

SOUTH EAST GREENWAY LINKAGE TO SLIEVERUE

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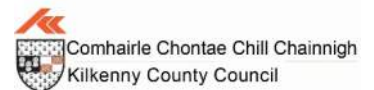
ROUTE SELECTION AND DESIGN OPTIONS REPORT

for

Kilkenny County Council



May 2023



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the Route Selection Report for the proposed Southeast Greenway Linkage. The report has been prepared by Roadplan Consulting in partnership with Trail Kilkenny and Kilkenny County Council.

The purpose of the report is to identify appropriate locations for new links from the new Southeast Greenway to the village of Slieverue. The purpose of this link is to provide connectivity for both cyclists and pedestrians from the Greenway to the village on the basis that the introduction of safe and comfortable links would encourage visitors to explore the village and in turn stimulate the economy of the settlement.

This report sets out the project background, the policy guidelines that relate to greenway schemes of this type and the overall aims and objectives of the scheme. The report identifies the constraints, opportunities and areas of interest within the study areas, proposes a number of route options and identifies an emerging preferred route for Slieverue.

The report:

- describes these routes,
- identifies their scoring against the assessment criteria,
- describes the community and stakeholder consultation process carried out and summarises the feedback on the scheme proposals received,
- explains why the preferred route was selected and,
- outlines the next steps in the development of the scheme.

The preferred route has been identified for Slieverue and this is a loop route that comprises a link to the greenway at Kilmurry Lane and another at Luffany.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

The Kilkenny Leader Partnership (KLP) and Trail Kilkenny (TK) initially identified the opportunity to convert the disused railway line from Waterford to New Ross as a Greenway.

This has paved the way for the development of the South-East Greenway project by the local authorities of Kilkenny, Wexford and Waterford, with KLP as a critical stakeholder. The local authorities have agreed to collaborate in developing a greenway from Mount Elliott in New Ross to Ferrybank in Waterford City, and it is now under construction.

The Greenway links New Ross at Rosbercon with Waterford at the proposed North Quays development. However, most of the Greenway passes through the South Kilkenny countryside. In order to maximise the potential commercial, economic and recreational benefits from the new Greenway, clearly defined links between the surrounding villages and the Greenway are required. The purpose of the links is to provide connectivity for both cyclists and pedestrians from the Greenway to both villages. It is anticipated that the introduction of a safe and comfortable links would encourage visitors to explore the village of Slieverue and in turn stimulate the local economy of the settlement.

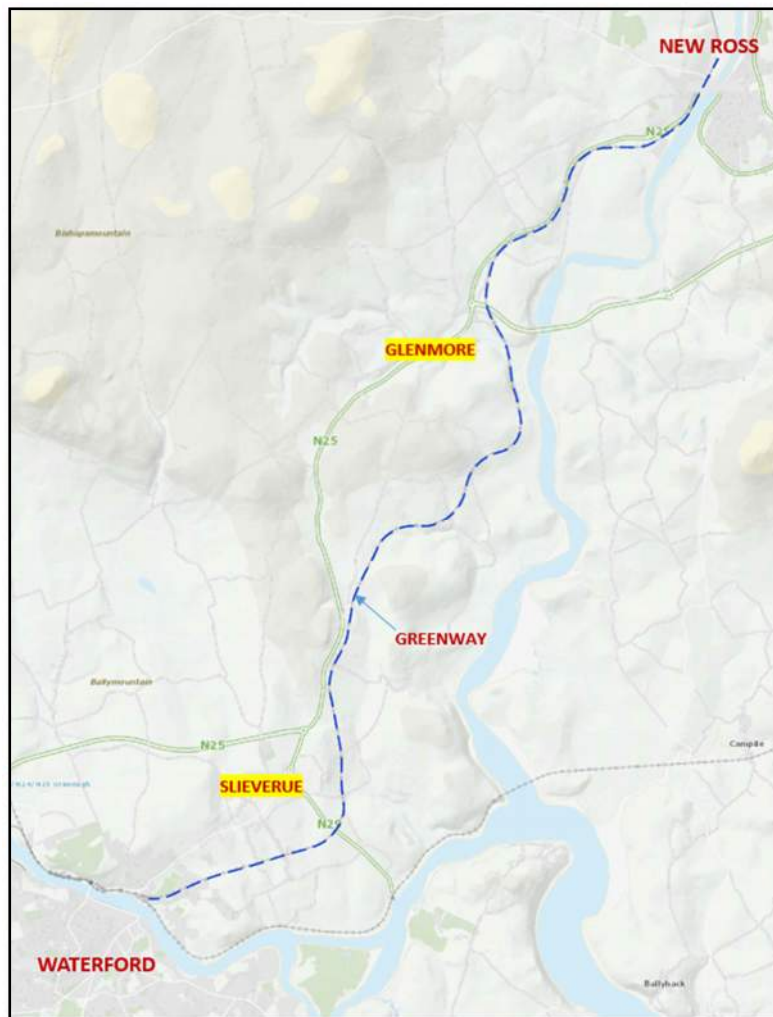


Figure 1.1 - Route of the Southeast Greenway (New Ross to Waterford)

The Project forms part of an overall collaborative vision and strategy for the development of an integrated network of Greenways and Blueways as outdoor recreational amenities, for the Southeast

region. The development of this Project, as part of the overall regional strategy, will attract domestic and international visitors to come, explore and stay in the region. It will connect with existing and planned Greenways and Blueways and will make provision for links to other local cycling and walking trails, tourism attractions/experiences and towns and villages along its route, creating a recreational pathway for use by local communities, attracting both domestic and overseas visitors to the area, providing an economic boost for rural communities, and encouraging and promoting walking and cycling in a safe and controlled environment. Works are well advanced on the construction of the 24km long Greenway.

The aim of this project is to identify route options and then determine the optimum connection routes to link the village of Slieverue with the new Greenway.

2 POLICY DOCUMENTS AND GUIDELINES

The following European, National, Regional and Local Policy Documents and Guidelines contain policies and objectives to promote and develop sustainable transport and cycling initiatives as well as recreational and tourism related objectives.

2.1 European Policy and Guidelines

‘Europe 2020 – A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth’ puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Sustainable transport strategy is set out under the “sustainable growth” priority, through flagship Initiative: “Resource efficient Europe”, which supports a shift towards a resource efficient and low carbon economy.

The TEN-T - Connecting Europe Policy (2014) focuses on connecting Europe through major infrastructure such as rail and roads. It highlights the potential for long distance walking and cycling routes.

European Cyclists’ Federation’s EU Cycling Strategy: Recommendations for Delivering Green Growth and an Effective Mobility in 2030” is the result of a systematic review of all EU policies related to cycling. The central objectives of the plan are as follows:

- Cycling should be an equal partner in the mobility system
- Grow cycle use in the EU by 50% at an average in 2019/2020-2030
- Cut rates of cyclists killed and seriously injured by half (in km cycled) in 2019/2020-2030
- Raise EU investment in cycling to €3bn in 2021-27; and €6bn from 2028-34.

2.2 National and Regional Policy and Guidelines

2.2.1 *Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework and National Development Plan 2018-2027*

Project Ireland 2040 is the Irish Governments overarching policy initiative for the long-term planning of the State. It is informed by the Programme for a Partnership Government 2016, which recognises that economic and social progress go hand-in-hand, and is made up of the “National Planning Framework to 2040” and the “National Development Plan 2018-2027”.

2.2.2 *National Planning Framework to 2040*

This is the Government’s high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of the country out to the year 2040. It seeks to achieve ten strategic outcomes including the following:

- *National Strategic Outcome 3: Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities* including an objective to “Invest in Greenways, blueways and peatways as part of a nationally coordinated strategy”
- *National Strategic Outcome 4: Sustainable Mobility* including an objective to “Develop a comprehensive network of safe cycling routes in metropolitan areas to address travel needs and to provide similar facilities in towns and villages where appropriate.”
- *National Strategic Outcome 7: Enhanced Amenities and Heritage* including an objective to “Invest in and enable access to recreational facilities, including trails networks, designed and delivered with a strong emphasis on conservation”
- *National Strategic Outcome 8: Transition to a Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Society* including developing metropolitan cycling and walking networks and Greenways.

The importance of Greenway developments to support rural job creation is highlighted noting that “the development of Greenways, blue ways and peatways offer a unique alternative means for tourists and

visitors to access and enjoy rural Ireland. The development of a strategic national network of these trails is a priority and will support the development of rural communities and job creation in the rural economy”

2.2.3 National Development Plan 2021 – 2030

The National Development Plan 2021–2030 is the most recent in the series of Government Capital plans and identifies the strategic priorities for public capital investment for all sectors to meet the strategic outcomes of the National Planning Framework.

Investment in activity-based tourism, including Greenways, is identified as be a priority over the period of the National Development Plan. Investment in sustainable travel measures, including comprehensive Cycling and Walking Networks for metropolitan areas, and expanded Greenways is also identified as a priority in delivering a transition to a Low-Carbon society.

2.2.4 Dept. for Transport, Tourism and Sport’s: “Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways – July 2018”

The Report was published in July 2018, following an extensive national consultations process undertaken in 2017. The Strategy outlines the Irish Government’s objective to assist in the strategic development of Greenways to an appropriate standard in order to deliver a quality experience for Greenway users. It recognises the benefits that can arise from the further development of Greenways in Ireland, as a tourism product with significant potential to attract overseas visitors, for local communities in terms of economic benefits, and for all users as an amenity for physical activity and a contributor to health and wellbeing.

The objective of the Strategy is *“to assist in the strategic development of nationally and regionally significant Greenways in appropriate locations constructed to an appropriate standard in order to deliver a quality experience for all Greenways users”*. It also aims to *“increase the number and geographical spread of Greenways of scale and quality around the country over the next 10 years with a consequent significant increase in the number of people using Greenways as a visitor experience and as a recreational amenity”*.

To achieve these objectives, the Strategy requires project promoters to work with Local Communities, Local Landowners, Local Authorities and other relevant State Bodies and organisations to deliver:

- *A Strategic Greenway network of national and regional routes, with a number of high-capacity flagship routes that can be extended and/or link with local Greenways and other cycling and walking infrastructure;*
- *Greenways of scale and appropriate standard that have significant potential to deliver an increase in activity tourism to Ireland and are regularly used by overseas visitors, domestic visitors and locals thereby contributing to a healthier society through increased physical activity;*
- *Greenways that provide a substantially segregated off road experience linking places of interest, recreation and leisure in areas with beautiful scenery of different types with plenty to see and do;*
- *Greenways that provide opportunities for the development of local businesses and economies;*
- *Greenways that are developed with all relevant stakeholders in line with an agreed code of practice.*

The Strategy identifies a ‘best practice’ approach to the development (i.e. throughout the public consultation and land access processes) and the design of greenways, which the project team has considered and will adopt, where relevant and as far as is practicable.

The strategy emphasises the requirement for early-stage consultation with affected landowners.

The strategy identifies design principles and standards that should be considered throughout the design process and introduces additional design guidance in the form of the *Greenways and Cycle Routes Ancillary Infrastructure Guidelines* which will be applied on this project where applicable and feasible.

Post construction, the strategy proposes an accreditation system, similar to the Sport Ireland trails register, which requires a minimum standard to be met for a Greenway to be accredited.

It highlights the benefits (based on experience to date in the Rep of Ireland) that can arise from the further development of Greenways as:

- a tourism product with significant potential to attract overseas visitors
- for local communities in terms of economic benefits
- as an amenity for physical activity and a contributor to health and wellbeing.

2.2.5 *Smarter Travel - A Sustainable Transport Future*

A New *Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020*. Relevant objectives are:

- Action 15 of the plan by striving to create a strong cycling culture;
- Action 17 through exploring opportunities to make a former railway line available for walking and cycling trails.

2.2.6 *National Cycle Policy Framework 2009*

Ireland's first National Cycle Policy Framework was launched in April 2009. It outlines 19 specific objectives, and details the 109 individual but integrated actions, aimed at ensuring that a cycling culture is developed in Ireland to the extent that, by 2020, 10% of all journeys will be by bike. The project supports the overall aims and objectives of the plan and in particular (but not limited to):

Objective 3: Provide designated rural cycle networks especially for visitors and recreational cycling.

2.2.7 *Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region (2010-2022)*

The Guidelines acknowledge that current cycling infrastructure in the region is currently limited but outlines an aim to encourage greater shift to cycling/ walking by the promotions of the strategies outlined in the Smarter Travel Policy and the National Cycling Policy Framework as referenced above.

The project will support specific cycling and walking Policy in Section 5:

PPO 5.8 'To promote and facilitate the sustainable development of cycling and walking facilities in the region, including development of 'Slí na Sláinte' and 'Greenways' in urban and rural areas.' To promote the development of cycling by the construction and improvement of cycle links within the region.

2.2.8 *Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region*

The Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region will implement the policies and goals of the NPF and NDP. A summary of the regional planning objectives (RPO's) that are relevant to the Slieverue Link project are listed below:

RPO 46 – Digital and Physical Infrastructure in Rural Areas: It is an objective to expedite the completion of infrastructure servicing diverse settlements to support innovation, enterprise start-ups and competitiveness. This includes high quality broadband and mobile communication services to all rural location, water and wastewater facilities for the growth of settlements, sustainable energy supply, enhanced transport including rural public transportation services and greenway waking and pedestrian corridors between settlements.

RPO 53 – Tourism:

b. Promote activity tourism subject to appropriate site selection and environmental assessment processes:

d. Sustainability develop walking and cycling trails opening greater accessibility to the marine and countryside environment by sustainable modes and promote the sustainable designation and delivery of Greenway and Blueway Corridors.

e. Facilitate appropriate tourism development and in particular a National Greenways, Blueways and Peatways Strategy, prioritising sustainable projects that achieve maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional levels.

RPO 174 – Walking and Cycling: The following walking and cycling objectives are supported and will guide investment subject to the required appraisal:

- Delivery of cycle routes, Greenway and Blueway corridor projects (subject to appropriate site selection and environmental assessment processes) having regard to the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways July 2018;
- Delivery of high-quality safe cycle route network across the Region and cycling environments (applicable to cities, towns and villages) with provision for segregated cycle tracks;
- Development of a safe cycling infrastructure to cater for the needs of all groups of cyclists, especially new cyclists, school children elderly etc.
- Safe walking and cycling routes especially in the approach to schools;
- Greenways in the Region shall be linked up to a network to improve connectivity within the Region for walking routes and commuter cyclist in addition to recreational amenity functions;
- Creating an safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists off the arterial roads shall be supported by large scale 30 km/h limits (except for main arterial roads) and adequate junction re-design;
- A cycle network that is coherent, continuous and safe, particularly when going through busy junctions;
- Alternative “quiet” routes must be established and signposted for cycling and walking to improve the uptake of active travel;
- Place walkability and accessibility by walking mode as a central objective in the planning and design of all new developments / new development areas , transport infrastructure and public transport services;
- Enhance pedestrian facilities in all urban areas in the region;
- Support sustainable pedestrian and cyclist greenway initiatives and the potential for interconnections between greenways subject to robust site selection processes and environmental assessment processes;
- Support accessibility to walking routes for people with disabilities.
- A buffer distance shall be maintained between walking, cycling, Greenway and Blueway corridors and from costal areas, particularly those subject to current and future erosion, as well as rivers and canals to ensure protection of riparian zones; and;
- Such initiatives shall commit to feasibility and route selection studies with a view to identifying and subsequent avoiding high sensitivity feeding or nesting points for birds and other sensitive fauna.

RPO 201 – National Trails, walking Routes, Greenway and Blueway Corridors: It is an objective to support investment in the development of walking and cycling facilities, greenway and blueway corridors within the region between our Regions settlements and the potential for sustainable linkages to create interregional greenways. Proposals for investment in walking and cycling facilities, greenway and blueway corridors should be based on the rigorous site / route selection studies and Local authorities of environmental assessment, including all necessary reports to assess the potential impact on

development does not contribute to loss of biodiversity. Local authorities and other public agencies shall seek to promote and support access to rural areas including upland areas, forestry, coastal areas in conjunction with other public bodies, representative agencies and community groups and shall identify and protect existing paths, walkways and rights of way.

2.2.9 People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025 (March 2015)

This Government Tourism Policy Statement sets out the Government's primary objective in maximising the services export revenue of the sector. The policy highlights the importance of high-quality facilities for activity-based tourism in the marketing of Ireland as a holiday destination. It notes the government's support for development and improvement of facilities for visitor activities including Greenways.

2.2.10 Fáilte Ireland Strategy for Development of Irish Cycle Tourism 2007

Fáilte Ireland (FI) produced its Strategy for the Development of Irish Cycle Tourism in 2007. It observed that cycle tourism had declined in Ireland since 2000. The FI strategy also referenced research which found, among other things, that:

- Cycling on Irish roads is not perceived to be safe – cyclists face dangerous bends, fast cars, intimidating HGVs, more traffic and higher speeds;
- There are very few, if any, traffic-free routes to cater for touring cyclists wanting to leave the cities to discover the countryside or for families who wish to participate in cycling.

The purpose of the FI strategy was to determine how best to renew the popularity of cycling in Ireland, how to encourage visitors to come to cycle in Ireland, and how to ensure that cycle tourism can generate visitor spend in rural areas. It proposed an approximately 3,000km long cycle network running from Donegal along the west, south and southeast coasts and continuing along the east coast as far as the Northern Ireland border.

The Strategy identified the following needs for cycle tourists:

- Safe places to cycle and consideration from other road users;
- Attractive routes with good scenery;
- Well-connected and signposted routes and destinations avoiding long detours;
- Opportunities to visit local attractions and specific places of interest;
- Food, accommodation and refreshments available at intervals, which reflect comfortable distances for stopping off / overnight stops.

2.2.11 Fáilte Ireland Cycling and Activities Research, 2013

In May 2013 Fáilte Ireland commissioned cycling research in order to, among other things, inform the route selection process of the route. Just over 15,000 people surveyed in Germany, France, Great Britain and Ireland. Respondents to this market research identified a beautiful landscape and scenery, and traffic-free cycling and safety of the cycle route as the most important attributes of a tourism cycle route.

This research indicates that directness of route is not a critical factor in the provision of a satisfactory leisure cycle route; picturesque landscapes and traffic free routes with good connections to towns and villages are rated highly.

2.2.12 Climate Action Plan (2021)

The Climate Action Plan 2021 provides a detailed plan for taking decisive action to achieve 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and setting us on a path to reach net zero emissions by no later than 2050, as committed to the Programme for Government and set out in the

Climate Act 2021. Specific actions identified in the plan which relate to the proposed Slieverue link are noted below:

Action 225: Continue the improvement and expansion of the active travel and greenway network.

Action 227: Construct an additional 1,000km of cycling and walking infrastructure.

Action 228: Encourage an increased level of modal shift towards active travel (walking and cycling) and away from private car use.

2.2.13 People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025

The Government's Tourism Policy Statement People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025 was published in March 2015. This policy statement is centred on Ireland achieving its full potential as a destination for overseas tourism. It confirms that the Government's aim was that by 2025, Ireland would have a vibrant, attractive tourism sector that makes a significant contribution to employment across the country; is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, helps promote a positive image of Ireland overseas, and is a sector that people wish to work in. The proposed Slieverue Link and its potential to enhance tourism in the local area is in line with the aims of this document.

2.2.14 Action Plan for Rural Development

The Action Plan for Rural Development contains more than 270 actions to support the economic and social development of rural Ireland. This plan provides a visible, cohesive and coordinated approach across the whole of Government to rural development. Objectives and Actions relevant to the proposed Slieverue Link include:

Pillar 3 Key Objective: Develop and promote Activity Tourism in rural areas through the development of blueways, greenways and other recreational opportunities.

Action No. 169: Enhance Infrastructure on and along the inland navigation system to support increased recreational and economic activity in rural Ireland.

Action No. 170: Through the Rural Recreational Scheme, provide funding for new recreation infrastructure and the maintenance of existing structures resulting in the creation and retention of jobs in rural areas,

Action No. 172: Ensure co-ordination of major outdoor recreation projects with all main State landowners to maximise potential for sustainable tourism in rural areas through the Inter-Agency Group on Outdoor Recreation.

Action No. 196: Encourage the conservation and reuse of historic properties and lettings to tourists in rural communities.

2.2.15 Rural Development Policy (2021-2025)

This document outlines the Government's plan to development the economies of rural places in Ireland. Policy measures relevant to the proposed Slieverue Link are listed below:

Policy Measure 36: Invest in greenways, blueways, walking trails and other outdoor recreation infrastructure to support in outdoor recreational tourism.

Policy Measure 64: Invest in infrastructure, including water and wastewater infrastructure, to support the development of rural towns and villages.

Policy Measure 102: Invest in high quality walking and cycling infrastructure specifically targeted at towns and villages across the country.

2.2.16 National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland

The aim of the National Physical Activity Plan is to increase physical activity levels across the whole population. It aims to create a society which facilitates people whether at home at work or at play to lead an active way of life. Objectives relevant to the Slieverue Link are listed below:

Objective 36: Prioritise the planning and development of walking and cycling and general recreational / physical activity infrastructure.

Objective 37: Explore opportunities to maximise physical activity and recreation amenities in the natural environment.

2.2.17 Alignment with Government Policy / Planning Context

Based on the above review, it is evident that the development of a Link between Slieverue and the South East Greenway would be well aligned with National and Regional policy objectives.

2.3 Local Policy Documents

2.3.1 Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 – 2027

The current adopted development plan is the *Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027*. The key issues addressed in this Plan are as follows:

- *Contributing towards achieving climate change targets in particular by means of encouraging and facilitating a modal shift towards more sustainable travel modes and patterns and an increase in renewable energy production, including wind, solar and bio energy, both at a macro and micro scale.*
- *Delivering compact growth in the form envisaged under the NPF and RSES for Kilkenny City, the Waterford MASP area and the towns and villages of the county.*
- *Facilitate the delivery of increased housing supply from both public and private sources.*
- *Facilitating the recovery of businesses across the county from the impacts of Covid-19 and helping businesses respond to the challenges presented by Brexit.*
- *The continued delivery of the Abbey Quarter Masterplan area.*
- *Facilitating the recovery from the impacts of Covid-19 on the tourism sector in the county and further development.*
- *Encouraging and supporting sustainable rural development by facilitating sustainable rural settlement patterns that will revitalise and sustain smaller towns and villages whilst continuing to facilitate the housing need of farming families and rural dwellers.*
- *Delivery of key infrastructure for the City and County to facilitate development.*

Relevant key points / objectives within the plan are as follows:

Climate Change

Strategic Aim:

To provide a policy framework with objectives and actions in this City and County Development Plan to facilitate the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient County with an emphasis on reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions, through a combination of effective mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change

2A - To support and encourage sustainable compact growth and settlement patterns, integrate land use and transportation, and maximise opportunities through development form, layout and design to secure climate resilience and reduce carbon emissions.

2F - To adopt nature-based approaches and green infrastructural solutions as viable mitigation and adaptation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions where feasible. The Council will promote and support physical activity, active recreation and an active lifestyle.

Economic Development

5C - To continue to develop sustainable high quality tourism, leisure and complementary activities for the City & County with the key stakeholders enhancing the position of Kilkenny as a Hero site within Ireland's Ancient East branding.

5E - Invest in public realm to create more multi-functional vibrant and inviting public spaces in urban areas and villages, which will greatly enhance the overall quality of place and act as a catalyst to stimulate private sector development. The public realm will be informed by the Kilkenny Access for All Strategy 2018-2021. The Council will ensure that the maintenance, cleanliness and animation of public spaces is managed in order to encourage visitors to dwell more in these spaces.

5F - Development of the Kilkenny Greenway as part of the South East Greenway in South Kilkenny.

5H - Continue the development of projects for submission under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) and other funding schemes (e.g. LEADER Programme).

5L - To promote a diverse and sustainable local economy through the designation of sufficient lands for employment related uses, including facilities, to promote SME growth through the local area plans for the District towns.

5Q - To improve the accessibility of each of the County's town centres and promote all sustainable modes of transport.

5W - To facilitate the regeneration and reuse of derelict buildings in appropriate locations for town centre uses and support the retention and maintenance of heritage premises and shopfronts

Open Space and Recreation

8F - To continue the development of new trails and walkways such as the Castlecomer, Knockdrinna Wood and Ballyhale Looped Walks and the upgrade of others such as the Freshford, Gathabawn and Kilmacoliver Looped Walks and the Nore Valley Walk.

Greenways and Blueways Objectives

8J To complete the construction of the Kilkenny Greenway, connecting New Ross to Waterford.

8K To promote and develop the Waterford to Rosslare Greenway in association with Waterford City and County Council and Wexford County Council.

8Kb To undertake a metropolitan-wide Open Space, Recreation and Greenbelt Strategy to include the identification of a location for a regional scale park within the Waterford Metropolitan Area as well as the development of neighbourhood parks and open spaces.

Movement and Mobility

Strategic Aim: To co-ordinate transport and land use planning, reducing the demand for travel and the reliance on the private car in favour of public transport, cycling and walking by providing for a greater mix of suitable uses and by promoting and facilitating the transition to electrification of our transport modes moving away carbon intensive modes to new technologies such as electric vehicles.

12A - To plan for and progressively implement a sustainable, integrated and low carbon transport system by enhancing the existing transport infrastructure in terms of road, bus, rail, cycling and pedestrian facilities and interfacing different modes as the opportunity arises.

12B - To plan for a transition towards sustainable and low carbon transport modes, through the promotion of alternative modes of transport, and 'walkable communities' together with promotion of

compact urban forms close to public transport corridors to encourage more sustainable patterns of movement in all settlements.

Modal Share Objectives

12E - To deliver on sustainable mobility with an accompanying investment in infrastructure to provide for integration between all modes of transport to support the use of sustainable travel choices.

12F - Implement strategies to meet the mode share targets during the lifetime of the plan and develop, in conjunction with the NTA, an effective monitoring regime for the implementation and where required, adjustment of the Council's sustainable transport strategy in order to ensure the achievement of the modal share targets referred to under Objective 12G.

12G - To achieve a modal shift from the private car to walking or cycling in accordance with the targets in Table 12.1 for County Kilkenny.

Mode Share	Walk	Cycle	Public Transport	Car
2016	11%	1.2%	8%	65%
2040 Target	20%	15%	20%	45%

Cycling Objectives

12H To compile a Cycling Strategy for the County

12I To develop a network of cycling and pedestrian routes within Kilkenny city to provide connectivity and provide an alternative to car-based transport.

12J To develop a cycle route between the Eastern Environs and the Breaghagh Valley.

12K To investigate the provision of a cycle route along the River Nore Linear Park connecting north of the City with the east and south of the City.

12L To improve cycling infrastructure throughout the city in accordance with the recommendations of the Kilkenny Local Area Transport Plan as resources permit.

12M To reduce the Council's carbon footprint through the implementation of the Council's own cycle scheme, which will encourage staff members to discharge their official duties in a more sustainable way.

12N To carry out an appraisal of each of the District Towns to determine measures to facilitate cycling and walking and improve connectivity within the town particularly from an age friendly perspective.

12O To invest in cycling and other smarter travel projects in support of the compact '10-minute city' concept.

12P To provide connections to the Kilkenny Greenway to settlements along its route as the need arises and resources permit.

2.3.2 Slieverue Local Area Plan 2006

The latest Slieverue Local Area Plan (LAP) was completed in 2006 in accordance with the requirements and provisions of the planning and development act, 2000 (as amended). It expired in 2012; however it contains a significant amount of information and can be used as a guidance document.

Objectives from the Slieverue 2006 LAP were:

- To encourage job/employment creation initiatives
- To facilitate and encourage the development of facilities catering for tourists in Slieverue

- To provide for appropriate pedestrian and cycleway linkages between all new and existing developments
- To facilitate and encourage the expansion of public transport servicing Slieverue. In particular connection to connection to the proposed green route under the PLUTS for Waterford City.
- The Council will consider proposals for additional car parking on suitable sites and seek appropriate provision of adequate car parking in any new developments
- To provide quality open space to meet the needs of the existing and future population
- To support the provision of appropriate recreational facilities to serve the present and future population of the village.

2.3.3 Ferrybank-Belview Local Area Plan 2017

The latest Ferrybank-Belview Local Area Plan (LAP) came into effect on the 15th of January 2018. Study area of the plan includes parts of the Greenway and its surround.

5G - To ensure the creation of access points to the Greenway at its intersection with the N29 in any development proposal at this location.

8C - To complete the Greenway and investigate and encourage the creation of access points in any significant future development proposal adjoining the Greenway.

It is an objective of the Council to complete the Greenway from Waterford to New Ross and to facilitate its connection and development to connect to the Waterford-Dungarvan greenway

2.3.4 Alignment with Local Government Policy / Planning Context

Based on the above review, it is evident that the development of a Link between Slieverue and the South East Greenway would be well aligned with Local policy objectives.

2.4 Environmental Policies and Guidelines

The following sections describe a non-exhaustive list of European and national, environmental policy documents and guidelines which were considered when assessing the routes passing through or close to EU designated sites.

2.4.1 EU Directives

The Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and the Habitats Directive (more formally known as Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) are European Union legislation for the protection of biodiversity and natural habitats. These directives are implemented throughout Europe by way of the Natura 2000 programme, which covers 30,000 protected sites throughout Europe.

EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species (1143/2014) deals with the issues of, among other things, bringing into the Union, keeping, breeding, transporting and placing on the market, species included on the list of invasive alien species of Union concern (the "Union list").

2.4.2 National

The most important national legislation underpinning biodiversity and nature conservation in Ireland is the Wildlife Act, 1976 and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000. Currently all bird species, 22 other animal species or groups of species and 86 species of flora are afforded protected status at a national level. It is an offence to kill or injure a protected species, or to disturb their habitat, nest or other breeding/resting place.

The European Union (Natural Habitats) Regulations, SI 94/1997, which have been amended twice with SI 233/1998 & SI 378/2005, transpose the EU directives for the protection of Natura 2000 sites (SACs and SPAs) into Irish national Law.

The 1997 Regulations and their amendments were subsequently revised, enlarged and improved by the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 and the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations, 2011.

European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I.272 of 2009) and (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and 2015, clarify the role of public authorities in the protection of surface waters also concern the protection of designated habitats.

2.5 Implemented Policy on the Greenway

The following existing documentation are relevant to the planning of the Slieverue Greenway link:

- Design Documents for the South East Greenway;
- South East Greenway Part VIII Documents;

2.6 Design Standards

Relevant standards and design guidelines appropriate to the proposed design include:

- the NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges,
- the DTTaS Design Manual for Urban Roads and Street,
- the DoT Traffic Signs Manual, 2010
- A Guide to Planning & Developing Recreational Trails in Ireland, from National Trails Ireland, DTTAS
- NTA National Cycle Manual,
- Greenway Design and Brand Guidelines DTGACSM
- Rural Cycleway Design (DN-GEO-03047)
- ROI Dept of Transport, Tourism and Sport Greenways and Cycle Routes Ancillary Infrastructure Guidelines (2018).

3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 Scheme Overview

A link to the new Greenway is to be provided to Slieverue village.

3.1.1. Slieverue Village

The village of Slieverue is located circa 5kms north of Waterford City and 14kms south of New Ross and adjoins the N29 and R711 roads. Slieverue is located on the city side of the Waterford Bypass. The Greenway is located approximately 2 kms from Slieverue village.

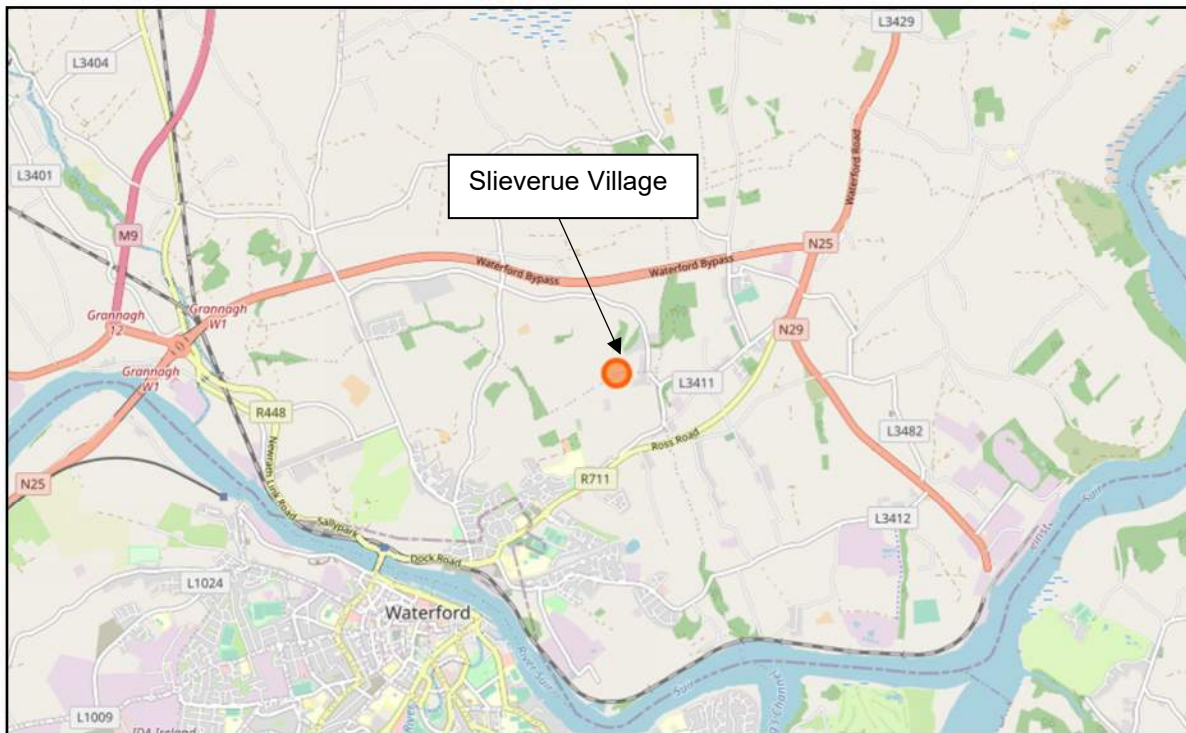


Figure 3.1 Location of Slieverue Village

3.2 Aims and Objectives

The project partners have identified the following strategic aims aligned to European, National and Local Policies (as outlined in Section 2.0), which set out the core benefits which the development of the greenway route seeks to achieve.

The aims and objectives are mainly Social, Economic and Environmental and are as follows:

- Connect the village of Slieverue to the Greenway and its planned tourism initiatives and infrastructure.
- Create a safe and pleasant amenity along which the local population can commute, socialise, and use as a recreational and leisure facility, and which promotes active lifestyles, physical exercise and participation in outdoor activities.
- Provide connection to existing and planned educational, recreational and leisure facilities such as schools, parks and open spaces, playgrounds, walks and trails, sports clubs and facilities.
- Provide a connection to the South East Greenway route that is safe, comfortable and attractive to all user groups (both cycling and walking) and provides a reliable and safe level of service.
- Provide high-quality infrastructure which will attract increased visitors to the area and drive the demand for associated cycling/walking related facilities e.g., cafes, bike hire etc.

- Offer an attractive and cost-effective sustainable alternative to private motor vehicle transport by providing connections between residential areas and areas of employment, commercial centres and recreational facilities.
- Increase the economic contribution of tourism to the local economy and provide a catalyst and opportunities for economic growth by providing linkages to the village to facilitate the growth of cycle tourism and the provision of basic facilities such as food, toilets, overnight accommodation, retail outlets, bicycle repair, and convenience shops.
- Facilitate access to existing visitor attractions and activities along the route by provision of a lateral links suitable for walking/cycling.
- Achieve an increase in modal shift to more sustainable methods of travel (on foot or by bike) between the communities and destinations linked by the project and enable improved access by active travel means to public transport connections.
- Promote health and wellbeing in the communities connected by the project.
- Enhance road safety for existing vulnerable and non-motorised road users.
- Enhance the cycling tourism offering within the region.
- Contribute to reducing carbon emissions in the area through achieving a rise in modal shift.
- Value and enhance the natural environment by creating a 'green' linear corridor to the benefit of wildlife through sensitive landscaping.

It is further intended that these aims and objectives would be met in the most cost-effective way that, where possible, mitigates the impact on private lands and maximises use of available public lands, provided always that the route meets the needs of all user groups and meets the aims and objectives outlined above.

The report *Failte Ireland Marketing Research 2013* provides key findings of relevance to the shaping of aims and objectives for the scheme.

In that research, when domestic and international visitors were asked what makes a good cycling destination, the cycling-specific attributes were not priorities for people. Rather scenery and landscape, attractive towns and villages etc., were more important.

The research revealed that:

- Visitors will choose a destination based on the overall experience of what they will see and do and cycling is an enjoyable means of experiencing those activities. It is important therefore that any planned route allows visitors to have that rounded holiday experience by incorporating interesting places to visit.
- This was followed by requirements for traffic free and safe cycling routes, perhaps reflecting the large proportion of the market that travels with children. As close to half the users for cycling in Ireland travel with children, the importance of delivering trails which meet the needs of this market segment cannot be overstated.
- Beautiful scenery is easily the most important destination attribute with respect to cycling. That said, the scenery needs to be varied, as too much of the same thing will become boring.
- Weather also ranks highly in preference however it's not the be all and end all.
- Cycling routes incorporating attractive cities and towns, followed by access to historical/ cultural attractions, and destinations that are easy to get to complete the list of attributes required to make a good cycling destination.

The implications in relation to the aims and objectives of the route selection and design process are:

- Attractive, and preferably scenic, routes are the main priority amongst both the domestic and overseas markets
- A significant portion of users travel in groups of family or friends with children. This has a significant bearing on the infrastructure required, as safe and traffic free cycling is key to this market. There is a strong preference for safe and traffic free routes to meet the needs of the high proportion of cyclists who travel with children

- Points of shelter are needed to overcome Ireland's weather barrier
- Flat routes are preferred – they won't necessarily be boring to dedicated cyclists
-

In summary, the routes should be Family-friendly for walking and cycling and be:

- Attractive – scenic and interesting
- Safe – away from heavy traffic but close to community
- Direct – short in length but induce diversion from greenway
- Comfortable – surfaced and not steep

3.3 Physical Character of the Greenway Connection Facility

A greenway is a traffic-free route designed exclusively for the use of pedestrians and cyclists. The character of the connection to the South East Greenway will align with the greenway as much as possible and is generally low-key in terms of its impact on the overall landscape of an area and its environmental effects. Greenways tend to be offline, which means they are located entirely off road and traffic free. For the Slieverue connection, some sections may be online within an existing road corridor located within the verge or footway areas, particularly in urban areas.

This greenway connection will generally be constructed as a 3m wide shared-use path, with a bituminous surface to provide a high-quality finish for cyclists. The greenway connection route will seek to follow, in so far as possible, field boundaries and land-holding boundaries, or existing laneways, rivers or other corridors to avoid disturbance to farming activity. The geometry of the facility is flexible and the route will be designed to minimise farm severance or agricultural impacts, apart from the loss of the small area of land forming the scheme footprint.

In urban areas the path width may be reduced in width through sections where constraints such as buildings, boundaries and carriageway kerblines exist. Where possible, appropriate screening in the form of shrubs, plants and/or trees will be planted as part of the greenway connection corridor to create wildlife habitats and to improve the visual quality of the infrastructure.

Figure 3.2 shows the typical cross section proposed for rural or offline sections of the greenway connection and Figure 3.3 shows the typical cross section in urban or online sections.

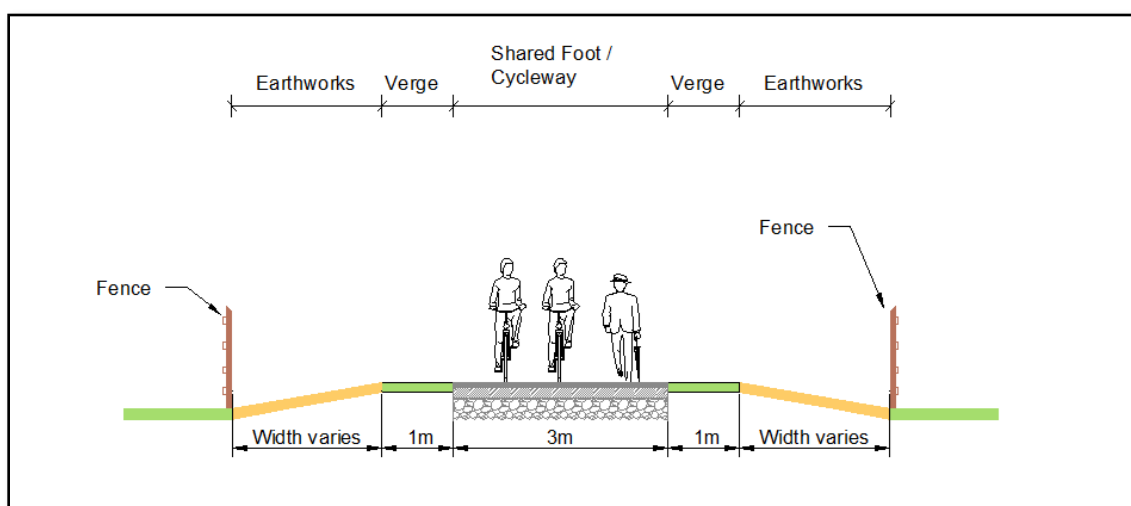


Figure 3.2 Typical cross section – rural / offline

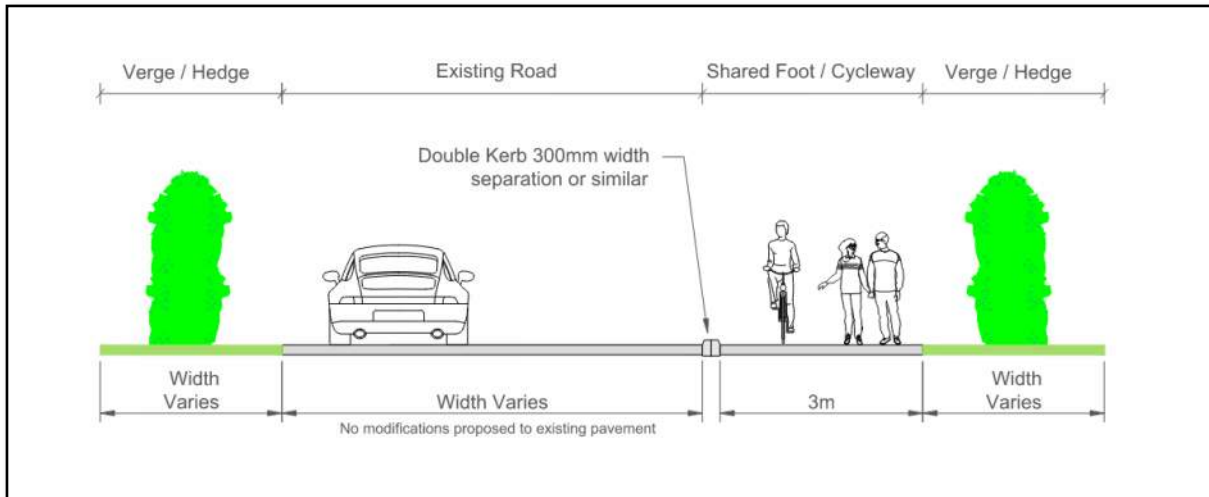


Figure 3.3 Typical cross section – urban / online

A fence will be erected along the offline sections of the greenway connection if required by the adjacent landowner from whom land has been acquired or if deemed necessary for the safe and efficient operation. The fence type would typically be a timber post and rail fence.

Lighting will be provided in urban areas, but not, in general, in rural sections, except where deemed necessary for the safe and efficient operation, subject to environmental and other restrictions, with any proposed specification being cognisant of, and sympathetic to, the rural landscape setting.

Gradients will be kept as flat as possible subject to existing topographical constraints and will not exceed 5% where feasible. Short sections of up to 10% gradients may be considered in exceptional circumstances. Similarly, the horizontal alignment will be designed for gentle radii and gradual changes in direction, with a minimum radius of 4m.

4 CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 Introduction

The preferred route of the completed greenway may be influenced, positively or negatively, by:

- topography physical constraints;
- environmental constraints, mainly ecology and cultural heritage;
- location of trip generators which offer potential for usage;
- connectivity to settlements and amenities;
- areas of interest, attractions, scenery and amenities that may attract tourists.

4.2 Topography and Watercourses

The topography across the area is relatively flat, with no significant hills or mountains. Levels vary between 30m OD at the western end of the railway and 90m at the high ground between Luffany and Drumdowney. Slieverue village lies between the 60m and 70m contours. In general, the topography is not problematic in achieving acceptable gradients for the greenway links.

However, there are significant level differences between the greenway and the local road network that crosses it. Peafield Road, Kilmurry Lane and the N29 Port Road are bridged over the former railway; the former railway is bridged over the greenway at Kilmurry. The difference in level between the greenway and the road surface is generally in the region of 5 to 7m. This is a significant constraint if the link route were to connect to the greenway at the location. Ramps would be needed to accommodate level differences and any inclines should be of a gradual gradient to attract commuting and leisure cyclists.

There is one stream in the area. It is unnamed, small sized and flows south to the river Suir on a line west of, and generally parallel to, the N29 Port Road.

Other than local engineering issues in forming connections where there are level differences between the former railway line and the proposed link to the greenway, there are no significant consequences to these constraints.



Figure 4.1 Topography of Slieverue (10m contours)

4.3 Environment and Ecology

4.3.1 Designated & Protected Areas

There are no designated NPWS areas at Slieverue.

4.3.2 Built Environment and Local Heritage

There are historic buildings and scheduled sites and monuments within the study area that may be constraints to routes. The design of the greenway will need to avoid any significant impacts on these sites.

The National Monuments Service (NMS) database was consulted to provide a list of all features within the Study Area. A map of these features is provided at the following link:

- <https://www.archaeology.ie/archaeological-survey-ireland/historic-environment-viewer-application>

The viewer provides a map of National Monument features that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) (as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2004) and Architectural features included the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH).

Figure 4.2 below shows all the features listed on the NMS viewer, along with the key features identified that are considered relevant to the assessment of the routes.

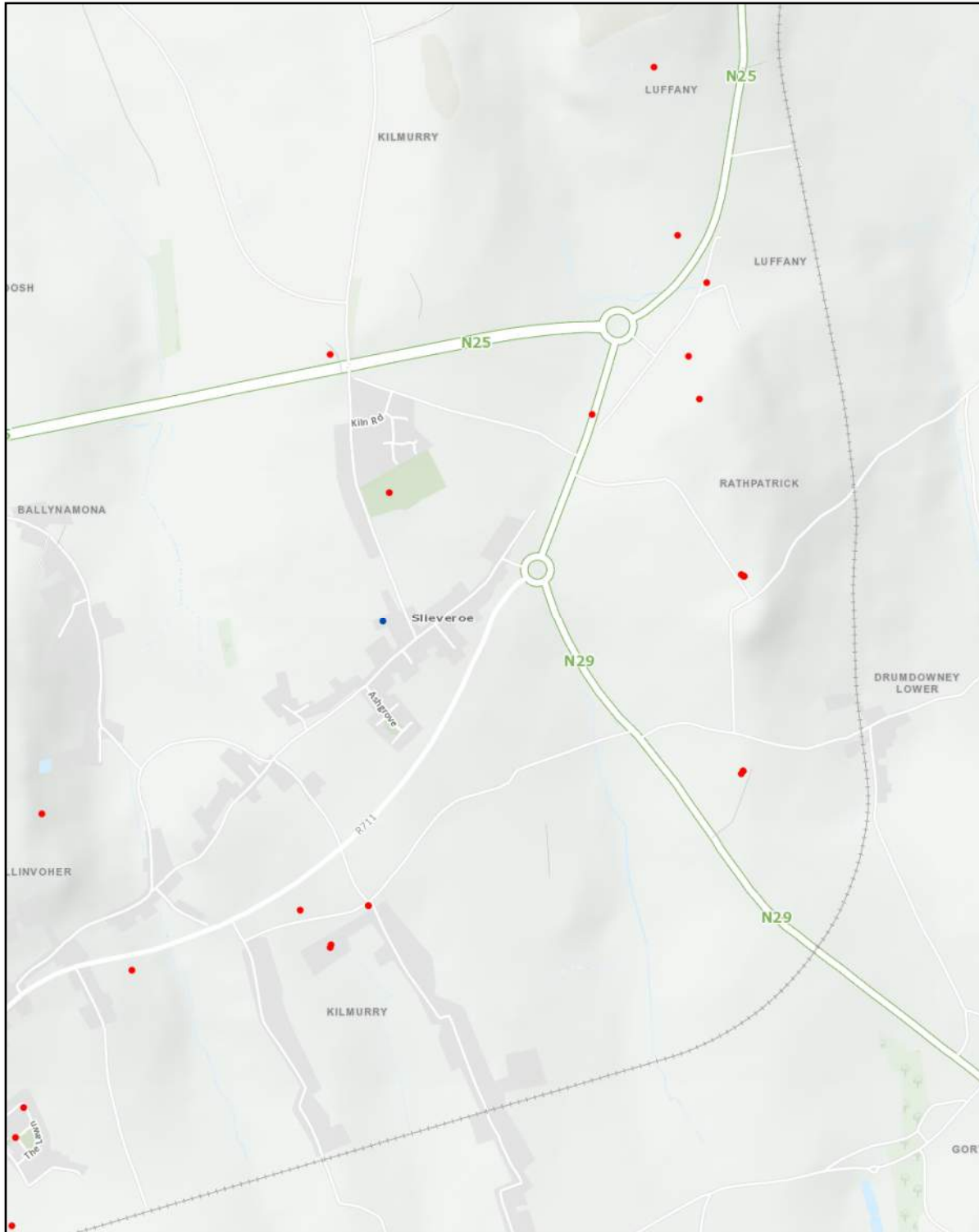


Figure 4.2 Slieverue Cultural Heritage Sites

Slieverue Cultural heritage: sites indicated by blue dots are Architectural heritage and by red dots are Archaeological heritage).

There is one site of Architectural Heritage within Slieverue village but it would not be impacted on by the project. There are cultural heritage assets within the area of the project that could be impacted on by the route options.

There are a number of archaeological sites within the area; however, the density and locations of the cultural heritage assets in the area of Slieverue are such that it would appear feasible to provide greenway linkages without undue impacts.

4.4 Population, Land Use, Zoning, Amenities and Attractions

4.4.1 Population

The latest census data (2016) records the following population counts:

- Slieverue - Electoral Divisions Census 2016: Rathpatrick – 1,095 persons.

People who live in the area offer the greatest potential for year-round use of the links to the greenway.

4.4.2 Existing Roads

The R744, N25 and the N29 Port Road are significant severance lines which would be difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to cross.

There is an existing underbridge beneath the R711, and this is a point at which the cyclist is carried beneath the R711 without interaction with traffic on the regional road.

Existing heavily trafficked roads are significant constraints to route development at the village.

4.4.3 Zoning

The area south of Slieverue village is zoned for development, and the zoning is as shown on the following image.

This is a major constraint to route development. Some lands within the area are zoned to support the development of Belview port. If lands are intended to be industrial developed their future uses may not be compatible with the objective of a greenway link being scenic, attractive and family-friendly. Security fences, industrial noise and odours, the presence of heavy traffic etc are characteristics that tend not to sit well with relaxed cycle tourism.

Conversely, the presence of a linear greenway through an area zoned for industrial type development could constrain the options for the development of the land through which it passes. Developers may be cautious about going ahead with projects where in the future there may be objections to the industrial use or restrictions imposed on it arising from conflict with users of the greenway.

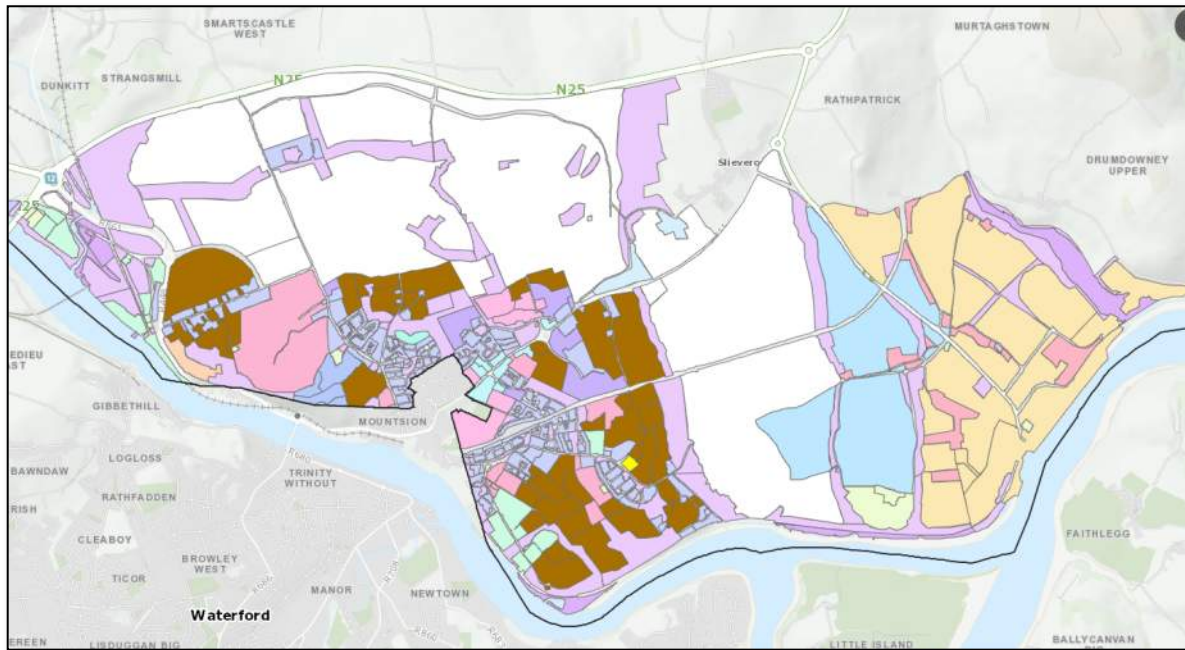


Figure 4.3 Zoning of lands south of Slieverue Village

Zoning for the village of Slieverue itself is shown in the LAP and an extract from the zoning map is provided in Figure 4.4.

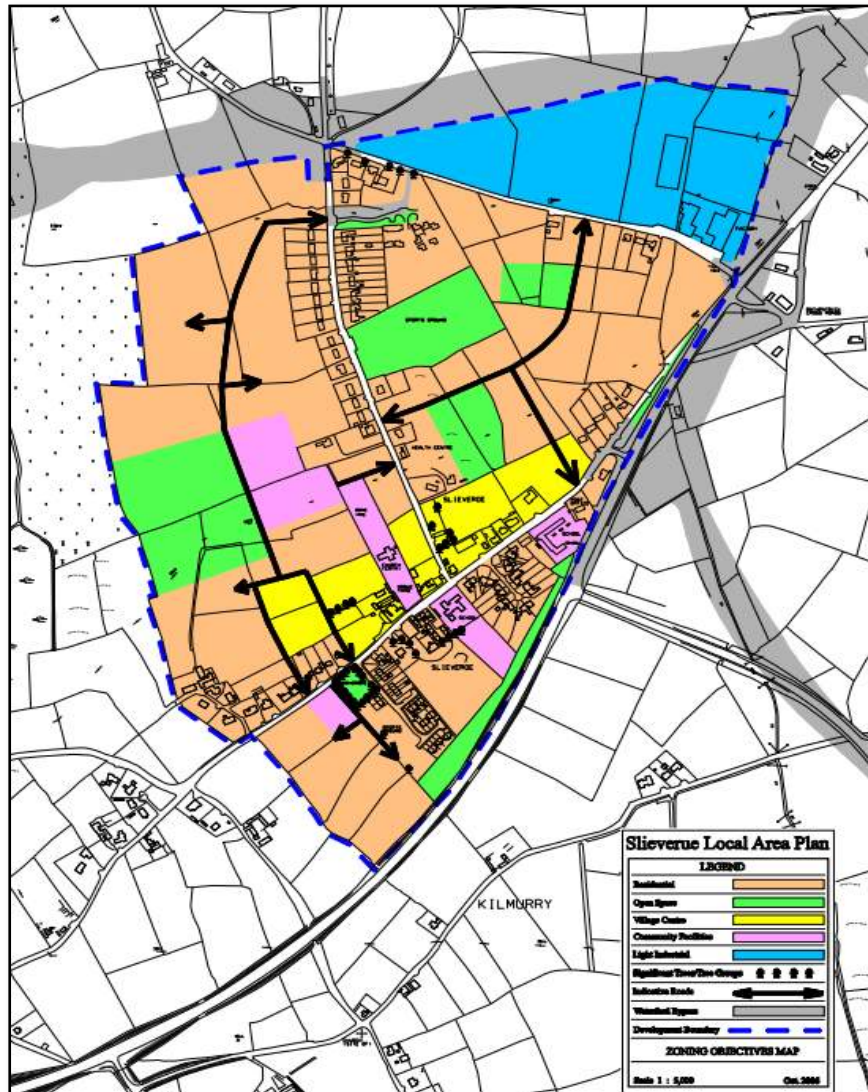


Figure 4.4 Slieverue village zoning map

4.4.4 Schools and Education Centres

Schools are an important consideration for achieving modal shift. Providing a Greenway allowing students, parents and staff to safely travel to school will help shift travel patterns towards more sustainable and healthy models.

The selection of routes will consider proximity to schools where students may be likely to travel by bike, perhaps accompanied by parents or guardians.

Figures 4.5 show the locations of schools in Slieverue.

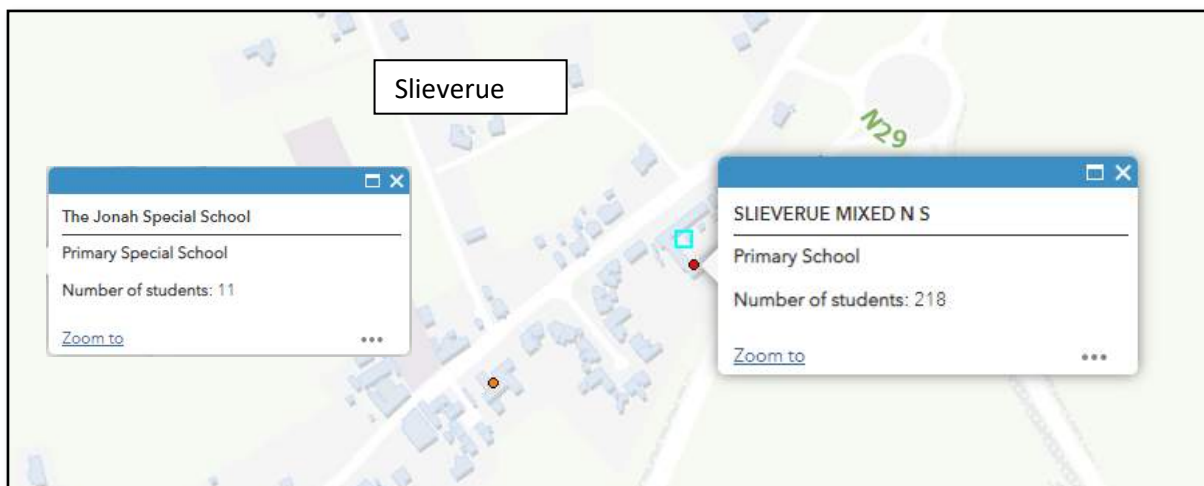


Figure 4.5 Slieverue Schools

There are attractions, businesses and employment centres, retail enterprises, social and community outlets in the area.

Local businesses should benefit from increased visitor numbers generated by the greenway, and new business opportunities, e.g. bicycle rental and bicycle repairs.

Amenities and attractions within the Study Area will provide opportunities for connections with the proposed Greenway. Routes connecting with local amenities and attractions may benefit from the existing trips generated by these facilities by providing potential for modal shift of some of these trips from motorised vehicles to walking/cycling. The additional trips and journeys generated on completion of the Greenway should also help to increase existing visitor numbers.

5 ROUTE OPTIONS

5.1 Slieverue

Figure 5.1 below shows the route options for Slieverue.



Figure 5.1 Slieverue Routes

The routes are predominantly off-line with the exception of the Yellow route which is predominantly on-line. Where they are shown to be adjacent to a road they are generally within the verge or behind the existing edge line. Acquisition of privately-owned lands would be required for the provision of the route.

There are five route options identified:

- Kilmurry Lane (Yellow)
- Stream (Green)
- N29 Port Road (Cyan)
- Drumdowney (Orange)
- Luffany (Pink)

A summary of the advantages and disadvantages of the individual routes is provided in subsequent sections, together with photographs providing context. Some key points from these descriptions are:

- a) Each route offers advantages from the perspective of the greenway connection itself and use for active travel and recreational use.
- b) The Yellow route can be seen to provide a greatest advantage in terms of its potential use as a commuter route to Waterford.
- c) Based on the locations and routes of the options, it can be seen that a complete loop route may be provided, utilising a combination of two of the proposed routes, that would connect each end

of the village to the greenway. This has the advantage of providing a looped walk for locals using the greenway for active travel, and for tourists who might wish to divert from the Greenway at one end to use facilities within the village and rejoin the greenway at the other end to resume their journey.

- d) When considering a loop route, it can be seen that inclusion of the Pink route is likely to enhance the attractiveness of the overall facility in terms of accommodating access to and from the Greenway. Omission of the Pink route may make a loop less attractive to southbound users of the Greenway in particular, who may remain on the Greenway and continue to Waterford.

5.1.1 Kilmurry Lane



Figure 5.2 Kilmurry Lane

KILMURRY LANE ASSESSMENT	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Existing underpass of R711 2. Passive surveillance 3. Existing walking route 4. Shortest route for commute to Waterford City 5. Potential for loop route (in conjunction with Luffany) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kilmurry graveyard site

5.1.2 Stream



Figure 5.3 Stream

STREAM ASSESSMENT	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Along farm boundaries 2. Re-uses former N29 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Potential impact on zoned lands close to the port 2. Not very attractive, and potentially less so if port lands developed 3. Personal safety concerns 4. At grade crossing R711 which carries AADT of 9,597 5. Level difference at connection

5.1.3 Port Road



Figure 5.4 Port Road

PORT ROAD ASSESSMENT

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complements development within the port area 2. Re-uses former N29 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not attractive for family use – high traffic volumes - 30% HGVs – national road 2. Zoned development land required. 3. At grade crossing R711 which carries AATD of 9,597 4. Level difference at railway connection 5. Objection likely from Road Authority

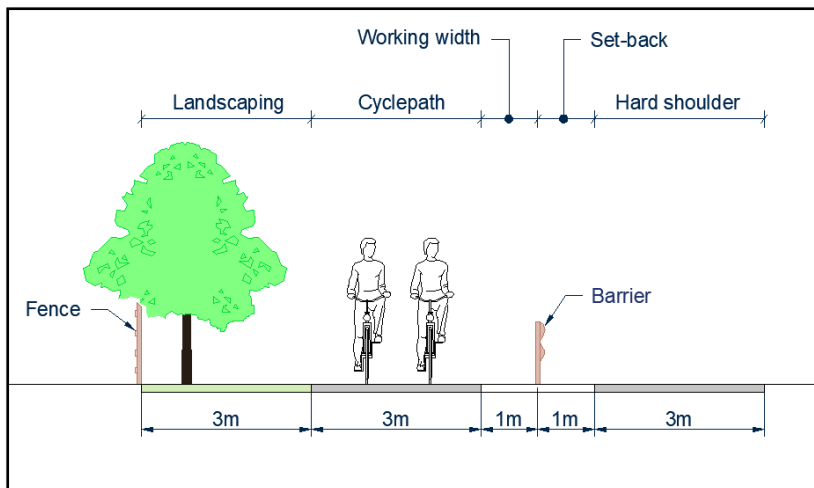


Figure 5.5 Typical cross section - Port Road

5.1.4 Drumdowney



Figure 5.6 Drumdowney



DRUMDOWNEY ASSESSMENT

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Short route 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Underpass of N29 required. Potential impact on zoned lands Crossing of crossing R711 which carries AATD of 9,597 Level difference at connection Not attractive for family use – at toe of embankment of the Port Road

5.1.5 Luffany



Figure 5.7 Luffany

LUFFANY ASSESSMENT	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mainly on publicly-owned land 2. Remedies an existing issue with community severance and road safety, i.e. crossing of N29 at Luffany Roundabout 3. Potential for loop route in conjunction with Kilmurry 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Footbridge required over N29 2. Located on the boundary of the TII PPP contract area

6 PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

A Public Consultation Event was held at which the drawings and proposals were displayed. The public consultation session was advertised beforehand. Display of the routes were mounted at the public consultation venue together with assessments of the route options. Feedback forms were made available for attendees to complete.

The date and venue of the consultation was as follows:

Date	Venue
1 st Public Consultation Event, Slieverue 8 th March 2022	Slieverue Parish Hall

Members of the Project Team were present at the event to explain the Project proposals, and drawings to the public.

Sign in sheets were provided at the event and the numbers of signed in attendees are given in the table. It is noted that many people chose not to sign in.

Feedback forms that provided the public with an opportunity to formally comment on the proposals were distributed on the consultation event and the public was encouraged to complete and return these forms.

Landowners on whose lands route options were located were contacted in advance of the public consultation by phone and informed of the scheme and of the route options that would impact directly on their landholdings.

The evening was well attended possibly 30 to 40 persons attended each. Not all people signed in.

Seven number submissions were made on Slieverue: two number in favour of Kilmurry; two number in favour of Luffany combined with another route (one being Kilmurry and the second being "Stream"); three number with no preference of which two were objections to Luffany and one a concern relating to Kilmurry.

7 ASSESSMENT OF ROUTE OPTIONS

7.1. Introduction

The assessment of the route option was carried out with reference to the route specific aims and objectives, and the assessment criteria and scoring matrix described in this section. For each of the criteria, a preamble which describes assessment and scoring process has been provided.

7.2. Route Assessment Criteria

Assessment criteria were used to score the route options and select the preferred route option. The route has been scored against the assessment criteria, having regard to the project aims and objectives and using a scoring matrix.

For each individual assessment criterion considered, routes have been compared against each other based on a five-point scale, ranging from having significant advantages to having significant disadvantages over other route options. For illustrative purposes, this five-point scale is colour coded as presented in Table 7.1, with advantageous routes graded to 'dark green' and disadvantaged routes graded to 'dark red'. Negative impacts were generally scored in the yellow to red range and opportunities and benefit in the yellow to green range.

Colour	Description
	Significant advantages over the other options
	Some advantages over other options
	Neutral compared to other options
	Some disadvantages over other options
	Significant disadvantages compared to other options

Table 7.1 Route Options Colour Coded Ranking Scale

The views of the public on the respective route options as expressed through the consultation process have been recorded and reflected in the route scoring. Routes which receive negative feedback score lower than those which have neutral or positive feedback.

The assessment criteria are divided into three categories:

- Impacts and Opportunities
- Effectiveness
- Public feedback

The overall assessment for each route is based on a comparative qualitative assessment of how each route ranked under each criterion, considering the relative importance of each criterion and a holistic view on the route's overall performance in the assessment.

7.2.1. Impacts and Opportunities

Every project has impacts on the environment and on people. Projects change the status quo and some impacts are negative in nature. Opportunities are generally the positive impacts and tend to be benefits that are expected to accrue from the project. These can sometimes be in addition to the direct aims and objectives of that project.

7.2.2. Effectiveness

Not all options for a project are equally effective. Some tend to be better in fulfilling the aims and objectives of the scheme. Effectiveness is a key criterion; it fundamentally assesses the quality of service provided to the users which in turn has a significant bearing on the potential use of the route by the cyclist and walker determines the extent to which the aims and objective of the project will be realized. For this reason, the various sub-criteria within the overall criterion of effectiveness are considered separately and not rolled up into a single quality of service measure.

7.2.3. Public Feedback

This project is a public good; it is a development proposal for the benefit of all but particularly for those who live and work in the area. It is essential that those for whom the project is intended have a say in its nature, extent and physical characteristics.

Under these general headings fourteen specific assessment criteria have been identified as follows;

- Modal shift – the extent to which the project will give effect to a change to sustainable transport
- The environment – impacts on ecology and cultural heritage
- Land requirement – impacts on existing and proposed land uses
- Risk – particular risks to timescale, project costs and to quality-of-service not captured by the other assessment criteria
- Travel distance – the length of the project
- Path gradient – the physical gradients of the route
- Attractiveness – the attractiveness of the route to the user
- Road safety – the road safety characteristics of the route, both actual and perceived.
- Personal safety – the personal safety characteristics of the route, both actual and perceived.
- Trip attraction – the extent to which the project will attract users
- Construction cost – the likely construction cost
- Active travel – the extent to which the route give effect to the occurrence of active travel
- Business and economy – the extent to which the route give effect to the occurrence of increased business activity including tourism
- Public feedback – the feedback received from the public and from landowners on the route.

7.3. Route Assessment

The detailed assessments of the route options for Slieverue are provided in the following table.

A: Kilmurry Lane B: Stream C: N29 Port Road D: Drumdowney E: Luffany						
Assessment Criteria	Routes					
	A	B	C	D	E	
Impacts and Opportunities						
Business and Economy					Kilmurry Lane and Luffany routes together as loop route would best attract tourists. The Stream route could negatively impact on the potential expansion westwards of the port area. The N29 Port Road route could impact on the intended uses of zoned port lands	
Modal Shift						The Kilmurry Lane route is the most direct commuter route to the City. The N29 port Road route is the best in connecting Slieverue and Belview. The Luffany route would not on its own serve commuters.
Active Travel						The loop route would be best in encouraging active travel (the bridge would facilitate crossing of the N29). The Port Road route might be least attractive to active travel users because of the proximity of heavy traffic and industrial areas

Table 7.2 – Slieverue									
A: Kilmurry Lane		B: Stream		C: N29 Port Road		D: Drumdowney		E: Luffany	
Assessment Criteria	Routes								
	A	B	C	D	E				
Impacts and Opportunities									
Environmental	Yellow	Red	Orange	Orange	Yellow	The Luffany and Kilmurry routes makes extensive use of existing roads. Other routes may be on lands behind the hedge lines of existing roads. The Stream route runs beside a stream and through wetter land not intensively used for farming. The Kilmurry route is close to an archaeological site, Kilmurray Graveyard.			
Land Requirements	Yellow	Orange	Red	Orange	Yellow	The N29 Port Road route would have a significant land-take of zoned port-related lands. The Stream route runs along the boundary of those zoned lands and has a significant land-take. The Drumdowney route use lands adjacent to existing roads or private lands directly behind roadside hedge lines, though passes through a zoned opportunity site. The Luffany route is largely on severed sections of road and has a lower requirement for private land. The majority of the Kilmurry lane route utilises either existing roadways or verges along existing roadways with limited land acquisition requirements.			
Construction Cost	Green	Light Green	Orange	Orange	Red	The Luffany route requires an expensive footbridge. The Drumdowney route requires an expensive underpass. The Kilmurry lane route uses an existing underpass and is significantly cheaper than other routes. On the Port Road, zoned land costs may be high.			
Risk	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange	The Drumdowney route and the Luffany route both require bridges across national roads which would be subject to TII/PPP approval.			
Effectiveness									
Travel Distance	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	All routes more or less the same			
Path Gradients	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	All routes more or less the same			
Attractiveness	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Assuming that the Port will be developed in line with its zoning objectives, the Stream and N29 Port Road routes may become less attractive in the future.			
Road Safety	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	The Stream, Port Road and Drumdowney routes all cross the R711 at grade.			
Personal Safety	Green	Orange	Light Green	Yellow	Light Green	Kilmurry lane has frequent roadside houses. The Stream route has no surveillance – woodland. The N29 has traffic surveillance. The Drumdowney route has some surveillance. The Luffany route has surveillance from traffic and houses			
Trip Attraction	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green	Kilmurry lane and Luffany together have potential for a loop route attractive to Active Users and tourists.			
Public Feedback									
Public Feedback	Light Green	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Kilmurry lane was preferred. There was opposition to the Stream and Port Road routes.			
Preferred Route									
	✓				✓	Kilmurry Lane and Luffany routes together as loop route is the preference. If only one is available Kilmurry Lane is the preference.			

Table 7.2 Route Options Assessment

7.4. Preferred Routes

As can be seen from Table 7.2, In the case of the Slieverue project the provision of a loop route formed by the Kilmurry lane route and the Luffany Route is preferred. The overall loop route would best

accommodate active travel by locals using the Greenway and would provide the best facility to attract tourists to the village and tourism related activity there. The Luffany leg of the route would be the more family friendly connection between the Greenway and the village; the Kilmurry Lane section would be of most use to commuters traveling between the village and the city.

The layout of the route is shown in Figure 7.2.



Figure 7.2 Loop Route

The preferred route characteristics, described clockwise from the southwestern connection to the greenway, are:

- The route is on-road over the extents of Kilmurry lane. Ideally a bollard would be inserted in the section of Kilmurry lane through the underpass so that through traffic is removed as much as possible from Kilmurry lane while vehicular access is retained for those who live there.
- From the junction with the Milepost Rd and along the existing road to the centre of the village, the existing footpath on the north side of the road would be widened to form a shared footpath cycle path.
- From the village centre the proposed path would extend into the new park that has been developed on the northeast side of the Slieverue roundabout.
- A new foot and cycle bridge would be provided across the N29 to take the path from the new park across the road to join with the existing footpath cycle path on the Southeast side of the N29
- The proposed path would make use of severed sections of the road network to connect to Luffany lane
- the path would connect from Luffany lane to the Greenway through private lands; a number of routes are possible for this final connection.

The preliminary cost estimate for the preferred route is €2.5m (2022 cost). A large part of this cost, approximately €1.5m+ million, relates to the footbridge. Preliminary cost estimates for the route is based on route length and the number and sizes of structures (e.g. bridges).

If it proves to be not feasible to provide the footbridge because of its cost or for other reasons, then the recommended route would be the Kilmurry lane route.

If the findings of this report are accepted, it is recommended that:

- in the case of the Slieverue project, it would be confirmed that the project is to comprise the full loop route: the Luffany route and the Kilmurry Lane route.
- the preferred routes be developed in accordance with the design standards and best practice guidance documents listed in this report.
- the route be submitted for approval under the appropriate statutory procedure and that further consultation, as required under that statutory procedure, would occur.