.2.2 National Policy and Guidelines

Project Ireland 2040 is the Irish Governments overarching policy initiative for the long-term planning of the State. It is informed by the Programme for a Partnership Government 2016, which recognises that economic and social progress go hand in hand and is made up of the "National Planning Framework to 2040" and the "National Development Plan 2018-2027".

2.2.2.1 National Planning Framework (NPF) to 2040

One of the principal purposes of preparing the NPF is to allow shared national development goals, including improved living standards, quality of life, prosperity, competitiveness & environmental sustainability, to be more broadly considered. In particular, the Newtown Road Trim Active Travel Scheme aims to provide based on the below NPF objectives;

- NPO15: Support the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging growth and arresting decline in areas that have experienced low population growth or decline in recent decades and by managing the growth of areas that are under strong urban influence to avoid over-development, while sustaining vibrant rural communities.
- NPO17: Enhance, integrate and protect the special physical, social, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets through appropriate and sensitive use now and for future generations.
- NPO18a: Support the proportionate growth of and appropriately designed development in rural towns that will contribute to their regeneration and renewal, including interventions in the public realm, the provision of amenities, the acquisition of sites and the provision of services.
- NPO27: Ensure the integration of safe & convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking & cycling accessibility to both existing & proposed developments & integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.
- NPO64: Improve air quality & help prevent people being exposed to unacceptable levels of pollution in our urban & rural areas through integrated land use & spatial planning that supports public transport, walking & cycling as more favourable modes of transport to the private car, the promotion of energy efficient buildings & homes, heating systems with zero local emissions, green infrastructure planning & innovative design solutions.

2.2.2.2 National Development Plan 2018 – 2027

- The NDP outlines several key rural initiatives, that set out to revitalise rural areas & to enhance economic growth. As part of the above plan, the Rural Recreation Infrastructure Scheme supports the development & necessary maintenance, enhancement or promotion of infrastructure – covering a broad spectrum & range of active travel developments.
- NSO4: Sustainable Mobility

2.2.2.3 National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI)

NIFTI has been developed to ensure sectoral investment is aligned with the National Planning Framework (NPF) and supports the delivery of the ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) in the National Development Plan. As the economy has grown in recent years, transport activity and emissions have risen also, and the correlation between emissions and economic growth must be broken. This will require considerable investment in walking, cycling and public transport, which will also bring environmental benefits in terms of air quality and noise pollution. It is essential that sustainable mobility alternatives take account of the needs of transport users whose experience has not always been well considered in the design of transport systems to provide viable alternatives to car travel that are accessible to all.

NIFTI sets out the following investments priorities relevant to this project:

- **Investment Priority:** Decarbonisation – “Decarbonisation and protection of our natural environment will mean investing in sustainable modes so that transport users have safe, accessible, reliable and efficient alternatives to the private car.”
- **Investment Priority:** Protection and Renewal – “Protecting and renewing the existing land transport network is a key priority for transport investment.” “Necessary improvements to ensure safety or increase accessibility are considered a form of asset protection and renewal.”
- **Investment Priority:** Enhanced Regional and Rural Connectivity: - “The types of measures that might be supported under this Investment Priority are diverse and will depend on specific

transport needs and local contexts but could include the introduction of a regional bus service in an area poorly served by public transport or the realignment of a road to improve safety, journey speeds and reliability.”

2.2.2.4 Climate Action Plan 2021

The Climate Action Plan sets out a range of measures to reduce emissions in the transport sector. These measures consist of a mix of investments in sustainable transport infrastructure designed to deliver an additional 500,000 daily journeys by walking, cycling and public transport. Under chapter 15 “Transport” the following climate actions are identified and considered relevant to this project:

- **Action 231** - Continue the improvement and expansion of the Active Travel
- **Action 233** – Construct an additional 1,000km of cycling and walking infrastructure.
- **Action 234** – Encourage an increased level of modal shift towards Active Travel (walking and cycling) and away from private car use.

2.2.3 Local Policy and Guidelines

2.2.3.1 Meath County Council Development Plan 2021- 2027

- ED OBJ 72: To continue to implement and facilitate environmental, amenity and recreational improvements to the public realm, including the restriction where appropriate of vehicle use in existing Core Retail Areas.
- ED OBJ 73: To promote and facilitate on-street activities including festivals, events, street markets and farmers / country markets in all existing retail centres.
- 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.
- 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 POL 22: To prioritise the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists in proximity to public transport nodes.
- 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.

2.2.3.2 Trim Written Statement – County Development Plan 2021-2027

The scheme is compatible with many of Meath County Council’s movement objectives and policies for Trim as outlined in the Trim Written Statement:

- TRM OBJ POL1: To continue to support the consolidation of Trim as an attractive heritage town with a diverse modern economy and a vibrant centre complementing its nationally significant cultural heritage and picturesque setting.
- TRM OBJ 12: To support and promote existing festivals and events to increase the cultural, heritage and lifestyle profile of Trim, subject to the satisfactory location, access, parking provision and protection of the surrounding environment.

3.0 DESIGN OF THE SCHEME

The proposed development has been designed in accordance with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Publications (Standards), (formally NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB)) and the Department of Transport's Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS).

3.1 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

Option Selection in accordance with TII PMG-02043 was carried out to identify an emerging preferred option to bring to Part 8 planning. 9 preliminary options were passed through the preliminary assessment and brought forward for Stage 2 Options assessment. The options looked at included 'Do-Nothing' and 'Do-Minimum' approaches along with 7 design options within the Study Area.

The Stage 2 assessment is carried out in accordance with the TII Project Management Appraisal Guidelines for minor projects (€0.5 – €5m). This includes a Multi Criteria Analysis tool in line with the below documents:

- TII PE-PMG-02043: Project Manager's Manual for Minor National Road Projects
- TII PE-PMG-02037: Project Appraisal Guidelines for National Roads Unit 14.0 – Minor Projects (€0.5m to €5m)
- TII PE-PMG-02031: Project Appraisal Guidelines for National Roads Unit 7.0 - Multi Criteria Analysis

Following the Multi-Criteria analysis under the headings of:

- Economy
- Safety
- Environment
- Accessibility & Social Inclusion
- Integration; and
- Physical Activity

3.1.1 Section 1 Preferred Option

Design Option 1 was identified as the emerging preferred option for section 1 to move forward to preliminary design. This option consists of continuous pedestrian infrastructure along the Northbound side Newtown Road to link with the R161 Navan Road, providing a continuous loop (Figure 3-1).

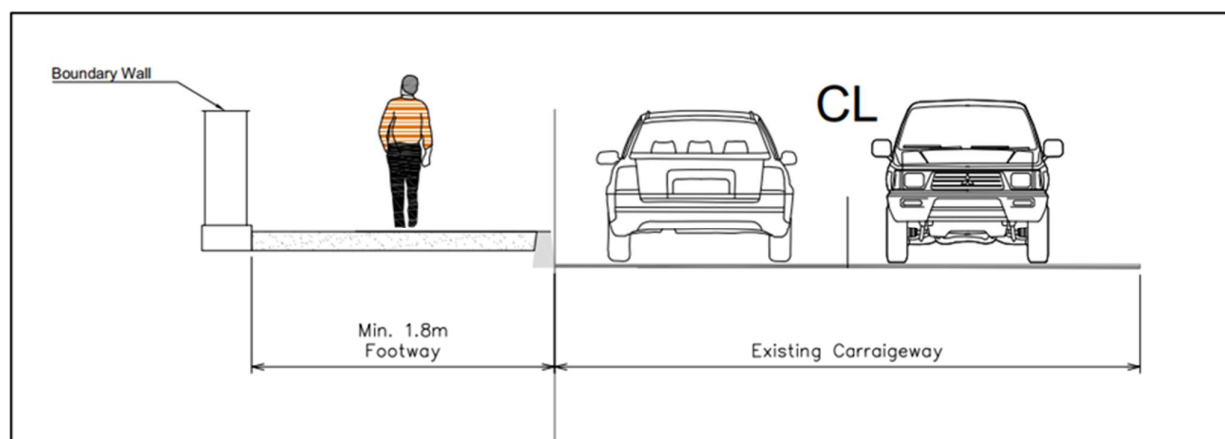


Figure 3-1 Preferred Option Section 1 (i) - Minimum 1.8m footway on northbound side

3.1.2 Section 2 Preferred Option Assessment

Design Option 1 was identified as the emerging preferred option for section 2 to move forward to preliminary design. This option consists of the provision of a segregated 2.5m walkway through lands to the north of the junction at St. Peter's Bridge (Figure 3-2).

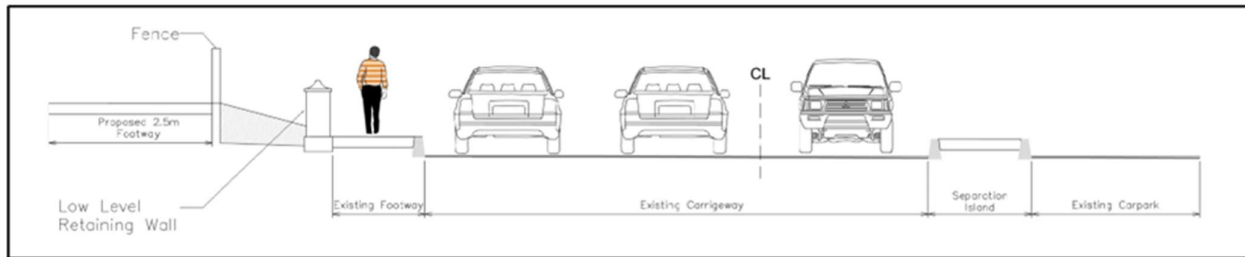


Figure 3-2 Preferred Option Section 2 - Offline 2.5m footway through lands north of existing roadway

Table 3-1 Options Selection Appraisal Matrix

Section	Junction (Section 2)		L0816 Newtown Road (Section 1)		
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Economy	2	1	1	2	3
Safety	2	1	2	3	1
Environment	2	1	2	1	2
Accessibility and Social Inclusion	2	1	2	2	1
Integration	1	1	1	1	2
Physical Activity	1	1	1	1	1
Overall Integration Ranking	2	1	1	3	2

3.2 PROPOSED DESIGN

Refer to the Overall Scheme Layout, General Arrangement, Cross Sections, Details and other drawings in Appendix B to this report.

The principal feature of the proposed development is the delivery of high-quality pedestrian facilities along a busy section of road that has no, or substandard pedestrian facilities. This scheme will complete missing pedestrian connectivity along the Newtown Road (L8017) and Link Road (L8016) in Trim, connecting the R161 to the R154 on the south and eastern side of a large housing development on the outskirts of the town.

It will improve safety for pedestrians by the provision of dedicated walking facilities with public lighting. It will create a sustainable mode of active travel access to the primary and secondary schools in the town and to local amenities. It will provide improved linkages to public transport on the R161 and the R154 and will encourage walking as a sustainable mode of transport for workers in the Town Centre and the Trim Retail Park. It is envisaged that most of the new walking facilities can be accommodated in the road curtilage, but additional lands will be required from private landowners. Details are as follows:

3.2.1 Alignment

Works on the proposed scheme are limited to the provision of dedicated online and offline walking facilities. The existing carriageway geometry will not be modified.

3.2.2 Footpaths, Civic Space & Cycleway

New footway layout which will connect to existing on the R161 at the junction with the L8017 and will follow the L8017 south for a distance 470m. From this point the pedestrian facilities will be taken offline into a green field site on the Western side of the Newtown Road for a distance of 200m. The offline facilities will then connect into an existing path which provides pedestrian access to the Newtown Abbey Housing estate from the Link Road. The total length of the scheme is approximately 675m.

3.2.3 Public Transport

There are no bus stops located within the study area. However, the proposed scheme will create a sustainable mode of active travel access to the primary and secondary schools in the town and to local amenities. It will provide improved linkages to public transport on the R161 and the R154 and will encourage walking as a sustainable mode of transport for workers in the Town Centre and the Trim Retail Park.

3.2.4 Drainage

It is proposed that the existing drainage provision be retained where possible with new gullies provided where the proposed footpath interacts with existing gullies.

3.2.5 Earthworks/Excavations

Earthworks and excavations are expected to be minimal on the scheme given the existing infrastructure in place. TOBIN have carried out a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment given the potential for Archaeological findings or impact on any culturally significant areas during any excavations. TOBIN will work closely with Meath County Council Heritage and Conservation officers on method statements to ensure a final product in keeping with the character of the local surroundings.

3.2.6 Landscaping & Lighting

Landscaping and Lighting redesign & assessment will be undertaken to ensure that the proposed development will successfully integrate and enhance the urban area and supplement the existing environment without compromising the existing landscape character. Landscaping will aim to significantly improve the character of the area and appeal to the community particularly noting the strong sense of character the village has and strong ethos being provide by local community groups.

3.2.7 Temporary Traffic Management

The alignment of the project is primarily off-line within the Study Area. However, works to enable Construction of the scheme will potentially have an impact on traffic and pedestrian movements in the area to enable upgrade works. It is envisaged that Temporary Traffic Management can be put in place to minimise impact to traffic in the area.

3.2.8 Public Utilities

Existing public utilities impacted by the proposed development will be diverted, altered or protected as necessary to accommodate the works. These include telecommunications and electricity supplies.

3.2.9 *Construction Compound Site*

The Construction of the Newtown Trim Active Travel Scheme will require one main site compound for the duration of the Construction works. A suitable location for the Compound will be identified and chosen by the Contractor in agreement with Meath County Council within a close proximity to the site.

The compound will provide accommodation for the following:

- Site offices with canteen, toilet and washing facilities;
- Parking for staff, plant and machinery;
- Storage areas for construction materials; and
- Temporary working areas for prefabricating construction elements.

The construction compound will be kept to the minimum size required to construct the Scheme. A Construction Management Plan (CMP) will be developed by the contractor which will detail access and egress arrangements for the duration of the construction of the scheme. The CMP will also detail measures to be put in place to reduce the risk of pollution incidents within the site compound and around the entire site. The CMP will also detail noise, dust and vibration measures to be undertaken by the Contractor to minimise impact to the area given the sensitive nature of Schools, residences and other businesses.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING

TOBIN ecologists have carried out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening of the preferred option against the criteria set out under Annexes I, II and III of the EU Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (EIA Directive) and as transposed into Irish Law.

The EIA Screening report has been issued to Meath County Council for the project as competent Authority.

The EIA Screening Report Concluded.

“The proposed development does not meet or exceed Schedule 5, Part 1 or Part 2 thresholds and criteria, and as such, EIA is not mandatory. In addition, the proposed road improvement scheme does not meet or exceed thresholds or criteria set out under Sections 50 or 51 of the Roads Act 1993, as amended. As such, EIA is not mandatory.

The proposed development can be considered a sub-threshold project under Part 2 Class 10 (b) (iv). A screening determination is required for a sub-threshold development.

An EIA screening has been carried out considering the nature of the proposed development, its size and location having due regard to the criteria listed in Schedule 7 and the relevant information listed in Schedule 7A. It is concluded that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and that the preparation and submission of an environmental impact report is not required.

Furthermore, the proposed development is anticipated to result in long term positive effects on safety for pedestrians by the provision of dedicated walking facilities with public lighting and it will create a sustainable mode of active travel transport usage.”

The EIA has not determined any potential ecological impacts associated with the proposed works. TOBIN have also procured an independent Tree condition assessment to determine the breakdown and quality of the existing trees which may be impacted by proposed works.

A copy of the EIA Screening Report is included in Appendix C.

5.0 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING

TOBIN Ecologists have also carried out an Appropriate Assessment Screening on behalf of Meath County Council as the competent authority. Appropriate Assessment is an assessment of whether a plan or project, alone and/or in-combination with other plans or projects, may have significant effects on a European site, collectively known as the Natura 2000 network, in view of the site’s conservation objectives.

The project design has sought to, in as far as possible, avoid impacts on European sites. The AA Screening considers the final design. It determines if direct, indirect and/or in-combination effects could arise, or if there is uncertainty regarding potential effects.

The AA process is an assessment of the potential for likely significant effects or negative effects of a plan or project, alone and/or in-combination with other plans or projects, on the conservation objectives of a European site(s). The Natura 2000 network is made up of European sites including Special Protection Areas (SPAs), established under the EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) (more generally referred to as the ‘Birds Directive’) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), established under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (more generally referred to as the ‘Habitats Directive’). The Natura 2000 network helps provide for the protection and long-term survival of Europe’s most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

The Screening Stage of the AA process identifies any likely significant effects upon European sites from the proposed development alone or in-combination with other projects or plans. A series of questions are asked during the Screening Stage of the AA process to determine:

- whether a plan or project can be excluded from AA requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site; and
- whether the project or plan will have a potentially significant effect on a European site, either alone or in-combination with other projects or plans, in view of the site's conservation objectives or if residual uncertainty exists regarding potential impacts.

The AA Screening Report concluded that.

"The screening assessment has examined potential effects via source pathway linkages on designated SACs and SPAs within the Zol of the proposed development, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. A total of two European sites were identified within the Zol; the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and the River Boyne SPA.

The potential impacts of the proposed development have been considered in the context of the European sites potentially affected, their Qualifying Interests and/or Special Conservation Interests, and their Conservation Objectives. Using best scientific knowledge through an assessment of the source-pathway-receptor model, which considered the Zol of effects from the proposed development, and the potential in-combination effects with other plans or projects, it is the considered the opinion of TOBIN that the proposed development, either alone or in-combination with other projects and plans, will not result in likely significant effects on the Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests of any European site(s). As such, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is, therefore, not required for the proposed development."

Enabling the project to be advanced without the requirement for a full AA screening to be carried out.

A copy of the EIA Screening Report is included in Appendix D

6.0 CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

Moore Group was commissioned to complete a cultural heritage impact assessment of the potential impact of the proposed scheme in Newtown Trim, Co. Meath. The report has found that *"Post construction the scheme will have no surface expression and will not affect the visual amenity of any known monuments."*

The report states *"It is recommended that a programme of archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the proposed development. 'Archaeological monitoring involves an archaeologist being present during the carrying out of development works (which may include conservation works), to identify and protect archaeological deposits, features or objects which may be uncovered or otherwise affected by the works' (DAHGI 1999, 28)."*

A copy of the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment Report is included in Appendix E

7.0 JUNCTION ASSESSMENT

TOBIN traffic & transport engineers have carried out a review of the junction and are satisfied that due to the offline nature of the works at this location a junction assessment is not required.

8.0 ROAD SAFETY AUDIT & QUALITY AUDIT

A Road Safety Audit and DMURS Quality Audit have been carried out on the preliminary design for the scheme. These audits have assessed the proposed works with regards safety, access & integration, walkability and cycle provision. The items raised in these audits have and will be incorporated into the detailed design to ensure a scheme of the highest design quality with a strong focus on safety and operation for all road users.

9.0 LAND ACQUISITION AND ACCOMMODATION WORKS

Land Acquisition will be required in order to construct the proposed scheme. Outline discussions between Meath County Council and relevant landowners are currently being undertaken to discuss land acquisition and accommodation works.

Accommodation works will be required along the route for any landowners directly impacted by the project. In Consultation with landowners, this includes paving & footpath works, boundary retaining walls, screening, relocation of access points, ducting and kerbing works.

10.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Plans and particulars of the proposed Newtown Trim Active Travel Scheme development will be available for inspection for the duration of the inspection period as referenced in the Notices, included in Appendix A

Appendix A: Notice of Proposed Development (Newspaper & Site)



Appendix B: Proposed Scheme Drawings



Appendix C: Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report



Appendix D: Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Appendix E: Cultural Heritage Assessment Report



Appendix F: DMURS Quality Audit Report



Appendix G: Visualisations of the Proposed Development