

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**

**Grand Canal Greenway (Phase 2) – 2 No. Additional Pedestrian/Cyclist Bridges.
Bridge 1 is proposed to be located in Lowtown, and Bridge 2 is proposed to be sited
to east of the existing Healy's Bridge (Bonyng Bridge) at Downings South, Co.
Kildare**

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Determination

Pursuant to the requirements of the above, Kildare County Council is proposing as part of the Grand Canal Greenway (Phase 2) – 2 no. additional pedestrian/cyclist bridges at Lowtown and to the east the existing Healy's Bridge (Bonyng Bridge) at Downings South, Co. Kildare, respectively.

The proposed development comprises of the following:

The provision of two additional prefabricated pedestrian bridges with approach ramp access on Phase 2 of the Grand Canal Greenway. The additional bridges will improve existing cycling and pedestrian infrastructure deficiencies and safety concerns, providing increased segregation between Greenway users and thereby allowing for safer access for users of the Greenway by avoiding the crossing of and travelling along dangerous sections of the public road. Bridge 1 is located just west of the existing Lowtown Bridge and Bridge 2 is located circa. 175m east of the existing Healy's Bridge (Bonyng Bridge).

The proposed works at Bridge 1 (located just west of Lowtown Bridge) involve the erection of a steel bridge over the Grand Canal and the construction of green reinforced earth bank approach ramps either side (circa. 130 meters in total length and 3 meters in width) with associated railings. In addition, the proposed works include an extension of the Greenway (circa. 1km) along the southern bank of the Grand Canal from the proposed pedestrian bridge in an eastern direction toward the village of Robertstown.

The proposed works at Bridge 2 (located circa. 175m to the east of Healy's Bridge /Bonyng Bridge) involves the erection of a steel bridge over the Grand Canal and the construction of green reinforced earth bank approach ramps either side (circa. 150 in total length and 3 meters in length) with associated railings. In addition, the proposed works include an additional pathway from the new pedestrian bridge to the original intended Greenway route (circa. 100 meters in length) and facilitating works within the curtilage of a protected structure – Healys / Bonyng Bridge (RPS No. B13-16).

The development also includes the installation of signage, road markings, bollards and associated site works at the above locations.

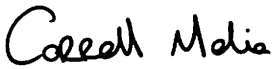
Having regard to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the guidance contained in the document entitled “*Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities*” (published by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2009, updated 2010) and following an examination of the objective information provided in the *Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening* Report by Fehily Timoney and Company, on behalf of Kildare County Council, as the Competent Authority, determines that the proposed provision of 2 No. Additional Pedestrian/Cyclist Bridges and the associated works along the Grand Canal Greenway at Lowtown and Downings South, Co. Kildare, individually or in combination works 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 adjacent to the European site of Ballynafagh Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (001387).
- The Blackwood Feeder channel of the Ballynafagh Lake SAC connects to the Grand Canal immediately west of Healy's bridge and is part of the SAC. There are no works associated with the proposed Bonynghe Bridge or new greenway route at this location. The Ballynafagh Lake SAC is outside of the Zone of Influence (Zol) for habitat damage / loss as determined in the AA Screening Report provided.
- The Ballynafagh Lake SAC is designated for the protection of Alkaline fens [7230] which is a groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE). The fen habitat within the SAC is located around the lake itself, which is 3.3km from the proposed Bonynghe Bridge and greenway route and 4.1km from the Lowtown Bridge and greenway route. As such, the fen habitat is not within the Zol for hydrogeology effects as determined in the AA Screening Report provided.
- The Conservation Objectives document for the Ballynafagh Lake SAC notes Desmoulin's whorl snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*), a qualifying interest of the SAC, as being present in the Blackwood feeder channel. A dedicated Desmoulin's survey was completed and no Desmoulin whorl snails were recorded within any sampling points near the Grand Canal. In addition, habitats within the Zol are not suitable for Desmoulin's whorl snail, as outlined in the AA Screening Report provided.
- All habitats and species of qualifying interest for the European Sites lie outside the defined Zol, ecological and hydrological connectivity of the site. It is considered that there are no likely significant effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interest or the conservation objectives of any designated European site.

It is therefore highly improbable that a project of this nature and scale will have any measurable impact on the qualifying interests, special conservation interest or the conservation objectives of any 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 Qualifying Interests, Special Conservation Interest or Conservation Objectives.



Carroll Melia

Senior Executive Planner

20th May 2025

ORDER: That Kildare County Council as the Competent Authority, having considered the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report prepared by Fehily Timoney and Company, on behalf of Kildare County Council, makes a determination that a Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment will not be required to inform the proposed provision of 2 No. Additional Pedestrian/Cyclist Bridges and the associated works along the Grand Canal Greenway at Lowtown and Downings South, Co. Kildare, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, with respect to any Natura 2000 sites and their Qualifying Interests, Special Conservation Interest or Conservation Objectives.

Date: 21/5/2025



Chief Executive