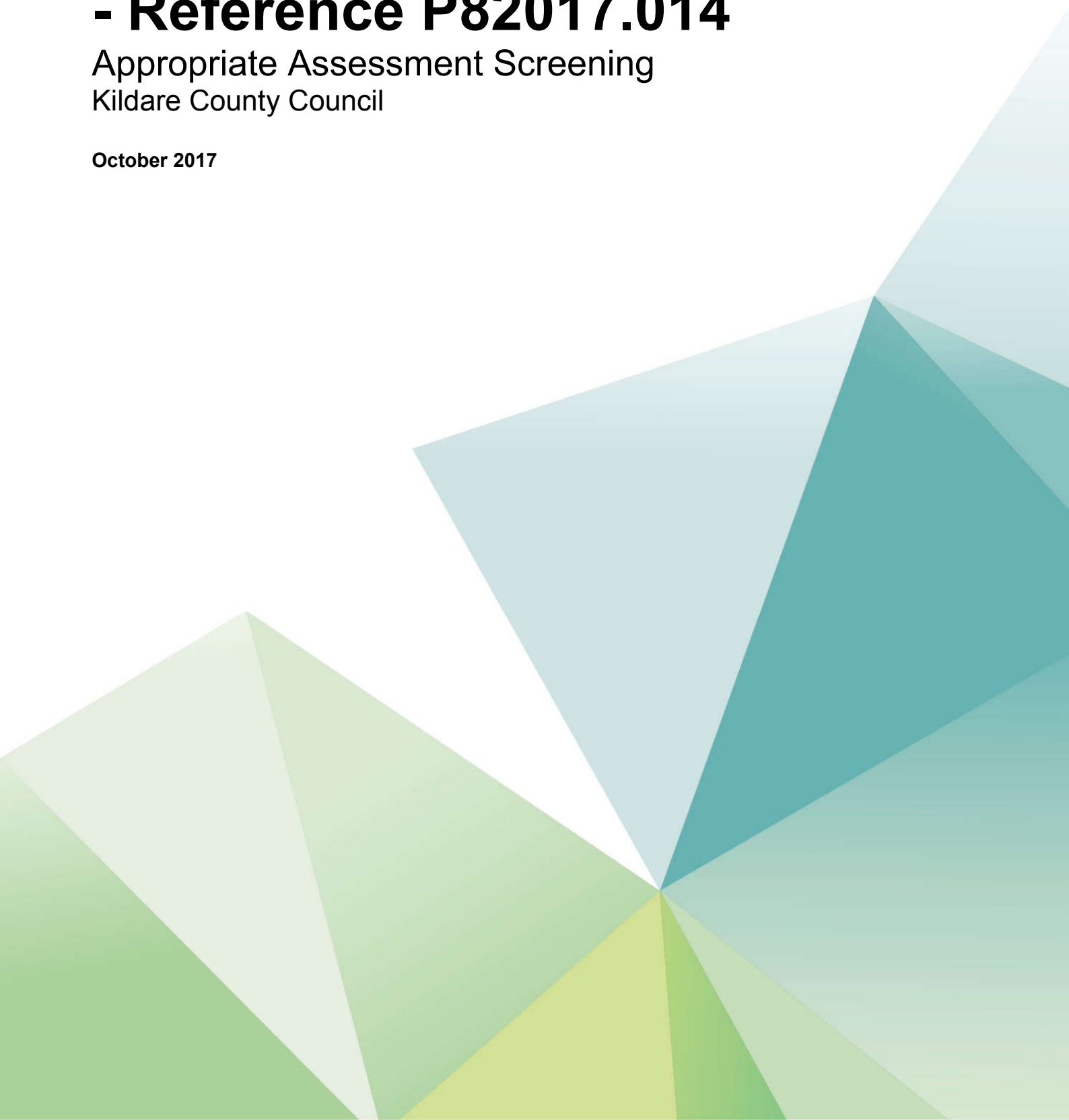


Naas to Kill Cycle Scheme - Reference P82017.014

Appropriate Assessment Screening
Kildare County Council

October 2017



Document history

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Atkins was commissioned by Kildare County Council (KCC), in partnership with the National Transport Authority (NTA), to undertake the preparation of Part 8 planning applications for three priority cycle routes within the area of Naas, Co. Kildare. This report forms part of the supporting information for the Part 8 application for the Naas to Kill Cycle Scheme.

Scope of this Report

- 1.2. The purpose of AA screening in this case is to determine the likelihood of significant effects, if any, that the proposed cycle route from Naas to Kill, Co. Kildare could have on Natura 2000 sites.

Scheme Overview

- 1.3. Kildare County Council (KCC) in partnership with the National Transport Authority (NTA) proposes to deliver high quality cycle routes within the Naas area. Implementing policies as set out within the National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF), the NTA have developed a Cycle Network Plan (CNP) for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA).
- 1.4. This plan includes a cycle network for Naas, recognising the town as a significant population centre within the GDA with the potential to become an exemplar cycling town which can take advantage of its relatively flat topography to develop a network that will facilitate a significant increase in cycling for all trip purposes.
- 1.5. The Naas to Kill Cycle Scheme, subject of this Part 8 planning application, forms part of Route NA1 as identified within the CNP maps for the cycle network in Naas. Figure 1.1 illustrates the location of the Naas to Kill Cycle Scheme in relation to the proposed wider cycling network for Naas.

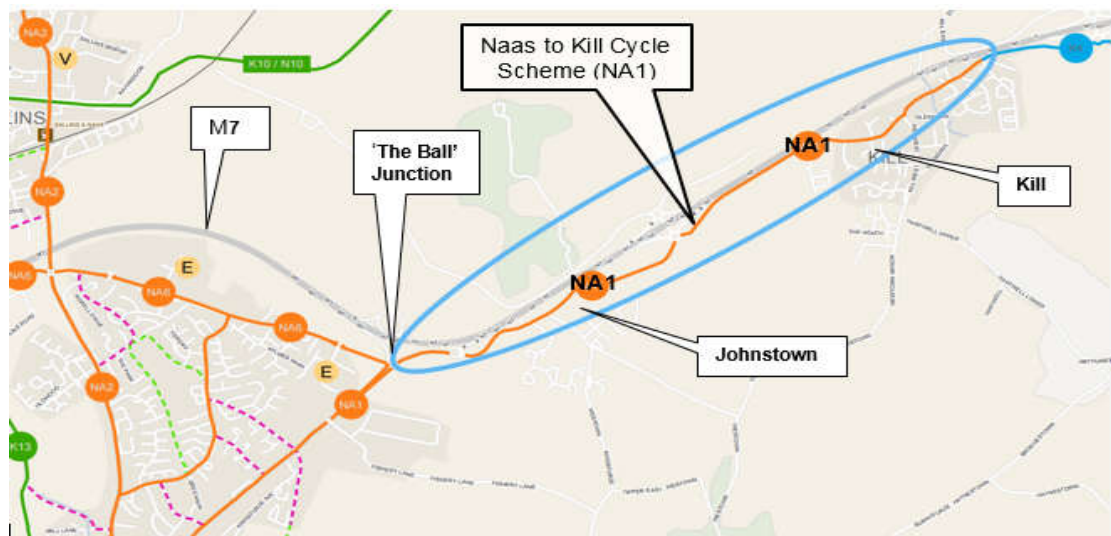


Figure 1.1 Naas Cycle Network (Extract from CNP).

- 1.6. The Naas to Kill Cycle Scheme consists of upgrading approximately 4.55km of existing shared pedestrian cycle paths and footpaths from 'The Ball' at junction 9 on the N7 in Naas through to Scoil Bhríde on the eastern side of Kill Village. The Scheme will improve connectivity of the overall existing cycle network, specifically the Dublin Road Cycle Scheme which will provide a cycle link into the town centre of Naas. To the east, the scheme will extend through the Earls Court roundabout junction in Kill and as far as Scoil Bhríde in Kill located on the western environs of Kill. The extents of the proposed cycle scheme are shown in more local detail overleaf in Figure 1-2.

Scheme Extents

1.7. The proposed scheme can be broken down into four sections:

- Section 1: 'The Ball' Roundabout (J9) in Naas to Johnstown Village;
- Section 2: Johnstown Village;
- Section 3: Johnstown Village to Kill Village;
- Section 4: Kill Village.



Figure 1.2 Scheme Extent

- 1.8. Section 1: The section from 'The Ball' at Naas to Johnstown village consists of approximately 850m of 3.0m wide shared use pedestrian and cycle path. Along this segment, the current shared pedestrian and cycle track will be effectively maintained in its current form with any appropriate improvements to signage, surfacing and lighting incorporated. The transitions proposed to the cycle provisions within Johnstown are well planned to ensure legibility, comfort and safety.
- 1.9. Section 2: The section of the scheme within Johnstown is comprised of approximately 500m of road and street carriageway and footpath through Johnstown Village. Within the village it is proposed to implement speed management and traffic calming measures. This will facilitate a self-regulating 30kph speed limit environment which, in turn, will facilitate a shared street mixed traffic regime wherein cyclists will cycle on street. Pedestrians will utilise the existing footpaths. There are no works proposed to the existing footpaths within this section of the scheme.
- 1.10. Section 3: The section of the scheme between Johnstown and Kill consists of approximately 1.7km of 3.0m wide shared use pedestrian and cycle path. Along this segment, the current shared pedestrian and cycle track will be effectively maintained in its current form with any appropriate improvements to signage, surfacing and lighting incorporated. The transitions proposed to the cycle provisions within Kill are well planned to ensure legibility, comfort and safety.
- 1.11. Section 4: The Kill Village section consists of approximately 1.5km of road and street carriageway through Kill Village. Within the village it is proposed to implement speed management and traffic

calming measures. This will facilitate a self-regulating 30kph speed limit environment which, in turn, will facilitate a shared street mixed traffic regime wherein cyclists will cycle on street. In addition, due to the significant volume of trips to and from Scoil Bhríde, located at the eastern end of the village, and Kill GAA club players to the west end of Kill, it is also proposed to provide an off road cycle provision within the village for use, in particular, by younger cyclists. This will operate as a shared pedestrian and cycle path through the village. The provision is to be achieved by upgrading the existing footpath and making alterations to the southern kerblines along the road and street carriageway in Kill. The route on approach to Scoil Bhríde will also benefit from an upgrade of the Earls court junction to a raised priority controlled junction and the upgrade of the school access junction to a mini roundabout junction.

Design Drawings

1.12. A full set of design drawings which accompany the Part 8 Planning application are included in Appendix A as follows: -

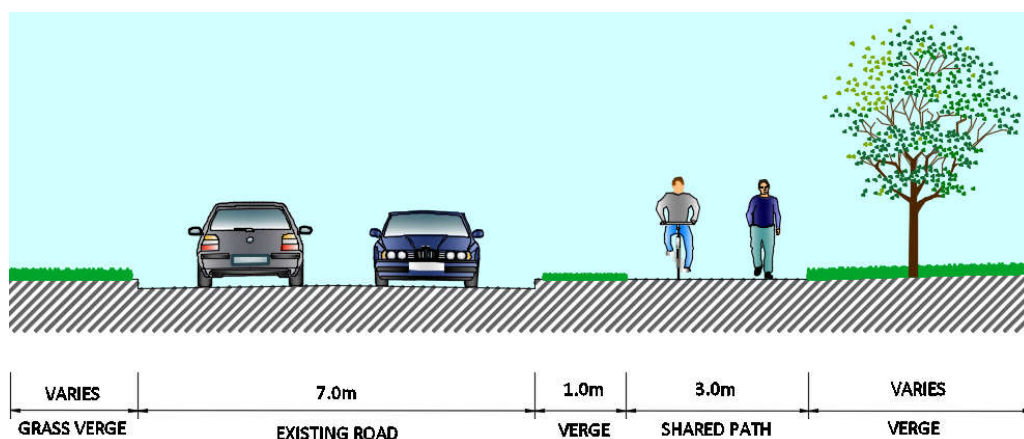
- 5139616/HW/P8/0010 Part 8 Coversheet
- 5139616/HW/P8/0011 Part 8 Site Location Plan
- 5139616/HW/P8/0012 Part 8 Site Extents – Sheet 1 of 2
- 5139616/HW/P8/0013 Part 8 Site Extents – Sheet 2 of 2
- 5139616/HW/P8/810 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 1 of 9
- 5139616/HW/P8/811 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 2 of 9
- 5139616/HW/P8/812 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 3 of 9
- 5139616/HW/P8/813 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 4 of 9
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- 5139616/HW/P8/815 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 6 of 9
- 5139616/HW/P8/816 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 7 of 9
- 5139616/HW/P8/817 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 8 of 9
- 5139616/HW/P8/818 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 9 of 9

Description of Proposed Scheme

Section 1: The Ball Roundabout to Johnstown

- 1.13. The proposed Cycle Scheme along this section of the route is to consist of the existing shared use pedestrian and cycle path in conjunction with minor measures to improve comfort and coherence. It is considered that this proposal offers the required quality of service at a low cost.
- 1.14. As such, the shared use pedestrian and cycle path extends 850m from 'The Ball' Roundabout to Johnstown village. The existing shared path has a width of generally 3.0m with a 1.0m verge to either side. The required minor improvements will include some local shared path resurfacing and associated signage where considered necessary.
- 1.15. The route section connects with existing pedestrian and cycle provision at the Ball Roundabout which in turn joins up with the Dublin Road Scheme in Naas. Figure 1-3 illustrates a schematic cross-section of the proposed link type.

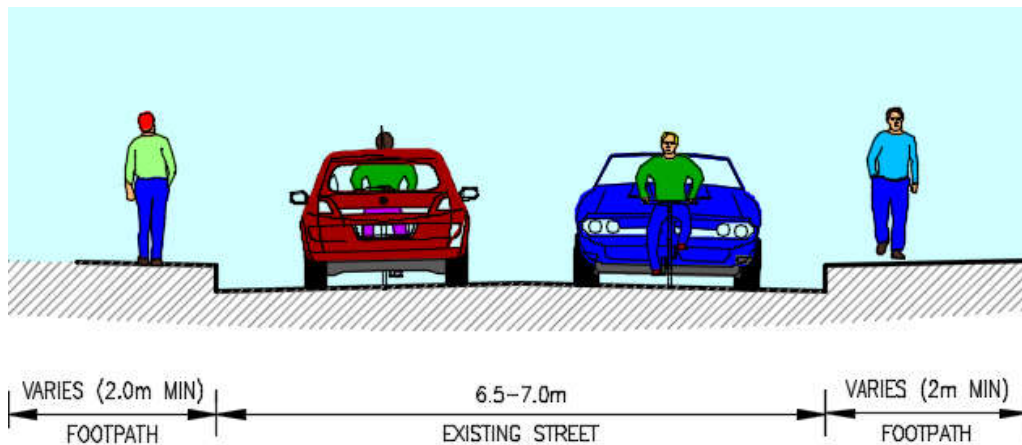
Figure 1-3: Section 1: Proposed Cross-Section



Section 2: Johnstown Village

- 1.16. Through Johnstown village the route will operate as a shared street facility whereby cyclists will share the street with vehicular traffic. The existing footpath will remain on either side of the carriageway to facilitate pedestrians as at present.
- 1.17. Shared street facilities are an entirely appropriate cycling provision for village environments and ensure that such villages retain their character. The shared street provision will tie back into the shared use pedestrian and cycle path at both approaches to Johnstown Village. These transition points will be facilitated through gateway treatments consisting of buildouts to form a 6.0m wide locally narrowed carriageway. This will encourage speed reduction on approach to the village and a wide raised crossing point located on the village side of this gateway will facilitate cyclists transitioning between the street carriageway and the shared path.
- 1.18. Additional speed management measures are to be implemented in the form of raised table junctions with reduced junction radii and raised table crossing points in order to create the self-regulating 30kph speed limit through the village.
- 1.19. The route section connects to the existing shared pedestrian and cycle track linking Johnstown village with Kill to the east and the shared path linking Johnstown village with Naas to the west. Figure 1.4 illustrates a schematic cross-section of the proposed link type.

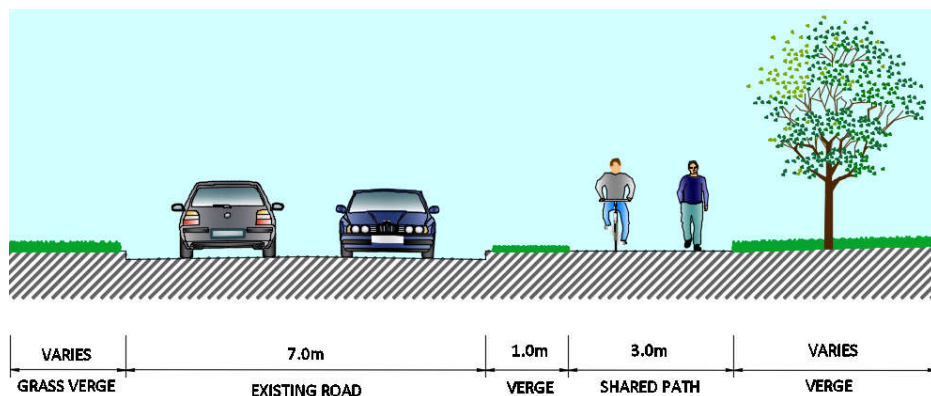
Figure 1-4: Section 2: Proposed Cross-Section



Section 3: Johnstown Village to Kill Village

- 1.20. The proposed Cycle Scheme along this section of the route is to consist of the existing shared use pedestrian and cycle path in conjunction with low cost measures to improve comfort and coherence. It is considered that this proposal offers the highest quality of service without resulting in significant works to the existing carriageway for only a marginal benefit to the quality of service.
- 1.21. As such, the shared use pedestrian and cycle path extends 1.7km from Johnstown Village to Kill Village. The existing shared path has a width of generally 3.0m with a 1.0m grass verge to either side. Improvements and upgrades will be implemented to the shared path surfacing, verge and associated signage where considered necessary.
- 1.22. The route section connects with existing pedestrian and cycle provisions from Johnstown village and also with provisions in Kill village. Figure 1-5 illustrates a schematic cross-section of the proposed link type.

Figure 1-5: Section 3 Proposed Cross-Section



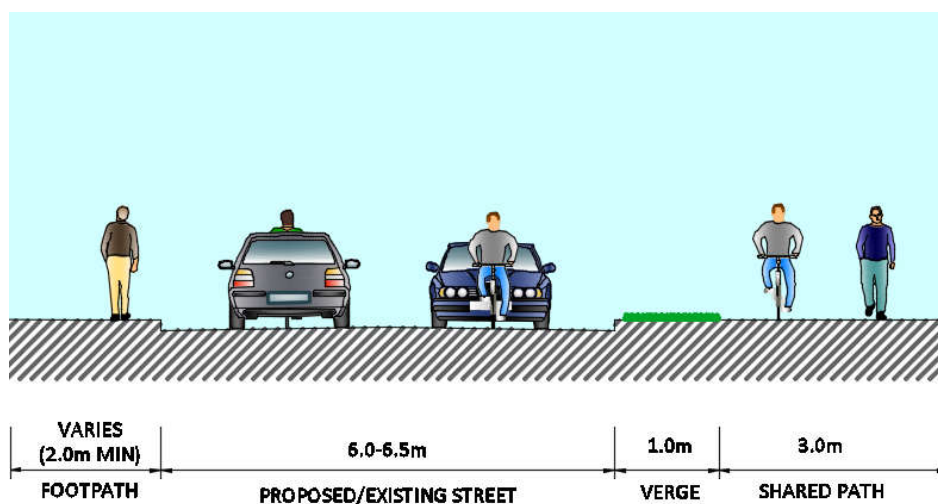
Section 4: Kill Village (Including route to Scoil Bhríde)

- 1.23. Through Kill village the route will operate with dual provision consisting of a shared street facility whereby cyclists will share the street with vehicular traffic and a segregated 3.0m wide shared use pedestrian and cycle path.
- 1.24. Shared street facilities are an entirely appropriate cycling provision for village environments and ensure that such villages retain their character. The shared street provision will tie back into the shared use pedestrian and cycle path at both approaches to Kill Village. These transition points will be facilitated through gateway treatments consisting of buildouts to form a 6.0m wide locally

narrowed carriageway. This will encourage speed reduction on approach to the village and a wide raised crossing point located on the village side of this gateway will facilitate cyclists transitioning between the street carriageway and the shared path.

- 1.25. Additional speed management measures are to be implemented in the form of raised table junctions and raised table crossing points in order to promote lower speeds through the village and slower turning movements at junctions.
- 1.26. The proposed 3.0m shared pedestrian and cycle facility will run adjacent the southern side of the existing street carriageway. The existing carriageway will be reduced to 6.5m to facilitate this path. The shared use path will predominantly facilitate children and less confident cyclists travelling through Kill Village.
- 1.27. Earls Court Junction is upgraded to a raised priority controlled junction designed to reduce approaching vehicular speeds and ensure that all drivers are aware of each other's presence and that of pedestrians and cyclists. The access to Scoil Bhríde is proposed as a mini roundabout. This will give greater priority to vehicles right turning in to and out of the school grounds, slow approach speeds of through traffic and ease traffic management issues at the school. The proposed mini roundabout central island is designed to slow small vehicles down, forcing them to turn around the island but will allow for larger vehicles to overrun, particularly for those larger vehicles wishing to gain entry to the school grounds. . Between both junctions the shared path provision is provided in the form of a 4.0m wide path with adjacent 1.0m verge. The road is narrowed to 6.0m and the right turn lane, now redundant, is removed.
- 1.28. A cross section of the proposed section is illustrated in Figure 1-6 below.

Figure 1.6: Section 4 Proposed Cross-Section



2. Appropriate Assessment Process

Requirement for Appropriate Assessment

- 2.1. The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora) forms the basis for the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Similarly, Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are legislated for under the Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds). The Habitats and Birds Directives is transposed into Irish law by the EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (Statutory Instrument No. 477 / 2011). Collectively, SAC and SPA are referred to as the Natura 2000 network. In general terms, they are considered to be of exceptional importance for rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats and species within the European Community.
- 2.2. Under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive an Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken for any plan or project that is likely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site. Article 6, paragraph 3 of the EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (“the Habitats Directive”) states that: -

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public”.

The Stages in Appropriate Assessment

- 2.3. There are up to 4 stages in the Appropriate Assessment process as outlined in the European Commission Guidance document (EC, 2001). The following is a brief summary of these stages (each of which is dependent on the outcome of the previous).
- Stage 1 - Screening: This stage examines the likely effects of a plan or project either alone or in combination with other projects upon a Natura 2000 Site and considers whether it can be objectively concluded that these effects will not be significant.
 - Stage 2 - Appropriate Assessment: In this stage, the impact of the plan or project on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site is considered with respect to the conservation objectives of the site and to its structure and function.
 - Stage 3 - Assessment of Alternative Solutions: Should the Appropriate Assessment determine that adverse impacts are likely upon a Natura 2000 site, this stage examines alternative ways of implementing the plan or project that, where possible, avoid these adverse impacts.
 - Stage 4 - Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain: Where imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist, an assessment to consider whether compensatory measures will or will not effectively offset the damage to the Natura 2000 site will be necessary.

Methodology Used

- 2.4. The Appropriate Assessment process begins with Stage 1 - Screening to determine if a plan or project is likely to have an impact on a Natura 2000 site. The methodology used to complete the Appropriate Assessment screening follows best practice guidance, including: -
- Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna (Habitats Directive);
 - Statutory Instrument No. 477/2011 — European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011;
 - European Commission (2000). Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC;
 - European Commission (2001) Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
 - European Commission (2007). Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/49/EEC; clarification of the concepts of: Alternative solutions, Imperative reasons of overriding public interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence, Opinion of the Commission; and
 - Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities.
- 2.5. Locations and boundaries of all Natura 2000 sites within the zone of influence of the proposed works were identified and reviewed using the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) online map viewer (accessed 07/6/2016). Boundary *shapefiles* were also downloaded from this site to facilitate the preparation of project graphics.
- 2.6. Desktop information on relevant Natura 2000 sites was reviewed on the NPWS website, including the site synopsis for each SAC/SPA, the conservation objectives, the site boundaries as shown on the NPWS online map viewer, the standard Natura 2000 Data Form for the SAC/SPA which details conditions and threats to the sites, and published information and unpublished reports on the relevant Natura 2000 sites.

Desk Study

- 2.7. A desk study was carried out to collate information available on Natura 2000 sites in the vicinity of the proposed cycle scheme. The Site and the surrounding area was viewed using Google Earth, Google maps¹ and Bing maps² (last accessed on 6th March 2017). The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and NBDC online databases were consulted concerning Natura 2000 sites and their features of interest in the vicinity of the Site.

Consultation

- 2.8. The proposed cycle scheme will progress through Part 8 planning and as part of this process the local authority will consult with National Parks and Wildlife Service through the Development Applications Unit of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Screening Process

- 2.9. The AA screening process is as follows: -

¹ <https://www.google.ie/maps> including Google Street view.

² <http://www.bing.com/maps/>

- Identify Natura 2000 sites, within the potential zone of influence of the proposed Cycle Scheme.
- Identify the features of interest of the Natura 2000 sites and review their conservation objectives.
- Review whether there is potential for the features of interest to be affected by the proposed Cycle Scheme such as the vulnerabilities of the Natura 2000 site, proximity to the Site and the nature and scale of the works associated with the scheme.
- Consider the likelihood of potential impacts occurring based on the information collated and professional judgement.
- Where potential impacts have been identified consider the likelihood of cumulative impacts arising from the proposed cycle scheme in-combination with other plans and projects.
- Identify the likelihood of significant effects on Natura 2000 sites occurring as a result of the proposed cycle scheme.

Statement of Authority

- 2.10. The appropriate assessment screening report was prepared by Elaine Dromey MCIEEM. Dr. Paul O'Donoghue MCIEEM CEnv also input to the report and carried out the technical review.
- 2.11. Elaine Dromey has worked in ecological consultancy since 2000 in both the UK and Ireland. She holds a BSc in Earth Science from University College Cork and an MSc in Vegetation Survey and Assessment from the University of Reading, UK. She is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. Elaine has worked as a senior ecologist and the project lead on a number of projects requiring the preparation of Appropriate Assessment reports. Elaine has prepared AA screening reports and Natura Impact Statements (NIS) for a range of different projects and plans including large wind farms, single turbine developments, power lines, quarry developments, anaerobic digesters, industrial development and single small developments. Elaine has also prepared and input to the preparation of AA screening reports and Natura Impact Reports (NIR) for County Development Plans (CDP), Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAP) and Masterplans. Elaine prepared this AA screening report.
- 2.12. Paul O'Donoghue has a BSc (Zoology), MSc (Behavioural Ecology) and a PhD in avian ecology and genetics. He is a chartered member of the Society for the Environment (CEnv) and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM). Paul has over 18 years' experience in ecology; including extensive experience in the preparation of Habitat Directive Assessments / Natura Impact Statements (i.e. Appropriate Assessment under Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive). Paul input to the preparation of this report and carried out the technical review.

3. Designated Areas

- 3.1. A distance of 15 km is currently recommended in the case of plans, as a potential zone of influence, and this distance is derived from Irish and UK guidance (DoEHLG, 2009). For projects, the distance could be much less than 15km, and in some cases less than 100m, but National Parks and Wildlife Service guidance (DoEHLG, 2009) advises that this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in-combination effects.
- 3.2. The proposed Naas to Kill Cycle Scheme does not lie within or immediately adjoining any Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas for birds. A distance of 15 km is adopted as a potential zone of influence for the purposes of preparing this report.

Identification of Natura 2000 Sites

- 3.3. This section of the report identifies Natura 2000 sites within the potential zone of influence of the proposed Naas – Kill Cycle Scheme. Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are also identified within the following section as many overlap with Natura 2000 sites. Proposed Natural Heritage were published on a non-statutory basis in 1995 but have never been statutorily designated. These sites are subject to limited protection under agri-environmental farm planning schemes and county development plans.

Special Protection Areas

- 3.4. There is one SPA within 15 km of the proposed Naas to Kill Cycle Scheme. The SPA is also a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) (see Table 3.1; Figure 3.1).
- 3.5. Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA is classified for wintering populations of greylag goose *Anser anser* and lesser black-backed gull *Larus fuscus*. Boland and Crowe (2008)³ note that greylag goose has been recorded predominantly at Threecastles to the northeast of Blessington Bridge, and also at Mountseskin in southwest County Dublin.
- 3.6. The proposed Naas – Kill Cycle Scheme does not have the potential to impact on either greylag goose or roosting lesser black-backed gull by virtue of the very minor scale of the proposed works associated with the scheme, the distance between the scheme and the SPA and the locations of the populations of the species within the SPA.
- 3.7. There is no potential for impact, direct or impact, on Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA / pNHA; due to the proposed Naas – Kill Cycle Scheme and this Natura 2000 site will not be considered further in this assessment.

Table 3.1 Special Protection Areas within 15km of the Cycle Scheme.

Site Name	Site Code	Distance from the cycle scheme	Features of Interest
Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA / pNHA	004063	9.5 km south east	Wintering populations of : - Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043] Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183]

Special Areas of Conservation

- 3.8. There are six Special Areas of Conservation within 15 km of the proposed Naas – Kill Cycle Scheme (see Table 3.2; Figure 3.1).

Table 3.2 Special Areas of Conservation within 15 km of the Cycle Scheme.

Site Name	Site Code	Distance from the proposed scheme	Features of interest	Likelihood of impacts
Red Bog, Kildare SAC / pNHA	000397	6.85 km east	Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]	<p>The proposed cycle scheme and associated works are limited to the existing road alignment. The works proposed will be minor in nature.</p> <p>The SAC is not linked via any surface water pathways to the proposed Cycle Scheme. Given the distance between the SAC and the proposed scheme it is not considered likely that the proposal has potential to impact on the hydrological regime of the SAC. Impacts on Red Bog, Kildare SAC are not considered likely.</p>
Wicklow Mountains SAC	002122	14.3 km east	<p>Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130]</p> <p>Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160]</p> <p>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]</p> <p>European dry heaths [4030]</p> <p>Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</p> <p>Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230]</p> <p>Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</p> <p>Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) [8110]</p> <p>Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210]</p> <p>Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220]</p> <p>Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]</p> <p><i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</p>	<p>The proposed cycle scheme is over 14 km from the boundary of the SAC and associated works are limited to the existing road alignment and will be minor in nature.</p> <p>The proposed cycle scheme will not have any direct impacts on the features of interest of the SAC.</p> <p>There are no surface water pathways via which the proposed cycle scheme could indirectly impact the SAC. There is no connectivity⁴ between the proposed cycle scheme and the SAC.</p> <p>Given the distance between the proposed cycle scheme and the SAC, the lack of surface water pathways and other connectivity impacts on the SAC are not likely to occur.</p>
Pollardstown Fen SAC / pNHA	000396	14.5 km south - west	<p>Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210]</p> <p>Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220]</p>	<p>The proposed cycle scheme and associated works are limited to the existing road alignment. The works proposed will be minor in nature.</p>

⁴ For the purposes of this report connectivity is defined as features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora, as referred to in Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.

Site Name	Site Code	Distance from the proposed scheme	Features of interest	Likelihood of impacts
			Alkaline fens [7230] <i>Vertigo geyeri</i> (Geyer's Whorl Snail) [1013] <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016]	<p>The proposed cycle scheme is over 14 km from the boundary of the SAC and will not have any direct impacts on the features of interest of the SAC.</p> <p>There is no connectivity between the proposed cycle scheme and the SAC therefore indirect impacts are not likely to occur.</p> <p>Given the distance between the cycle scheme and the SAC, the minor nature of the proposed works and the lack of connectivity between the SAC and the cycle scheme impacts are not likely to occur as a result.</p>
Mounds Bog SAC / pNHA	002331	10.5 km south west	Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]	<p>The proposed cycle scheme and associated works are limited to the existing road alignment. The works proposed will be minor in nature.</p> <p>The proposed cycle scheme will not have any direct impacts on the features of interest of the SAC.</p> <p>The SAC is not linked via any surface water pathways to the proposed Cycle Scheme.</p> <p>Given the distance between the SAC and the proposed scheme and the lack of connectivity between them it is not considered likely that the proposed cycle scheme has potential to impact on the SAC.</p>
Ballynafagh Lake SAC / pNHA	001387	12.8 km west	Alkaline fens [7230] <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016] <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]	<p>The proposed cycle scheme and associated works are limited to the existing road alignment. The works proposed will be minor in nature.</p> <p>The proposed cycle scheme will not have any direct impacts on the features of interest of the SAC.</p> <p>The SAC is not linked via any surface water pathways to the proposed Cycle Scheme.</p> <p>Given the distance between the SAC and the proposed scheme and the lack of connectivity between them it is not considered likely that the proposed cycle scheme has potential to impact on the SAC.</p>

Site Name	Site Code	Distance from the proposed scheme	Features of interest	Likelihood of impacts
Ballynafagh Bog SAC / pNHA	000391	11.2 km west	Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]	<p>The proposed cycle scheme and associated works are limited to the existing road alignment. The works proposed will be minor in nature.</p> <p>The proposed cycle scheme will not have any direct impacts on the features of interest of the SAC.</p> <p>The SAC is not linked via any surface water pathways to the proposed Cycle Scheme.</p> <p>Given the distance between the SAC and the proposed scheme and the lack of connectivity between them it is not considered likely that the proposed cycle scheme has potential to impact on the SAC.</p>

Natural Heritage Areas

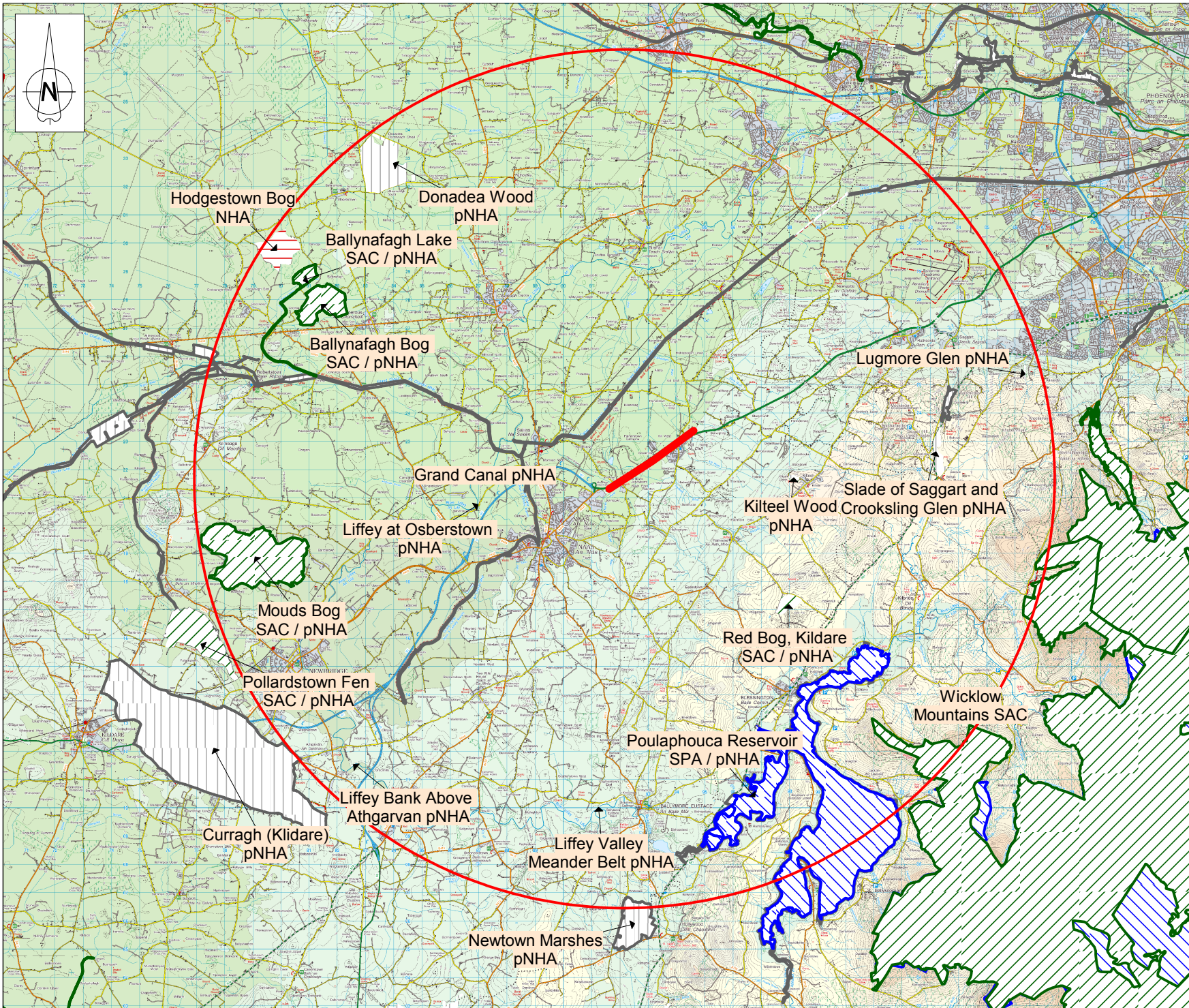
- 3.9. Proposed Natural Heritage Areas do not form part of the Natura 2000 network but, due to the proximity of the Grand Canal pNHA, consideration is also given to the potential for impact on this site. The proposed cycle scheme is just under 2km to the east of the Grand Canal pNHA (002104). The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) site synopsis for the Grand Canal pNHA highlights a number of different habitats present along the canal including hedgerow, tall herbs, calcareous grassland, reed fringe, open water, scrub and woodland. The ecological value of the canal lies more in the diversity of species it supports along its linear habitats than in the presence of rare species. Protected species recorded from the site include otter (*Lutra lutra*), smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) and opposite-leaved pondweed (*Groenlandia densa*).
- 3.10. The proposed cycle scheme and associated works are limited to the existing road alignment. The works proposed will be minor in nature. The Grand Canal pNHA is some 2 km west of the proposed cycle scheme and will not be directly or indirectly impacted by the proposed scheme.
- 3.11. Table 3.3 lists Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas within 15 km of the proposed cycle scheme (see also Table 3.1 and 3.2 for details of sites designated as pNHA / NHA and are also Natura 2000 sites; see also Figure 3.1). Given the minor nature of the proposed works and the distance from many of the pNHA / NHA sites no direct or indirect impacts are considered likely to occur as a result of the proposed cycle scheme.

Table 3.3 Details of NHAs and pNHAs within 15 km of the proposed cycle scheme.



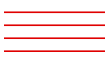



Site Name	Site Code	Distance from the proposed works	Key Features ⁵
Grand Canal pNHA	002104	2.0 km north west	A number of different habitats are present along the canal including hedgerow, tall herbs, calcareous grassland, reed fringe, open water, scrub and woodland. The ecological value of the canal lies more in the diversity of species it supports along its linear habitats than in the presence of rare species. Protected species recorded from the site include otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>), smooth newt (<i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>) and opposite-leaved pondweed (<i>Groenlandia densa</i>).
Kilteel Wood pNHA	001394	4.7 km east	A good example of deciduous woodland comprised mostly of Oak (<i>Quercus</i> spp.) and Birch (<i>Betula pubescens</i>).
The Curragh pNHA	000392	14.4 km south west	The site is most unusual in an Irish, European and even global context, in that it is an extensive open plain area of lowland acid grassland, succeeding to dry heath in places. It has been grazed but unfertilised for hundreds, perhaps even thousands of years. Because of the management regime on the open grassland, nationally important populations of rare fungi are found. Their presence best highlights the continuity of the area as a grazed, unfertilised grassland for centuries, as these fungi cannot tolerate soil disturbance or fertilising and they are only found in ancient grasslands. The site is also of ornithological interest for Golden Plover, Lapwing and nesting Meadow Pipit and Skylark.
Liffey at Osberstown pNHA	001395	4.5 km west	The main plant for which the site was originally designated was Black Willow, however the woodland has been cleared. The site has represents a good example of riverside vegetation with two scarce plants.

⁵ This information has been sourced from the site synopses available at https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/pNHA_Site_Synopsis_Portfolio.pdf for pNHA and at <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/nha> for NHA

Site Name	Site Code	Distance from the proposed works	Key Features ⁵
Liffey Bank above Athgarvan pNHA	001396	13.0 km south west	South facing unstable sandy slope. Assemblage of plants typical of disturbed and unstable habitats. Such areas of natural habitats are rare in Co. Kildare.
Liffey Valley Meander Belt pNHA	000393	10.9 km south	Site includes Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) woodlands which merge into a dense growth of Lesser Pond-sedge (<i>Carex acutiformis</i>). Important chironomid communities have been recorded from these areas. Ashwood and marshy areas are rare in Co. Kildare.
Newtown Marshes pNHA	001759	14.5 km south	Site consists of marshes and ponds. Area is of ornithological interest due to a breeding colony of Black-headed Gulls (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>). Mute swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>), Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>), Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) and Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) are also recorded as breeding here.
Slade of Saggart and Crooksling Glen pNHA	000211	9.6 km north east	The site includes a good example of a wooded river valley (Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>), Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>), Oak (<i>Quercus</i> spp.), Birch (<i>Betula</i> spp.)) and a small wetland system. Shoreweed (<i>Littorella uniflora</i>), a rare aquatic plant, is found in Brittas Ponds, a Wildfowl Sanctuary. The chalcid <i>Halticoptera patellana</i> (Hymenoptera) was recorded from the site in 1981, the only Irish record for this species up to at least 1989. The presence of a Rare plant, a Rare invertebrate and a variety of wildfowl species adds to the interest of the site.
Donadea Wood pNHA	001391	12.9 km north east	The site is notable for the presence of two rare species of Myxomycete fungus, namely <i>Diderma chondrioderma</i> and <i>Licea testudinacea</i> , the latter in one of only two known Irish sites. This site is of interest as, although highly managed, it has a significant proportion of deciduous trees and parts of the site have been wooded for a long period.
Hodgestown Bog NHA	001393	13.9 km north west	This site is of conservation significance as it is comprised of a raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of a Midland Raised Bog, consisting of Ling Heather (<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>), White Beak-sedge (<i>Rhynchospora alba</i>), Cranberry (<i>Vaccinium oxycoccos</i>) and Bog-rosemary (<i>Andromeda polifolia</i>). This site supports a good diversity of raised bog microhabitats, including hummocks.
Lugmore Glen pNHA	001212	13.2 km north east	This small wooded glen is located about 2km south-east of Saggart in Co Dublin. The importance of this site is that it is a fine example of a wooded glen with a good representation of woodland plants. This type of semi-natural habitat is now scarce in Co. Dublin.



Designated Sites

-  Special Areas of Conservation
-  Special Protection Areas
-  Natural Heritage Areas
-  Proposed Natural Heritage Areas
-  Naas - Kill Cycle Route
-  15km buffer from centre point of cycleway

Client: Kildare County Council

Project: Naas - Kill Cycle Route

Title: Designated Sites

Designed/Drawn:	OT	Checked:	OT	Authorised:	POD
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Date:	06/03/16	Date:	06/03/16	Date:	06/03/16
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Drawing No:	Figure 3.1	Rev:	0
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Dublin - Tel: 353 - 1 - 810 8000
Cork - Tel: 353 - 21 - 429 0300
Galway - Tel: 353 - 91 786050

4. Appropriate Assessment Screening Matrix

Screening Matrix

1. Description of the project or plan	
<i>Location</i>	The proposed cycle scheme is located within the existing alignment of the route between Naas and Kill, Co. Kildare.
<i>Distance from Natura 2000 site</i>	There are seven Natura 2000 sites within 15 km of the proposed cycle scheme. The distance between these sites and the proposed cycle scheme is given in Table 3.1 and 3.2 above.
<i>Brief Description of the project or plan</i>	The Naas to Kill Scheme consists of upgrading 4.25km of existing shared pedestrian cycle paths and footpaths from 'The Ball' at junction 9 in Naas through to Kill Village.
<i>Is the plan directly connected with or necessary to the site management for nature conservation?</i>	No
2. Assessment Criteria	
<i>Other plans or projects which may have a cumulative impact</i>	The proposed cycle scheme is not likely to impact any of the Natura 2000 sites identified in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 Therefore, the proposed scheme cannot act in-combination with other plans or projects to give rise to cumulative impacts on Natura 2000 sites.
<i>Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 sites.</i>	The proposed Naas – Kill cycle scheme is an upgrade of existing shared pedestrian and cycle pathways within the existing alignment of the road between Naas and Kill Village. The minor nature of the works associated with the proposed cycle scheme, the distance between the scheme and the Natura 2000 sites in addition to a lack of connectivity between the scheme and the Natura 2000 sites means that impacts on Natura 200 sites are not likely.
<i>Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Size and scale - Land-take - Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site - Resource requirements - Emissions - Excavation requirements - Transportation requirements - Duration of construction, operation etc. - Others 	There are no impacts on Natura 2000 sites likely to occur as a result of the proposed Naas – Kill Cycle Scheme.

<p><i>Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction of habitat area - Disturbance of key species - Habitat or species fragmentation - Reduction in species density - Changes in key indicators of conservation value - Climate change 	<p>Changes to Natura 2000 sites listed in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 are not likely as no impacts on Natura 2000 sites are predicted as a result of the proposed cycle scheme.</p>		
<p><i>Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site - Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site. 	<p>Impacts on Natura 2000 sites are not considered likely to occur as a result of the proposed Naas – Kill Cycle Scheme.</p>		
<p><i>Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss - Fragmentation - Disruption - Disturbance - Change to key elements of the site 	<p>Impacts as not likely to occur as a result of the proposed Naas – Kill Cycle Scheme.</p>		
<p><i>Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale of magnitude of impacts is not known.</i></p>	<p>The proposed cycle scheme and associated works are limited to the existing road alignment. The works proposed will be minor in nature.</p> <p>The proposed Naas – Kill cycle scheme is not considered likely to have any direct impacts or indirect impacts on any of the Natura 2000 sites identified in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 above. The proposed cycle scheme can therefore be screened out and is not required to progress to the second stage of the AA process.</p>		
Data collected to carry out the assessment			
<p><i>Who carried out the assessment</i></p>	<p><i>Sources of data</i></p>	<p><i>Level of assessment completed</i></p>	<p><i>Where can the full results of the assessments be accessed and viewed?</i></p>
<p>The AA screening report was prepared by Atkins Ireland to accompany the Part 8 Planning application for the proposed cycle scheme between Naas and Kill, Co. Kildare.</p>	<p>Online databases including National Biodiversity Data Centre and National Parks and Wildlife Service.</p> <p>Aerial photography from Bing and Google.</p> <p>Consultation with project engineers; design drawings; site photos.</p>	<p>Kildare County Council will use this report to support their Appropriate Assessment Screening.</p>	<p>Kildare County Council offices</p>

Finding of No Significant Effects (FONSE) REPORT

<i>Name and location of Natura site(s)</i>	There are seven Natura 2000 sites within 15 km of the proposed cycle scheme. The distance between these sites and the proposed cycle scheme is given in Table 3.1 and 3.2 above.
<i>Brief description of the project or plan</i>	The Naas to Kill Scheme consists of upgrading 4.25km of existing shared pedestrian cycle paths and footpaths from 'The Ball' at junction 9 in Naas through to Kill Village.
<i>Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the site management for nature conservation?</i>	No
<i>Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site?</i>	No

Assessment of significance of effects	
<i>Describe how the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site.</i>	The proposed cycle scheme and associated works are limited to the existing road alignment. The works proposed will be minor in nature. The proposed Naas – Kill cycle scheme is not considered likely to have any direct impacts or indirect impacts on any of the Natura 2000 sites identified in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 above.
<i>Explain why the effects are not considered significant</i>	There are no effects expected. The proposed cycle scheme can therefore be screened out and is not required to progress to the second stage of the AA process.
<i>List the Agencies consulted</i>	n/a
<i>Response to Consultation</i>	n/a.

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Appendix A. Part 8 Design Drawings

- 5139616/HW/P8/0011 Part 8 Site Location Plan
- 5139616/HW/P8/0012 Part 8 Site Extents – Sheet 1 of 2
- 5139616/HW/P8/0013 Part 8 Site Extents – Sheet 2 of 2
- 5139616/HW/P8/810 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 1 of 9
- 5139616/HW/P8/811 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 2 of 9
- 5139616/HW/P8/812 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 3 of 9
- 5139616/HW/P8/813 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 4 of 9
- 5139616/HW/P8/814 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 5 of 9
- 5139616/HW/P8/815 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 6 of 9
- 5139616/HW/P8/816 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 7 of 9
- 5139616/HW/P8/817 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 8 of 9
- 5139616/HW/P8/818 Part 8 General Layout – Sheet 9 of 9

Atkins
Unit 2B
2200 Cork Airport Business Park
Cork

info.ie@atkinsglobal.com
+353 (0)21 429 0300

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