



Ardmore Road Upgrading Scheme, Mullingar – Phase 3

Report to support Part 8 Planning Application

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Introduction

Westmeath County Council (Transportation - Active Travel) propose works to upgrade the Ardmore Road to better provide for active travel modes (cycling and walking). The proposed development is to be considered under Part XI of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001-2023.

Application

The application consists of this “Report to support Part 8 Planning Application” together with the following documents and drawings:

- Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (*Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants, 09.03.23*)
- Environment Impact Assessment Screening Report (*Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants, 09.03.23*)
- Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) (*Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants, 09.03.23*)
- Baseline Environmental Noise Survey Report 2023 (*Rowan Engineering Consultants Ltd, March 2023*)

Drawing No.	Drawing Title
WH23XXXX-PL-01 rev 3	Site Layout Plan
WH/23/XXX-01 rev 8	Proposed Plans (Sheet 1 of 2)
WH/23/XXXX-02 rev 2	Proposed Plans (Sheet 2 of 2)
WH/23/XXXX-03 rev 3	Section A-A & Section B-B
WH/23/XXXX-04	Section C-C (Longitudinal Section through raised table)

Site Location and Context

The development works proposed are sited along the Ardmore Road, being a local primary road L-1133 which links the Dublin Road and Russellstown Road, southeast of Mullingar town centre in the townlands of Petitswood and Marlinstown.

The site extends from just east of the entrance into Ardmore Close along Ardmore Road in front of the recently constructed Holy Family National School and further east in front of house plots, with a narrow encroachment into one residential plot, with a termination just to the east

of the road access junction of the residential estate of Ardmore Hills. The adjoining land uses are residential, agricultural and a national school. Residential lands contain a mix of single house plots and two residential estates connecting onto/adjacent to this proposal.

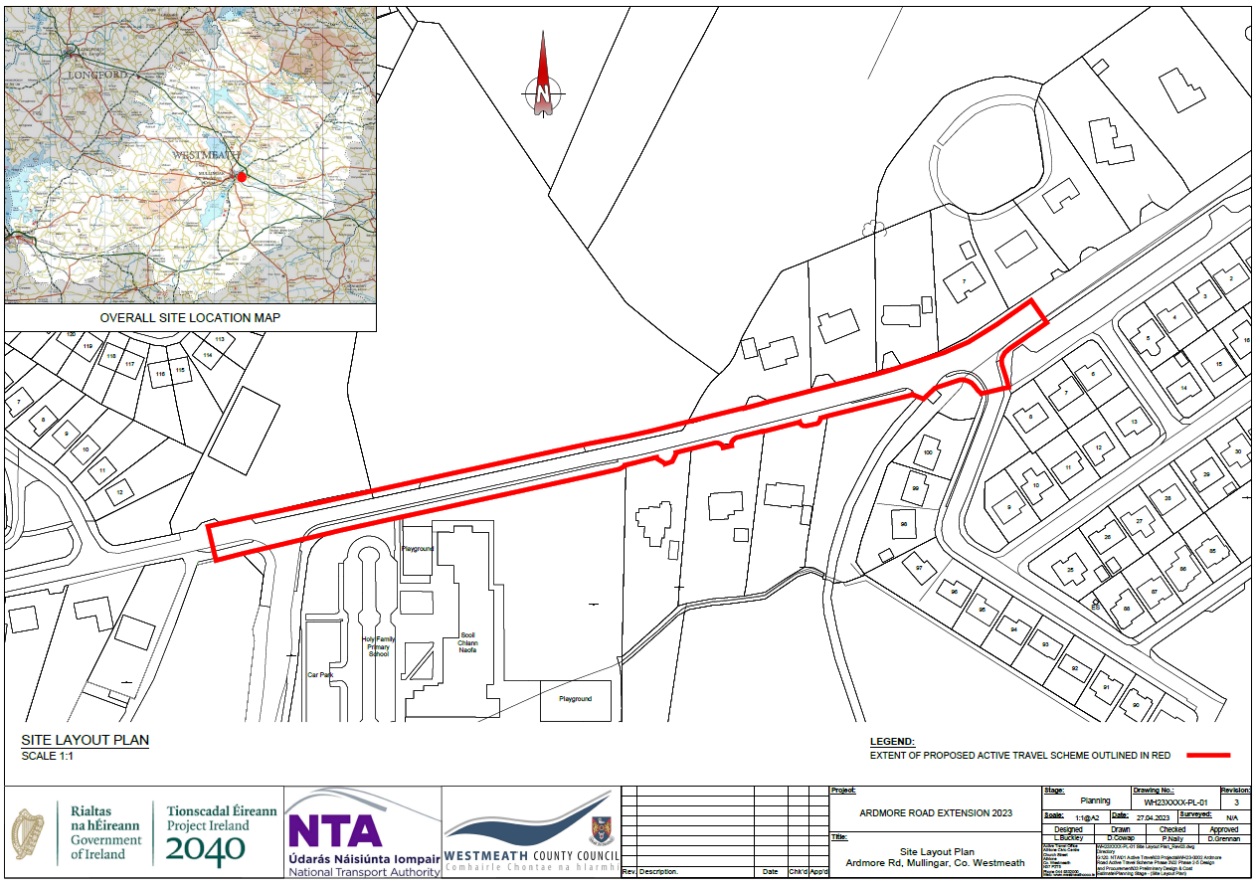


Figure 1: Location Map of proposal

Proposed Development

Westmeath County Council are in the process of improving the cycling and pedestrian infrastructure along the Ardmore Road. A number of part 8 applications to provide cycling and pedestrian routes along this road and at the adjacent Saunders Bridge have previously been granted and works have been completed for some sections and are in progress for others. The current proposal relates to a mid-section of the roadway contained within the eastern/northeastern half of the Ardmore Road.

The northern side of the site has no cycling or pedestrian infrastructure. It is proposed to develop a hard-surfaced shared footpath/cycling route, segregated from the vehicular

carriageway on the northern side of the Ardmore Road. These works will require the widening of the roadway with consequent removal of field boundary trees and hedging together with the culverting of a drain, together with the set back of a residential boundary in a triangular strip of a maximum of 1.15m depth narrowing down to zero over a distance of approximately 27.5m (between the properties western boundary and its vehicular entrance).

The southern side of the site in front of the Holy Family National School and the three no. dwellings to the east has a shared cycle/footpath which will remain in its current form. The southern side of the site, at the junction of Ardmore Hills, will be subject to works to improve pedestrian/cycling connections across the junction entrance. A controlled crossing point will be provided across Ardmore Road at the eastern end of the site to connect the planned, existing and proposed pedestrian/cycle paths either side of the carriageway.

The vehicular carriageway is to be 6m in the vicinity of the Holy Family National School consistent with the 6m width in the remainder of the roadway.

Public lighting will be upgraded along the route.

The works will generally consist of the following:

- excavation of soils and subsoils
- disposal of surplus soil off site to an authorised waste facility
- culvert drain
- importation, placement and compaction of hardcore (crushed stone)
- installation of 50mm macadam surfacing
- ducting for and provision of public lighting
- tree removal
- plantings (new field boundaries will be marked with fencing and a compensatory hedge and tree line)
- noise and general construction disturbance during daytime hours
- works duration expected to be approximately 6 months.

The proposed footpath and cycleway improvements will provide pedestrians and cyclists with a safe route along this road and is an integral element of the overall scheme to provide safe facilities from Saunders Bridge to the Dublin Road past the Holy Family National School. This

scheme is the third phase of the upgrade of Ardmore Road.

Relevant Planning History

LA(M)124 – 2020

Ardmore Road, Phase 2, Footpaths and Cycleway (Saunders Bridge to Ardmore Close)

LA(M)119 – 2019

Pedestrian and Cyclist Bridge at Saunders Bridge

LA(M)108 – 2016

Ardmore Road, Cycle and footpath infrastructure on south side of road (Dublin Road to proposed school site)

LA(M)104 – 2014

Curraghmore NS

Policy Context

National Policy Context

Project Ireland 2040

Project Ireland 2040 is a strategy set up by the Irish Government to make Ireland better for everyone and to build a more resilient and sustainable future. The strategy ensures the alignment of investment plans with the stated National Strategic Outcomes for 2040 in a considered, cohesive and defined manner. The National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan 2021-2030 combine to form Project Ireland 2040.

National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF), part of Project Ireland 2040, is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping future growth and development. It identifies nine strategic outcomes which include inter alia; compact growth, sustainable mobility and transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.

The NPF seeks to reduce the dependence on the car as a mode of travel and enhance public health by way of encouraging and facilitating more active lifestyles and creating a more walkable and cycling friendly urban environment. It is a National Policy Objective to ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed

developments (NPO 27).

The NPF seeks to reduce the dependence on the car as a mode of travel and enhance public health by encouraging and facilitating more active lifestyles by creating a more walkable and cycling friendly urban environment. The National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) and National Policy Objectives (NPOs) which are particularly relevant to the proposed project are as follows:

- NPO 4: Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.
- NPO 26: Support the objectives of public health policy including Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan, though integrating such policies, where appropriate and at the applicable scale, with planning policy.
- NPO 27: Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.
- NPO 28: Plan for a more diverse and socially inclusive society that targets equality of opportunity and a better quality of life for all citizens, through improved integration and greater accessibility in the delivery of sustainable communities and the provision of associated services.
- NPO 62: Identify and strengthen the value of greenbelts and green spaces at a regional and city scale, to enable enhanced connectivity to wider strategic networks, prevent coalescence of settlements and to allow for the long-term strategic expansion of urban areas.
- NPO 64: Improve air quality and help prevent people being exposed to unacceptable levels of pollution in our urban and rural areas through integrated land use and spatial planning that supports public transport, walking and cycling as more favourable modes of transport to the private car, the promotion of energy efficient buildings and homes,

heating systems with zero local emissions, green infrastructure planning and innovative design solutions.

- NPO 65: Promote the pro-active management of noise where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life and support the aims of the Environmental Noise Regulations through national planning guidance and Noise Action Plans.

The project supports the NPF aims to promote walking and cycling and provide for convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.

Climate Action Plan 2023

The Climate Action Plan 2023, published by the Government of Ireland, sets out a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve Carbon emissions by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government. The Plan sets out how Ireland can accelerate the actions that are required to respond to the climate crisis, putting climate solutions at the centre of Ireland's social and economic development.

The transport network in Ireland will play a key role in reaching the goals set out in this plan. It sets out to transform how we travel and has a goal to reduce transport emissions by 50% by 2030 by:

- changing the way we use our road space;
- reducing the total distance driven across all car journeys by 20%;
- for walking, cycling and public transport to account for 50% of our journeys;
- ensuring that nearly 1 in 3 private cars will be an Electric Vehicle;
- increase walking and cycling networks;
- ensuring that 70% of people in rural Ireland will have buses that provide at least 3 trips to the nearby town daily by 2030.

Investments in walking, cycling and public transport will promote a modal shift reducing the

level of private car use in the country and thereby assist in reducing greenhouse emissions.

National Sustainable Mobility Policy (NSMP) and Action Plan 2022-2025

In April 2022, the Department of Transport (DT) published the “National Sustainable Mobility Policy” (NSMP) and the supporting “NSMP Action Plan 2022-2025”. These documents align with the existing Project Ireland 2040 Framework.

The NSMP sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. It is accompanied by an action plan to 2025 which contains actions to improve and expand sustainable mobility options across the country by providing safe, green, accessible, efficient alternatives to car journeys. It also includes demand management and behavioural change measures to manage daily travel demand more efficiently and to reduce the journeys taken by private car.

The policy aims to deliver at least 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys by 2030 and a 10% reduction in the number of kilometres driven by fossil fuelled cars.

National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland

The Department of Transport (DT) has published the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI). NIFTI is the DT’s framework for prioritising future investment in the land transport network to support the delivery of the National Strategic Outcomes. Through our investment we will contribute to Ireland’s decarbonisation efforts, support vibrant and successful communities, deliver a high-performing transport system, and promote a strong and balanced economy.

The Framework establishes key principles and priorities to guide the allocation of investment to best develop and manage Ireland’s land transport network. It outlines that for a given transport problem the modal hierarchy to address is:

1. Active Travel;
2. Public Transport;
3. Private Vehicles.

And It also outlines the intervention hierarchy as being:

1. Maintain;
2. Optimise;
3. Improve;
4. New.

CycleConnects: Ireland's Cycle Network Programme (National Transport Authority (NTA)) (draft plan - consultation ended on 18.11.2022)

CycleConnects: Ireland's Cycle Network is a draft plan developed by AECOM on behalf of the NTA. The plan aims to improve sustainable travel by providing the potential for more trips on a safe, accessible and convenient cycling network, connecting more people to more places.

The draft plan outlines a National Plan comprising 22 individual cycle networks in each respective county. The plan does not prescribe any cycle infrastructure for the routes presented but mainly serves to illustrate the potential cycle connections between all major towns and cities outside the Greater Dublin Area (GDA).

Indicative proposals for cycling links in key cities, towns and villages in each county are included in the plan, in addition to connections between the larger towns, villages and settlements. The plan also incorporates existing and planned cycle routes such as greenways and blueways.

The draft plan for Mullingar shows an Urban Secondary route to run along the length of Ardmore Road.

National Cycle Network (Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)) (draft plan - consultation ended on 07.06.2022)

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) invited views on the development of a new National Cycle Network (NCN). The NCN is a planned core cycle network of 3,500km to criss-cross the country, connecting more than 200 villages, towns and cities. The network will include cycling links to transport hubs, education centres, employment centres, leisure and tourist destinations, and support "last mile" bicycle deliveries.

Mullingar contains elements of the proposed network with some facilities already in place.

National Cycle Manual (NTA, 2011)

The Manual indicates that the “cycling offer” within urban areas must be improved to encourage more people to cycle, including those who are risk-averse. It’s aim is to provide for two-abreast cycling in a stress free and safe environment. It embraces the *Principles of Sustainable Safety* as this will offer a safe traffic environment for all road users including cyclists. It offers guidance on integrating the bike in the design of urban areas.

The Manual is currently under review.

Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) is a mandatory strategy to be used to address street design within urban areas. It sets out an integrated street design approach which: is Influenced by the type of place in which the street is located; and balances the needs of all users.

Get Ireland Active – The National Physical Activity Plan

Healthy Ireland, A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025 (Department of Health, 2013) is the national framework for whole of Government and whole of society to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland. The National Physical Activity Plan contributes to the Framework.

The Plan includes actions to develop, promote and support active travel modes and ensure that an active travel network is delivered.

Get Ireland Walking

Get Ireland Walking is a national initiative that aims to maximise the number of people participating in walking - for health, wellbeing and fitness - throughout Ireland.

Permeability: A Best Practice Guide (NTA)

This publication from the National Transport Authority (NTA) aims to encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport, ensuring that the wider considerations of mode choice are addressed in the land use planning process. This guide strives to maximise the potential in sustainably meeting the mobility needs of people in their day-to-day routines by proper integration at the land use planning stage.

As a guidance note, the NTA provides a basis for the delivery of sustainable mode choices in existing built-up areas by promoting permeability for pedestrians and cyclists, whilst also addressing the legacy of severance inherent in the recent expansions of Irish towns and cities. Characteristics of a permeable environment are highlighted as:

- Interconnected pedestrian and cycle street network.
- Absence of high walls and fences segregating housing areas and local/district centres.
- Absence of cul-de-sacs for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Secure, well-lit, overlooked pedestrian and cycle links between housing areas and between housing and local/district centres.

UN Convention for the Rights of People with Disabilities

In March 2019, Ireland ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Article 9 of the 'UNCPRD' includes the right to transport and creating an accessible end to end journey, with the user focus central to this approach.

To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.

These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, inter alia:

a) Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces.

b) Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.

This Article enshrines the right to transport within Irish legislation. The focus on Usability and Accessibility has implications and opportunities across transport planning and provision.

Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities

This set of updated standards include a default policy for car parking provision to be minimised, substantially reduced or wholly eliminated in highly accessible areas; and a

significant uptake in the quantity and quality of cycle parking provision and design.

Regional Policy Context

Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) (2019-2031)

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) is a strategic plan and investment framework to shape future growth and to better manage regional planning and economic development throughout the Region. It identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives.

Throughout the strategy there are 3 cross cutting key principles;

- **Healthy Placemaking** - To promote people's quality of life through the creation of healthy and attractive places to live, work, visit, invest and study in.
- **Climate Action** - The need to enhance climate resilience and to accelerate a transition to a low carbon society recognising the role of natural capital and ecosystem services in achieving this.
- **Economic Opportunity** - To create the right conditions and opportunities for the Region to realise sustainable economic growth and quality jobs that ensure a good living standard for all.

The RSES promotes healthy placemaking and people's quality of life through the creation of healthy and attractive places to live, work, visit, and invest in, and focus on placemaking to create attractive and sustainable communities to support active lifestyles including walking and cycling.

Mullingar is designated as a 'key town' within the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region. The proposed development is consistent with the RSES which contains the following Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSO) and the following Regional Policy Objectives (RPO):

- **RSO 4: Healthy Communities:** Protect and enhance the quality of our built and natural environment to support active lifestyles including walking and cycling, ensure clean air and water for all and quality healthcare and services that support human health. (NSO 10)
- **RSO 6: Integrated Transport and Land Use:** Promote best use of Transport Infrastructure, existing and planned, and promote sustainable and active modes of

travel to ensure the proper integration of transportation and land use planning. (NSO 2, 6, 8,9)

- **RSO 9:** Support the Transition to Low Carbon and Clean Energy: Pursue climate mitigation in line with global and national targets and harness the potential for a more distributed renewables - focussed energy system to support the transition to a low carbon economy by 2050. (NSO 8, 9)
- **RPO 4.64** Support Mullingar's role as a tourism hub having regard to its accessibility to key tourist destinations in the Region including proximity to natural amenities and recreational opportunities including the Galway to Dublin Greenway. The development proposed will further complement existing greenway trails within the town and provide an attractive recreation hub which will benefit both the local community, tourists and visitors.
- **RPO 7.24:** Promote the development of a sustainable Strategic Greenway Network of national and regional routes, with a number of high capacity flagship routes that can be extended and /or linked with local greenways and other cycling and walking infrastructure, notwithstanding that capacity of a greenway is limited to what is ecologically sustainable.
- **RPO 9.14:** Local authorities shall seek to support the planned provision of easily accessible social, community, cultural and recreational facilities and ensure that all communities have access to a range of facilities that meet the needs of the communities they serve.

The following guiding principles are outlined in relation to the Integration of Land Use and Transport:

- The management of space in town and village centres should deliver a high level of priority and permeability for walking, cycling and public transport modes to create accessible, attractive, vibrant and safe, places to work, live, shop and engage in community life. Accessibility by car does need to be provided for, but in a manner, which complements the alternative available modes. Local traffic management and the location / management of destination car parking should be carefully provided.

Local Policy Context

Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (WCDP)

2.19 Core Strategy Policies and Objectives

CPO 2.16 Promote the integration of land use and transportation policies and to prioritise provision for cycling and walking travel modes and the strengthening of public transport.

4.8 Creating Sustainable Neighbourhoods:

The creation of sustainable neighbourhoods play an important role in quality of life factors and foster a wider sense of community. Creating successful urban neighbourhoods to support sustainable communities requires the efficient use of land and sustainable densities to enable viable provision of the necessary range of facilities, services and good public transport connections – all of which should be within walking distance of residents and workers and of a high-quality urban design to create places where people will want to live.

Sustainable Communities Policy Objectives

CPO 4.1 Support sustainable transport infrastructure, by developing mixed use schemes, higher densities close to public transport hubs, safe walking routes in developments, promoting alternative modes of transport and reduce the need to travel.

CPO 4.2 Support and promote the development of socially inclusive, sustainable communities in the County and seek to ensure that all citizens enjoy optimal health and well-being along with associated mental health supports and youth services.

7.44 Healthy Placemaking

A key element of healthy placemaking is the need to ensure alternatives to the car in the design of streets and public spaces and to prioritise and promote cycling and walking as active transport modes. The provision of high-quality public transport, greenways and cycleways can enhance areas, contributing to more attractive places and creating opportunities to be physically active and reduce the necessity for car-based commuting.

CPO 7.6 Promote the development of healthy and attractive places by ensuring:

- Good urban design principles are integrated into the layout and design of new development. Future development prioritises the need for people to be physically active in their daily lives and promote walking and cycling in the design of streets and public spaces.
- New schools and workplaces are linked to walking and cycling networks.
- The provision of open space considers different types of recreation and amenity uses with connectivity by way of safe, secure walking and cycling routes.
- Developments are planned for on a multi-functional basis incorporating ecosystem services, climate change measures, Green Infrastructure and key landscape features in their design.

Transport Infrastructure and Energy – Transport Policies

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to:

- CPO 10.1** Promote and deliver a sustainable, integrated and low carbon transport system with ease of movement throughout County Westmeath by enhancing the existing transport infrastructure in terms of road, bus, rail, cycling and pedestrian facilities.
- CPO 10.2** Support the development of a low carbon transport system by continuing to promote modal shift from private car use towards increased use of more sustainable forms of transport such as cycling, walking and public transport.
- CPO 10.3** Support the implementation of the following national and regional transport policies as they apply to Westmeath:
 - The National Planning Framework
 - The RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region
 - Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020
 - Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)
 - Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for Planning Authorities

2012

- National Cycling Policy Framework and National Cycle Manual
- Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, 2018.
- Local Link Rural Transport Programme Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022.

The Council also supports the implementation of sustainable transport solutions.

CPO 10.4 Seek to ensure primacy for transport options that provide for unit reductions in carbon emissions. This can most effectively be done by promoting public transport, walking and cycling, and by actively seeking to reduce car use in circumstances where alternative options are available.

10.3.12 Integration of Land Use Planning and Transportation

The integration of land use and transportation is a fundamental principle of the national policy document *Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future, 2009 - 2020* which will inform policies and objectives in this Plan. By shaping the pattern of development and influencing the location, scale, density, design and mix of land-uses, the integration of land-use and transportation can help reduce the need to travel and facilitate sustainable urban development.

The Plan promotes an integrated approach to land-use and transportation which aligns with the Core Strategy and directs future development into existing towns and settlements within Westmeath in order to reduce car dependency. The Plan supports the creation of compact urban growth, consolidation of existing settlements and prioritisation of the development of brownfield lands across the settlement hierarchy which in turn will encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking as viable alternatives to the private car. Furthermore, allowing higher density development to occur along public transport corridors increases the number of people within the walking catchment of the public transport service, which in turn increases the patronage of the service, and leads to an increase in its financial and economic viability and in turn a positive environmental impact.

10.4.1 Walking and Cycling

Walking and cycling are the most sustainable modes of transport and are key components to movement and accessibility in urban and inter-urban areas. Benefits accruing for both the environment and population, include reducing air and noise pollution and traffic congestion as well as contributing to healthy and more active lifestyles. Encouraging and promoting walking and cycling as a sustainable mode of transport and moving away from reliance on the private car will depend on providing well connected and integrated pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. Pedestrian and cycle facilities will be most successful where they form a coherent network, place an emphasis on safety, directly serve the main areas where people wish to travel, provide priority over vehicular traffic at junctions, are free from obstructions and have adequate public lighting where considered appropriate.

Infrastructure and Mobility Policy Objectives - Walking and Cycling

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to:

- CPO 10.11** Promote walking and cycling as efficient, healthy and environmentally friendly modes of transport by securing the development of a network of direct, comfortable, convenient and safe cycle routes and footpaths, particularly in urban areas and in the vicinity of schools.
- CPO 10.12** Improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity to stations and other public transport interchanges and request Iarnród Éireann to provide accommodation for bicycles on inter-city and commuter trains.
- CPO 10.13** Design pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in accordance with the principles, approaches and standards set out in the National Cycle Manual, the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and international best practice.
- CPO 10.14** Encourage and seek sustainable transport movement at the earliest design stage of development proposals, to ensure accessibility by all modes of transport and all sections of society and promote the provision of parking space for bicycles in development schemes.
- CPO 10.15** Improve the streetscape environment for pedestrians, cyclists, and people with special mobility needs by providing facilities to enhance safety and

convenience, including separation for pedestrian infrastructure from vehicular traffic.

- CPO 10.16** Provide better sign posting and public lighting where considered appropriate and ensure that the upgrading of roads will not impact negatively on the safety and perceived safety of cyclists.
- CPO 10.17** Work with the National Trails Office, Coillte, the Department of Planning, Housing and Local Government, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, and other relevant stakeholders, to improve on the existing level of infrastructure and facilities for walking and cycling.
- CPO 10.30** Continue to work with the relevant transport providers, agencies and stakeholders to facilitate the integration of active travel (walking, cycling etc.) with public transport, thereby making it easier for people to access and use the public transport system.

10.6 Mobility Management Plans

Mobility planning by business, educational facilities and institutions that have high numbers of employees is a way of promoting sustainable means of access, reducing traffic congestion in urban areas and making more efficient use of land by reducing the need for car parking. It is Council policy to promote the use of mobility management and travel plans to bring about behaviour change and more sustainable transport use and the achievement of reduced car dependency.

Mobility management plans will be required to accompany planning applications for significant new developments or trip intensive developments. Mobility management plans must address:

- The need to provide adequate, affordable and sustainable means of access for employees, visitors and others (e.g. students).
- The need to promote and support alternative means of transport to the private car, i.e. public transport, cycling, walking.
- The need to minimise the impact of traffic and parking generated by the business,

educational facility or institution in the surrounding areas.

- The need to manage on-site parking (if any is to be provided).

10.7 Car Parking

The management of parking in the County is important to its efficient economic development. Providing for additional parking in towns encourages further use of private cars and makes public transport a less attractive or viable option. Access to the town centre is essential for the successful operation of business. There is a balance to be achieved between facilitating necessary parking in the short term, and the overall objective, of having improved public transport as a viable alternative and as that becomes available of discouraging use of private cars. That can only be achieved in the medium term. In this regard, it is Council policy that a reduced car parking requirement will operate in both Mullingar and Athlone town centres, in order to encourage the establishment and the expansion of small businesses in these towns. Car parking standards will also be reviewed in Town Centres to reflect the proposed modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport, cycling and walking.

Transport and Infrastructure Policy Objectives – Parking

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to:

- CPO 10.65** Allow for the reduction in car parking standards in suitable locations in order to encourage a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport, cycling and walking.
- CPO 10.66** Manage on-street and off-street car-parking to accommodate longer term parking in less convenient and under-utilised off street car parks.
- CPO 10.67** Facilitate and support purpose built off-street car parks including multi-storey car parks, in preference to on-street parking.
- CPO 10.68** Ensure that applications for surface car parking are accompanied by landscaping proposals.
- CPO 10.69** Seek and promote the provision of Aged Friendly parking arrangements and further provide for the improvement of parking arrangements for people with

disabilities.

10.8 Bicycle Parking Facilities

Cycling is becoming increasingly recognised for the contribution it provides as a sustainable and healthy form of transport for work, education and leisure trips within and around the County. Provision of secure cycle parking facilities is essential for supporting the promotion and development of cycling as a more sustainable mode of transport. A lack of appropriate cycle parking facilities is often cited as a barrier to cycling and cycle ownership and could be a constraint on the future growth of cycling. In that regard, high quality secure cycle parking at origins and destinations is considered to be a key element of any strategy aimed at encouraging cycling. High quality cycle parking should be regarded as an integral part of any new development.

CPO 16.25 New development proposals should be fully permeable for walking and cycling and the retrospective implementation of walking and cycling facilities should be undertaken where practicable in existing neighbourhoods, in order to give a competitive advantage to these modes for local trip making. Where possible, new residential developments should provide for filtered permeability, i.e. provide for walking, cycling, public transport and private vehicle access while restricting or discouraging private car through trips.

Development Management Standards Policy Objectives - Roads and Transportation

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council in assessing development proposals, that the following road safety considerations be taken into account:

CPO 16.35 Traffic Management and Road Safety: All new road layouts should be designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and relevant TII publications. Development proposals should also include provision for a sustainable modal split, with pedestrian and cycling facilities recognised as an important aspect of new design proposals.

Road Safety Audit: A Road Safety Audit may be required to demonstrate that a proposed development does not pose a risk to road users, create a traffic nuisance or contribute to congestion. It should be carried out on all new national

road infrastructure projects and on any schemes/proposal which results in a permanent change to the layout of a national road by suitably competent persons, in accordance with TII Publications GE-STY-01024 Road Safety Audit).

Road Safety Impact Assessment (RSIA): A Road Safety Impact Assessment (RSIA) provides a strategic comparative analysis of the impact of a new road, or for substantial modifications to an existing road, on the safety performance of the road network as defined within the EU Directive on Road Infrastructure Safety Management (EU RISM) 2008/96/EC. The RSIA shall be prepared by suitably competent persons, in accordance with TII Publications PE-PMG-02001 Road Safety Impact Assessment.

Traffic and Transport Assessments (TTAs): Development proposals that are likely to create significant vehicular movements will be required to undertake a site-specific assessment to demonstrate the impact of the proposal on the integrated transport system by means of a Transport and Transport Assessment (TTA). The TTA should include an assessment of the impact of the proposal on the full range of modes of transport and incorporate traffic impact statements, road safety audits and measures to maximise accessibility of non-private car related movement, carried out by suitably competent persons, in accordance with the *'TII's Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines'*.

Mobility Management Plans (MMPs): (Refer Chapter 10, Section 10.6 Mobility Management Plans for instances where MMPs are required) Mobility Management Plans should include achievable measures to reduce dependency on private car use for daily commutes and incorporate where possible;

- Measures to promote use of public transport, cycling and walking;
- Car sharing/carpooling;
- Charges for parking;
- Staggered working/business hours.

Mobility Management Plans may be subject to annual reviews. It is recognised that the first (and subsequent) annual reviews of an Mobility Management Plan are the key stages in making them tangible as they will be tailored to real travel-to-work patterns and not a generic model based upon assumptions).

Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020 (Extended)(MLAP)

It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the policies as set out under the MLAP:

- P-TM5** To promote the development of walking and cycling in the Mullingar area. Cycling and walking are environmentally friendly, fuel-efficient and healthy modes of transport, and their development is in line with the principles of sustainability.
- P-TM6** To ensure that the safety of road users, including motorists, cyclists and pedestrians, will be a primary consideration in the design and/or improvement of roads ... Cyclists and pedestrians are especially vulnerable in road accidents and new design must pay particular attention to securing their safety.
- P-TM8** To continue the programme of improvement of footpaths throughout the town.
- P-TM12** To further the development of an integrated cycle network in Mullingar.
- P-FP7** To provide for the establishment of an integrated movement network serving all modes with connectivity to the town centre and adjoining areas.

The proposed development of the Ardmore Road Upgrading Scheme (Phase 3) is consistent with and required by the Ardmore/Marlinstown Framework Plan, to address the urban structure and connectivity deficiencies identified, contained within the Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020 (MLAP). The Framework Plan provides for the development of a sustainable urban quarter at Ardmore/Marlinstown to accommodate a mixture of uses such as local shops, offices, schools, residential development, and public open space within a permeable urban structure. The character area map for the plan area is shown in Figure 2 below.

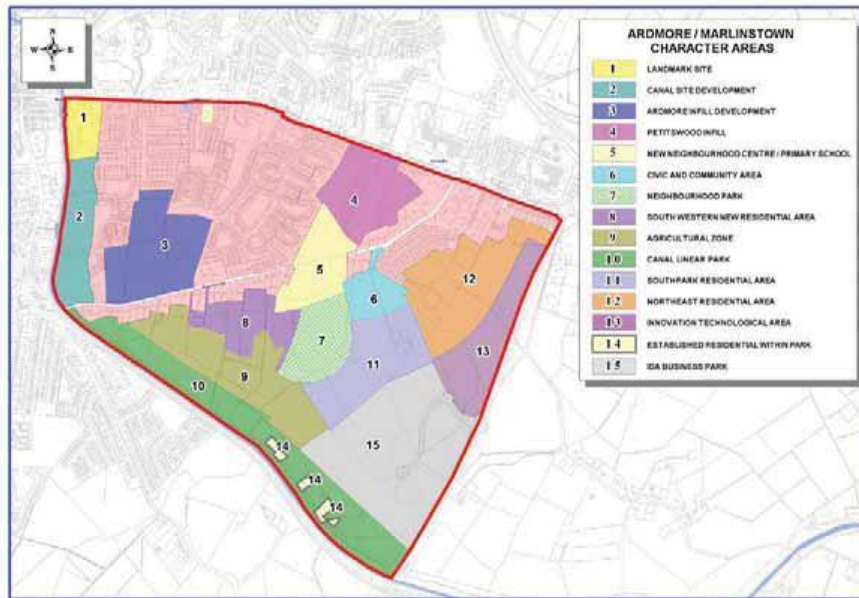


Figure 2: Ardmore/Marlinstown Character Areas map (MLAP)

Need

The Mullingar Local Area Plan (MLAP) provides for a proposed road network comprising of a hierarchy of arterial and link roads and the proposed road network is shown in Figure 3. The Ardmore Road is identified as a Link Road along the same line as currently exists.

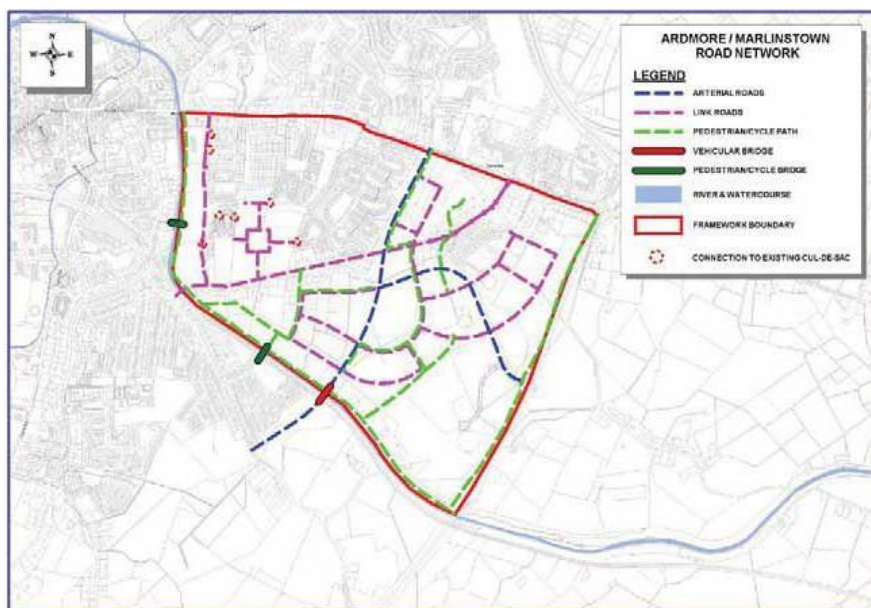


Figure 3: Ardmore/Marlinstown Road Network as per MLAP

In order to support the implementation of the MLAP objectives it is necessary to upgrade the Ardmore Road to accommodate all modes of transport including pedestrians, cyclists, as well as vehicular traffic. It is a requirement of the MLAP that the area shall be pedestrian/cycle friendly and allow for the safe movement of the more vulnerable road users (i.e. pedestrians, cyclists and mobility impaired).

Development works are complete for Curraghmore National School/Holy Family National School along the Ardmore Road. The school is now open and operational. The Part 8 process which was completed in relation to the school development (ref: LA(M) 104 (2016)) committed to the provision of necessary improvement works along the Ardmore Road, including the following:

- Prior to opening the school: Provide footpath and cycle facilities along the south side of Ardmore Road (school side) from the Dublin Road to the school. Also provide a pedestrian/cyclist crossing to link the housing areas of Ardmore Close, Pettiswood Manor, Glenmore Wood and Glen Pettit (and hence the Dublin Road) to the school site
- Within two years of the school opening: Provide a footpath and cycle track along the north side of Ardmore Road from Saunders Bridge to the school.
- Within four years of the school opening: a footpath and cycle track, in accordance with a detailed design prepared by Westmeath County Council, along the north side of Ardmore Road from the Dublin Road to the school will be provided. Alternatively, the cycle track can be included as part of a two-way cycle track on the south side of the road along this section.

This report relates to the Part 8 process for Phase 3 of the necessary upgrading works pursuant to the requirements above.

The proposal to undertake the works satisfies the requirements of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and in particular:

- Core Policy Objective CPO 2.16 to prioritise the provision of cycling and walking travel modes; and

- Policy Objective CPO 10.1 to deliver a sustainable, integrated and low carbon transport system with ease of movement throughout County Westmeath by enhancing the existing transport infrastructure in terms of road, bus, rail, cycling and pedestrian facilities.

Appropriate Assessment

The initial stage (1) of the Appropriate Assessment process is to undertake a screening exercise to determine:

- Whether the proposed plan or project is directly connected with or necessary for the management of the European designated site for nature conservation
- If it is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the European designated site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

The proposed scheme has undergone an Appropriate Assessment screening exercise under the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). A copy of the report, Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (*Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants, 09.03.23*) is included with this Part 8 Planning Application.

The following European designated sites are within 15km of the scheme and have been considered in Appropriate Assessment Screening Report:

SiteCode	Name	Type	Distance From (km)
000692	Scragh Bog SAC	SAC	6.6
002299	River Boyne And River Blackwater SAC	SAC	11.1
002205	Wooddown Bog SAC	SAC	2.5
000685	Lough Ennell SAC	SAC	4.1 directly 5.3 hydrologically
000688	Lough Owel SAC	SAC	5.1
002342	Mount Hevey Bog SAC	SAC	14.7
004044	Lough Ennell SPA	SPA	4.1 directly 5.3 hydrologically
004043	Lough Derravaragh SPA	SPA	9.8
004046	Lough Iron SPA	SPA	11.5

004047	Lough Owel SPA	SPA	5.1
004232	River Boyne And River Blackwater SPA	SPA	13.96

The report concludes:

In our professional opinion and in view of the best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the European sites reviewed in the screening exercise, the proposed development individually/in combination with other plans and projects (either directly or indirectly) are not likely to have any significant effects on any of the European sites. It is therefore the conclusion of this report that progression to the second stage, a full Appropriate Assessment and accompanying Natura Impact Statement will not be required.

EIAR Screening Report & Ecological Report

The proposed scheme has undergone screening for Environmental Impact Assessment under the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU to identify whether there is a need to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment Report for the proposed works. The Environment Impact Assessment Screening Report, (*Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants, 09.03.23*) is included with this Part 8 Planning Application and states:

It is considered 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 therefore required.

Conclusion

The recommended carriageway, footpath and cycleway facilities is consistent with the development objectives of the Mullingar Local Area Plan and the facilities committed to be provided as part of the Curraghmore/Holy Family National School development.

Appendix 1: Preliminary Screening Assessment for AA and EIA