



# **Construction of Pedestrian and Cycle link from Killucan/Rathwire to the Royal Canal Greenway at Thomastown - Project Particulars**

## **1 Overview**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The project is to create a 1.7km walking and cycling linkage between Killucan/Rathwire village and the Royal Canal Greenway by the construction of a surfaced footpath/cycleway from Thomastown to Killucan/Rathwire together with the installation of associated signage and cycle parking facilities in the town centre.

The proposed works comprise of the following: -

- Construction of a 3m wide paved pedestrian and cycleway
- Erection of new boundary fences and hedges.
- Construction of a pedestrian and cycleway bridge
- Signage (Mapboards, tourist information) and Public Lighting where required.
- Cycle parking facilities i.e. benches, cycle stands etc.

**Objectives** This project aims to expand the recreational facilities available along Westmeath's Greenways, by developing Pedestrian and Cycle link from Killucan/Rathwire to the Royal Canal Greenway at Thomastown Harbour, as part of the Dublin to Galway Project. The Dublin to Galway Cycleway aims to be the first Coast to Coast Greenway and will be a recreational tourism product of international scale and standard, forming part of the Eurovelo 2 route from Galway to Moscow. To date, approximately 14 million has been invested in Westmeath's Greenways and the Council are working with communities to create the necessary linkages, facilities and amenities required to enable these Greenways to reach their full potential.

This project also aims to provide better accessibility to these local amenities for the residents in this area of Killucan and Rathwire who although are living adjacent to these significant recreation assets, have been unable to easily access them easily.

## 1.2 Location

Westmeath County Council (WCC) proposes to carry out works comprising the provision of a 1.7km combined pedestrian and cycle way on lands which are predominantly in agricultural use, to the east of the L-1015 local road between the Royal canal greenway at Thomastown and St. Joseph's National School, Rathwire, Co. Westmeath.

There are no recorded monuments or protected structures within the site area.

## 1.3 Proposed Route

The entire site measures approximately 1.7 km in length. The route commences at the L1015 adjacent to Rathwire National School and runs east off-road to intersecting with the L5020. Where the route runs south for a short on-road section along the L-5020. The route then continues south, off-road following the bank of the disused canal supply drain, before turning west for a stretch. The route turns south, crossing a drain via a proposed new Bridge or Culvert. The route continues south to meet the Royal Canal Greenway at Thomastown Harbour.

The overall area of the site is approximately 1.2 Hectares.

# 2 Description and Project Elements

## 2.1 Project Description

Westmeath County Council (WCC) proposes to carry out works comprising the provision of a 1.7km combined pedestrian and cycle way on lands which are predominantly in agricultural use, to the east of the L-1015 local road between the

Royal canal greenway at Thomastown and St. Joseph's National School, Rathwire, Co. Westmeath. There are no recorded monuments or protected structures within the site area.

## 2.2 Project Elements

The works proposed (subject to land acquisition) include the following: -

- **Construction of a 3m wide paved pedestrian and cycleway.**

The track will be 3 metres in width and consist unbound granular surface finish/bound finish and associated grass verges suitable for cyclists, pedestrians, buggies and wheel chair users. Access to the track will be provided at several locations along the scheme.

- **Erection of new boundary fences and hedges.**

Fencing will be stockproof 1.3m high timber post and four rail fencing with plastic coated steel mesh. Native hedging will be planted along the cycleway side of the fencing. In general, all the existing hedges and trees will be preserved. The strip between the track and the boundary will be maintained as grassed areas and reseeded as necessary.

- **Construction of a pedestrian and cycleway bridge**

A 3m wide pedestrian and cycle bridge will be constructed across an OPW channel. At three other locations the route will use existing road and farm bridges.

- **Signage**

Signage will include Mapboards, Tourist Information and direction signs, where required.

- **Cycle parking facilities**

Cycle stands and benches will be provided along the route



**TYPICAL CYCLEWAYS ALONG FARM LANDS.**



**TYPICAL FENCING & GATES.**



### **3.0 AA Preliminary Screening Conclusions**

Given the nature, siting and scale of the proposed works, a Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required. A suitably qualified person, Environmental Consultant was engaged to prepare an AA screening report, to assist in determining whether the proposed development, in view of best scientific knowledge, is/is not likely to give rise to a significant effect, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, on a European Natura 2000 Site. The Stage 1 Screening Report considers and details the likely significant effects of the development works at both construction stage and project completion stage on the Natura 2000 network.

This Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment is included as part of this application.

#### **4.0 EIA Preliminary Screening Conclusion**

This Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment concludes “*that there is no potential for significant effects on the integrity of the above mentioned European sites from the proposed development, either alone or in-combination with other plans and/or projects.*”