# Kilkenny Cycling and Walking Campaign

Submission to County Draft Development Plan

9/03/2021

## Strategic Objectives

Kilkenny Cycling and Walking Campaign (KCWCG) group welcome the integration of land use and transportation planning to guide local planning objectives over the period of the development plan.  The focus on infill development, integrated transport, compact growth and promoting regeneration and revitalisation of urban areas will secure a more sustainable future for our settlements and for our communities. We look forward to this being reflected in the Local Transport Plan for Kilkenny City. The concept of a 10 minute city will also reduce the demand for travel and the reliance on the private car in favour of public transport, cycling and walking. This is essential to pursue the transition to a climate resilient and climate neutral economy by the end of 2050 and meet the commitments for a net-zero greenhouse gas emission as set out in the Climate Action Bill.

* Kilkenny County Council should ensure that Kilkenny makes a convincing case for and benefits proportionally (per head of population) from the Governments €360 million per annum Sustainable Transport Measures Grant. The active travel team will also seek to ensure access to and synergies with other funding initiatives to promote Kilkenny as a walking and cycling city and country. Kilkenny County Council should aim to spend the funding received under this measure on upgrading current infrastructure to standards in the Nation Cycle Manual and developing new cycling and walking infrastructure routes. This funding should not be used on projects that fall under improvement and maintenance.
* The mapping of infrastructural requirements to support the concept of a 10 minute city should be an output of the Local Transport Plan.
* KCWCG stress the urgent need for a Cycling Strategy with an overall vision for the city and county incorporating a detailed design of a county-wide cycle network, linking in with other regional networks where appropriate.
* A mmultidisciplinary team should be put in place to lead on the development and delivery of the cycling strategy.
* An Active Travel team should focus solely on the delivery of walking and cycling infrastructure and complementary behaviour change programmes.
* All those responsible for the design of roads network across the county should be upskilled in the delivery of cycling infrastructure in line with the National Cycle Manual.
* New infrastructure delivered in the city and county, under any capital funding stream should cater for all users, with cyclist and pedestrian provision that meet the guidelines set out in the National Cycle Manual.

## City Centre

Once the medieval stronghold of the ancient east, Kilkenny’s history permeates its laneways, slips, and narrow streets with its heritage visible in the walls, towers and stone-clad landmarks. Kilkenny’s ancient legacy stretches from Kilkenny Castle to the South and its Cathedral to the North with a network of medieval streets and lanes for its people to move, to work and to live. Its aim should be to reduce vehicular traffic volumes and there should be priority given to pedestrians and wide scale use of a one-way systems with cyclist facilities or shared space. This is in keeping with the concept of the medieval mile. With the city streets and layout owing their origins to medieval times, when horse and pedestrian use and access dominated, it is perhaps appropriate to consider how the city might re-assert pedestrian and cycle ways as the predominant model in its medieval core.

The new transport plan for the city centre must encourage more sustainable travel and safer streets by placing pedestrians at the top of the user hierarchy, followed by cyclists and public transport. This is in line with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and will ensure that sustainable, inclusive transport is prioritised. Reduction of traffic volumes should be a priority through the use of pedestrianisation and one-way systems, with cyclist facilities or shared space. KCWCG recognise the work that has taken place to introduce a one-way system in Kilkenny and welcomes the reduction in traffic flows. However, cyclist facilities have been reduced as part of these emergency measures on key routes serving the city centre, which generates the majority of all trips in Kilkenny. Social distancing measures introduced have excluded cyclists from High Street, Rose Inn Street and James Street. Future plans for Ormonde St also lead to the exclusion of cyclists. Permanent changes to the city centre should prioritise pedestrian and cyclist facilities in line with the DMURS and to the standards outlined in the National Cycle Manual. Contra flows are urgently needed on Rose Inn St, Omonde St and James St as necessary safety measures. As the main pedestrian thoroughfare in the city, High St should be pedestrianised, facilitating the free movement of people, with allowances made for vehicular access for deliveries and residents. KKCWG welcome the demarcation of the city centre gateways and the prioritisation of pedestrian and cyclist movement within the Gateways and the introduction of 30km zones.

KCWCG welcomes the recognition of the importance of the laneways in the draft Development Plan. Reimagining these spaces would create a network of cyclist/pedestrian routes, showcasing the built heritage of the city and creating shared spaces for economic, cultural and social activities.

KCWCG welcome the vision for the Abbey Quarter as an inclusive place for an inter-generational community to work, live and play. The opening of the Skate Park is an example of what can be achieved with public spaces and the opening of the riverside park is eagerly awaited. In 2020, Kilkenny County Council replaced a section of Market Yard car park with a public seating area that immediately created a hub for people to visit, relax, play and connect. Similar projects could be replicated in other parts of the city, to create much needed spaces for our youth and our children. Kilkenny is a city that has always been lived in, and will attract new generations with rich, vibrant community spaces, designed to complement the medieval city.

## River Nore Central Spine

To develop a central cycling and pedestrian spine along both banks of the Nore with dedicated pedestrian and cyclist facilities from the old river pedestrian bridge at Talbots inch/woollen mills to the pedestrian bridge under the Ossory bridge in South. Consideration might also be given to constructing a further pedestrian bridge beyond Brett’s sawmill on the Sion Road to allow full off road access to the Kilkenny-Bennetsbridge Nore Walk, without diverting people onto the Sion Road.

The City Nore Spinal Route should include

* the widening of the existing path and boardwalk and the separation of cyclist and pedestrian facilities where possible. There is scope for wide shared space or separate cyclist and pedestrian facilities in most sections of the route from the Canal Walk to Ossory Bridge. Shared space signage “Share with Care” has been used in Fairview Park for cyclist/pedestrian shared space.



* installation of raised area at Johns Bridge to slow oncoming traffic and thus allow cyclists and pedestrians to cross safely.
* enhanced access at Johns bridge to the bank at the Rivercourt Hotel. Good signage and shared access through the Rivercourt Hotel (through their arches) allows the connection to be created from Peace Park via the Rivercourt to the cycle lanes at County Hall and Maudlin St. This route would need to be signed with thermoplastic makings on the road and/or raised surface to make the shared space obvious to all road users. This route would benefit the hotel greatly, with a bike route on their front door and an ideal river-front stop off point for cyclists on the route.
* access through St Canices hospital to the Old Dublin Road and access from the viewing point on Dublin Road to below the Lacken steps. The latter access has been previously discussed in mobility management plans for the city.
* explore the provision of an additional pedestrian bridge between Ossory Bridge and John’s Bridge to connect St. Canice’s campus to the Canal Walk (already included in draft Development Plan).
* the provision of a pedestrian bridge at Talbotsinch (already included in draft development Plan) with link to Freshford Road, Castlecomer Road and Bleach Road.  This could involve restoration/restatement of the former pedestrian bridge, with sufficient width to accommodate pedestrians and bikes.
* the construction of a Boardwalk with cyclist provision at Greensbridge to link the River Nore Riverside Walk with the new Riverside Linear Park in the Abbey Quarter.
* A pedestrian/cyclist bridge alongside Greens Bridge to join both banks, possibly as part of a restoration of Greens Bridge.
* explore the provision of an additional bridge, south of Ossory bridge with access to Sion Rd and Bennetsbridge Road, overcoming severance of the Ring Road and providing access to industrial parks while also completing a circular route along the river.
* P93 Objective C6M: To develop access along the eastern bank of the river up from Greensbridge, to the proposed bio‐diversity park at Dunmore as part of the River Nore Linear Park as opportunities arise and resources permit and link with the proposed pedestrian bridge at Talbots Inch.

## Radial Routes

Segregation of radial routes into city centre with cyclist provision to continue through all junctions on routes. Routes prioritised should be those serving schools and key trip generators, Freshford Road, Castlecomer Road, Waterford Road, Bohernatounish Road and Bennetsbridge Road. The treatment should then be extended to Dublin Road and Hebron Road. St Francis Bridge places the cyclist outside of the protected area, this cycle lane should also be segregated.

Continuity should be prioritised on the Johnswell Rd, Kells Rd and Callan Rd to include dropped kerbs and cyclist provision at roundabouts.

The possibility of linking the Castlecomer Road to McDonagh Junction via the Old Railway line should be investigated. This would involve restoring the old railway bridge that crossed over the top of John St runs along John Green and along by the back of the boot factory/Padmore and Barnes and joins the new St Frances Bridge Road at the cinema.  This could be further extended along the West side of the mart site to cross over new road and end up at the gate at the top of Broguemakers Hill/ lane. This would allow for a dedicated cycle pedestrian way, linking with public transport routes.

KCWCG welcome the development of the Eastern Environ route that has been included in the Draft Development Plan, in particular the link to Johns Green Car Park and McDonagh Junction and the train station. Lighting is important on sections of this route.

## Major Severance Points

The roundabouts on the ring road have been identified as major severance points. Cyclist provision needs to incorporated at all roundabouts in line with the National Cycle Manual. It is unlikely that traffic volumes will allow for safe cyclist provision at the Bohernatounish, similarly at the Dublin Road Roundabout. In both these cases, an alternate route should be provided such as an underpass or over bridge. Cyclist should be provided for on both sides of the Ring Road. Cyclist provision should be provided on the Ring Road at Ossory Bridge. The Callan Roundabout is in urgent need of cyclist provision prior to the relocation of the schools

## Other Severance Points

Most roundabouts in the city centre have two lane entries, limiting drivers’ views of cyclists. All roundabouts within the ring road should be reduced to single lane entries with Dutch style treatment for cyclists where possible and all in line with the National Cycle Manual.

Kissing Gates prevent the entry of wider trikes, trailers, cargo bikes, wheelchair and buggies. They are currently installed in Linear Park and Broguemakers Hill and lead to exclusion of people with disabilities, buggies and all vehicles mentioned above.

## Safe School Zones

All schools in the city and county should be considered for a Safe School Zone to reduce traffic speed and volumes at school gates or eliminate where possible through School Streets. In Kilkenny city, many schools are in close proximity to each other and the school zone should extend to incorporate adjacent schools.

The relocation of existing schools out of the city centres has the potential to induce car travel. The new school sites for the CBS, the Pobail Scoil and Kilkenny City Vocational School should be fully serviced by cycle and pedestrian facilities with particular attention to roundabouts and junctions. Permeability should be maximised, as this can significantly reduce journey distances, which is the greatest influencer of active travel.

Cyclist facilities should be provided at all secondary schools, including secure bike parking, large lockers and access to changing areas.

Park and Stride locations should be identified, and in some cases revisited, to cater for those who must use the car and encourage active travel for the last part of the journey.

## High Volume Entrances

To highlight cycle path through colour of surfacing and raising of surface at high volumes entrance and exit points such as Petrol Stations, Supermarkets etc

## Other Infrastructure

* Provision of Park and Ride Locations with provision of Cycling Lockers and/or covered bike parking at identified sites on the approach roads such as Nowlan Park, James Park, Cillín Hill, Rugby Club, Former SOS site (Callan Road), Waterford Rd (Motorway). All sites to be linked with public transport network
* Bike parking and shower facilities should be incorporated into all new office spaces for commuters
* Secure bike parking should be provided, similar to other cities, with electric charging points for E-bikes
* Secure bike parking should be provided at McDonagh Train Station with electric charging points
* All Bike Parking should be close to entrances and in full view and provided at shops, medical centres, government buildings
* Secure bike storage (lockable sheds, cages or lockers) to be provided in residential developments, particularly those with apartments and duplexes
* Exploration of bike share scheme
* Bike Park or Pump Track, possible locations St Canices, Mart Site, Quarry Site on Castlecomer Road, adjacent to the Skate Park or either side of Greens Bridge to create a hub of activity and a youth, recreation space
* Mapping and signage of network and off-road routes
* In addition to the #shopkilkenny, #tastekilkenny include #cyclekilkenny

## Major Infrastructural Project for Urban/Rural Regeneration Schemes and Greenway Projects

Explore the following routes as potential for Rothar Roads / Greenways

1. Kilkenny to Inistioge Greenway - linking Bennetsbridge, Thomastown and Inistioge to the City and to the Greenway in New Ross to the South. This would serve as a Cycleway for commuters and tourists. As this is an SAC (special area of conservation), all designs would have to adhere to strict environmental regulations.

2. Kilkenny to Castlecomer Greenway - linking Kilkenny, Ballyragget and Castlecomer. Again, this would serve as both a commuter and tourist route, maximising the return on investment.

3. Old Waterford Road, Knocktopher and Mullinavat to link to the Waterford Greenway

4. The feasibility of Rothar Roads should be explored around the county, these are quiet, low trafficked rural roads to be used for commuting (the Bleaches Road for example) as well as linking areas of interest. Other Possibly routes exist around Thomastown, linking local heritage sites, swimming areas, local crafts and coffee shops. These should be signed so that cyclists would be **expected and respected** in line with the rural vision.

## Maintenance Programmes

For safety on cycling routes, the following should be incorporated into regular road maintenance programmes:

1. Decluttering of lanes, unwanted signage etc
2. Resurfacing of cycle lanes
3. Maintenance/sweeping of routes
4. All traffic calming island to provide cycle lane on footpath side of island - current traffic calming road treatments can throw cyclist into path of vehicles