

COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHILL DARA

KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

Record of Executive Business and Chief Executive's Orders

Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) – Part XAB
Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) – Part 8

**Revised Greenway Route with 2 additional Pedestrian Bridges at Lowtown and Bonyng Bridge
Co. Kildare**

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Determination

Pursuant to the requirements of the above, Kildare County Council is proposing to provide 2 pedestrian bridges with a revised route to the Grand Canal Greenway scheme. The Grand Canal Greenway is a 38.5km walking and cycling facility in Co. Kildare which follows the route of the existing Grand Canal towpath. The towpath stretches from Kildare's border with Dublin to Kildare's border with Offaly. The Grand Canal Greenway consists of two phases. Phase 1 stretches from Aylmers Bridge on the Kildare-Dublin border to the proposed pedestrian bridge in Sallins, Co. Kildare. Phase 2 stretches from Sallins to Clonkeen on the Offaly border. Phase 1 of the greenway route is currently under construction and is expected to be open to the public in 2024. Phase 2 is currently at the detailed design stage.

The proposed additional bridges seek to improve on the safety and user experience for all. The proposed bridges will allow greenway users to move safely across the canal with one bridge located in Lowtown, and the second adjacent to Healy's/Bonyng Bridge in Co. Kildare. The proposed route would follow the Canal south bank from Robertstown along the public road for 950m to where the proposed bridge in Lowtown is to be located. The proposed works are detailed in Sections 2.2 of the AA Screening Reports for Revised Route and pedestrian Bridge at Lowtown and Pedestrian Bridge at Bonyng Bridge Co. Kildare prepared by Fehily Timoney & Company forming part of the Part 8 application. Proposed development mainly comprises of the following;

- A revised route to continue westwards on the south bank of the canal from Roberstown to proposed bridge at Lowtown. The new pedestrian bridge is proposed just west of the connection between the old barrow line and the grand canal. The new bridge at Lowtown will allow users to cross the old barrow line, where they may then cross the existing Fenton's bridge before continuing their journey westwards using the previously consented route along the north (north east) canal bank.
- The proposed bridge at Lowtown will greatly improve the safety of this area of the Greenway by segregating greenway users from the traffic on the L3073 and avoiding the dangerous crossing at Binns bridge. In addition, the proposal will also provide improved connectivity between the Grand Canal Greenway and the Barrow Blue Way as well as providing additional recreational spaces for users to enjoy.
- The proposed pedestrian bridge at Lowtown will be of similar form of construction as the pedestrian bridge recently constructed on the Grand Canal Greenway in Sallins. The proposed bridge will have a minimum 3.5m clearance to the canal water level below to allow for safe passage of canal boats. The pedestrian ramps required to allow greenway users to get up to the

correct height above the canal will be constructed from reinforced earth and shall have a grass surface finish. The ramp width and gradient shall be designed to allow for universal access. The proposed bridge decking shall be a high friction buff coloured epoxy type surfacing. A 1.45m high painted steel parapet shall be provided to protect greenway users from the exposed edge.

- In the second location east of Robertstown, A new pedestrian footbridge is proposed circa 180m east of the existing Healy's/Bonyngne bridge. The proposed bridge will allow greenway users travelling west to cross the canal and continue their journey into Robertstown on the south bank by passing under the L7081 at Healy's/Bonyngne bridge. This proposed change will significantly increase the safety and sense of security of greenway users and is considered a necessary amendment to the originally proposed route of the Grand Canal Greenway. The proposed arrangement will completely separate greenway and road users in this location, significantly increasing both safety and sense of security.
- The proposed pedestrian bridge in the second location will be of similar size and form of construction as the pedestrian bridge recently constructed on the Grand Canal Greenway in Sallins. The proposed bridge will have a minimum 3.5m clearance to the canal water level below to allow for safe passage of canal boats. The pedestrian ramps required to allow greenway users to get up to the correct height above the canal will be constructed from reinforced earth and shall have a grass surface finish. The ramp width and gradient shall be designed to allow for universal access. The proposed bridge decking shall be a high friction buff coloured epoxy type surfacing. A 1.45m high painted steel parapet shall be provided to protect greenway users from the exposed edge.

Having regard to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the guidance contained in the document entitled "*Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities*" (published by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2009) and following an examination of the objective information provided in the Screening for Appropriate Assessment reports (the Screening Report) prepared by Fehily Timoney & Company, on behalf of Kildare County Council, as the Competent Authority, determines that the proposed development along Grand Canal Greenway, Co. Kildare, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, does not have the potential to give rise to likely significant effects on European sites, their conservation objectives or integrity, and therefore does not require an Appropriate Assessment.

Key points in the determination – The subject site is within or adjacent to European site of Ballynafagh Lake SAC (001387). The furthest east section of the SAC is connected to the works area. Upon further screening, the proposed development poses no risk of significant impact on the European site. The next closest Natura 2000 sites are Ballynafagh Bog SAC (Site Code 000391) approximately 1.8km north of the development site, Mouds Bog SAC (002331) 5.2km south of Site, Pollardstown Fen SAC (000396) 8.4km south and The Long Derries, Edenderry SAC (000925) 11.2km north-west. There is no connectivity to any other European sites within or outside the potential Zone of Influence. The consideration of all potential direct and indirect impacts that may result in significant effects on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into account the size and scale of the Proposed Development have been carried out in the AA Screening, prepared by Fehily Timoney & Company, on behalf of Kildare County Council.

No risks to the conservation objectives of any other Natura 2000 sites are considered likely due to one or more of the following, lack of ecological or landscape connectivity between the proposed works areas and the designated area, significant buffer between the proposed works area and the designated area, the nature of the site's conservation objectives, no impact or change to the

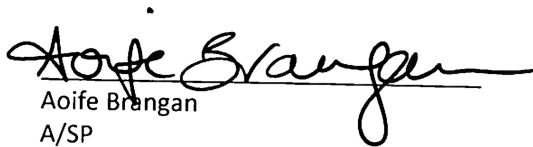
management of the designated area or; and no change to chemical or physiological condition of the designated site as a result of the proposed development.

It is therefore highly improbable that a project of this nature and scale will have any measurable impact on the qualifying interests of these Natura 2000 sites.

Therefore a Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment will not be required to inform the project appraisal either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, with respect to any Natura 2000 sites and their Conservation Objectives.



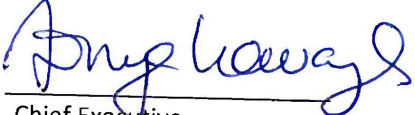
Kehinde Oluwatosin
Senior Executive Planner
23/07/2024



Aoife Brangan
A/SP
23/07/24

ORDER: That Kildare County Council as the Competent Authority, having considered the Screening Reports for Appropriate Assessment, prepared by Fehily Timoney & Company on behalf of Kildare County Council, makes a determination that a Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment will not be required to inform the proposed pedestrian bridges with revised route along the Grand Canal Greenway, Co. Kildare, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, with respect to any Natura 2000 sites and their Conservation Objectives.

Date: 24/7/2024


Chief Executive