



## Cootehill Cycling + Pedestrian route

### EIA Screening Report

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Date: November 2021

Revision 'A'

AT: *Errigal, Cornacarrow, Magheranure, Cootehill, Co.Cavan*

FOR: *Cavan County Council, in partnership with Cootehill Area Development Ltd*





## **Cootehill Cycling + Pedestrian route**

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## 1.0 Introduction

This is an EIA screening report for 'Cootehill cycling and pedestrian route at Errigal, Cornacarrow, Magheranure, Cootehill, Co.Cavan. The purpose of the report is to screen the proposed development to establish whether it requires Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and as a result if an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) should be prepared in respect of it.

The screening process includes an assessment of the details of the proposal with reference to the relevant EIA legislation including the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended by Planning and Development Regulations 2015), the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU) and relevant EU Guidance including *Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive*, EU, 2015 and *Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on Screening*, EU, 2017.

The EIA screening covers:

- Description of the proposed development
- Principle features of the proposed development
- Characteristics of the proposed development
- Screening considerations
- Conclusions



## 1.1 Executive Summary

The proposed development is for provision of new walking / cycling route to extend for a distance of approximately 2.5 Km from Errigal along the R188 Cootehill-Cavan Road as far as Magheranure, R188 Cootehill-Monaghan Rd.

The route extends through Cootehill Industrial Park for a distance of 0.50 Km and diverts on existing agricultural lanes and new walking / cycling track for approximately 1.2 Km.

The works will include the construction of new gravelled surface routes, signage, street lighting, line marking, fencing and timber barriers at junctions to public roadways.

The project design evolved around the most suitable location for the Cycling + Pedestrian route that allows for pedestrian connection and permeability within Cootehill. The proposed route extends along existing agricultural laneways to connect the R188 Cootehill-Cavan Road to The Cootehill-Monaghan Rd and offers a scenic journey without the necessity to pass through the town centre.

A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been prepared by TTRSA. The RSA examines the documents relating to the proposed scheme and identifies issues which may have an adverse impact on road safety.

An Appropriate screening report has been prepared by Whitehill Environmental. The assessment allows areas of potential ecological value and potential ecological constraints associated with this proposed development to be identified and it also enables any potential impacts associated with the proposed development to be assessed.



*Development Location – Cootehill, Co.Cavan*





## 2.0 Proposed Works

The proposed new trail is located in areas to the west of Cootehill town. It starts at Errigal where the route will initially follow an existing agricultural lane. This laneway will be upgraded with compacted layers of quarry dust. The route will then approach the R188 Cootehill-Cavan Road which will include a staggered gateway with appropriate signage to warn pedestrians and cyclist of the public roadway. The public roadway that connects the existing laneway to Cootehill Industrial Estate along the R188 shall be upgraded to facilitate cycle / pedestrian lanes subject to detail design and land acquisition.

The route extends through Cootehill Industrial Park for a distance of 0.50 Km and diverts on existing agricultural lanes and new walking / cycling track for approximately 1.2 Km.

The Greenway meanders through existing lanes bordered by hedgerows and native mature Trees which can be further enhanced through implementation of the national Pollinator Plan. Users of the Greenway will pass through rural countryside and proximity to the Errigal and Cabragh ringforts will allow some links between the "fairy fort theme" and the "Fairy forest" for the youngest generation.

The proposed route of the Cootehill Greenway has been outlined in Figures 1 and photographs of the route is shown in the Appendices.

The report is to be read in conjunction with the appendices attached and provides details on the design brief, the aim of meeting the brief, the design team's analysis in relation to achieving this brief.

There will be no trees or hedgerows removed along the route. The majority of the off-road route will be existing agricultural lanes. There will be no public lighting along the off-road routes and will only be provided at junctions to the public footpaths. Existing lighting will be used and that will negate any impacts upon wildlife.

The proposed footpath walking / cycle track surface on the existing agricultural laneways is to be constructed of compacted layers of 50mm quarry dust.

During operation, the Project will create a national attraction in the region and establish a significant tourism investment. The proposed Greenway has the potential to appeal to regular cyclists, tourists, and recreational users. Increased volumes of walking and cycling trips to work would result in direct health and environmental benefits. The Greenway would link the town and local amenities.



*Figure 1: Site Plan of the overall Route (Overall distance Approx. 2.5Km)*

- Red lines indicate existing agricultural laneways to be upgraded to facilitate proposed cycle / pedestrian route Approximate Distance = 1.28Km
- Blue dashed line indicates existing public roadway R188 Cootehill – Cavan Road that connects the Errigal to Cootehill Industrial Park. This route shall be upgraded to facilitate cycle / pedestrian lanes subject to detail design and land acquisition. Approximate Distance = 0.5Km.
- Yellow line indicates new cycle lane and pedestrian crossing along existing roads / pathways. Approximate Distance = 0.31 Km.
- Orange line indicates new cycle / pedestrian routes to be formed along existing hedgerow boundaries and Cootehill harps fenced boundary. Approximate Distance = 0.40 Km



### **3.0 Principal Features of Proposed Development**

The Project will be designed in accordance with the NRA Project Management Guidelines, the Project Appraisal Guidelines and the suite of NRA Environmental Assessment and Construction Guidelines. The geometric design of the development is governed by the NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).

The Project includes the following principal elements:

- Site clearance of a 5 m envelope, i.e. removal of vegetation;
- Fencing of the site;
- Removal of soil to a maximum depth of 500 mm, depending on ground conditions;
- Improvements to the provision of a suitable surface, i.e. quarry dust, surface dressing or asphaltic cement, depending on local conditions for pedestrian and cyclists use;
- Improvements to existing track / agricultural laneways (surface dress) between public roads connecting to the proposed route;
- Provision of traffic safety measures and signage to facilitate safe pedestrian and cycling crossings at bridges and public roads;
- Provision of access controls (pedestrian/cyclist-friendly gates) road makings, traffic calming measures.



## **3.1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development**

### **3.1.1 Cumulation with Other Projects**

A number of searches in relation to plans and projects that may have the potential to result in cumulative impacts have been undertaken. Data sources included the following:

- Cavan County Council Website;
- An Bord Pleanála Website (Planning Searches);
- Web Search for major infrastructure projects in Co. Cavan;
- Cavan County Development Plan 2014–2020; The searches revealed no large-scale projects that have the potential to result in likely significant cumulative impacts. The recent planning applications shown on the Cavan County Council website in the vicinity of the Project were small in scale and domestic.

### **3.1.2 Use of Natural Resources**

Whilst exact quantities of materials required have not been determined at this stage, the amount of aggregates that will be used during construction phase is likely to be small.

### **3.1.3 Production of Waste**

Small quantities of unsuitable material will be excavated and may not be reused during the construction. Whilst the exact amount of this unsuitable material has not been evaluated, any waste produced as part of the Project will be dealt with in a sustainable manner and in accordance with all relevant environmental guidance and policy documents

### **3.1.4 Pollution and Nuisances**

During construction, polluting material has the potential to cause environmental effects, however the likelihood and severity of these effects will be minimised through compliance with the NRA Environmental and Construction Guidelines and the employment of construction management best practice. During the construction stage, temporary impacts will be experienced by those property owners along the Project and those road users on the existing network.

During the operational phase, there will be no increase in noise and vibration levels or air quality emissions along the route. There is to be a reduction in emissions in urban areas as commuters make use of the Project.

### **3.1.5 Densely Populated Areas**

There are no densely populated areas affected by the proposed development. The study area will benefit from improved environmental conditions as a result of a decrease in vehicular traffic. All urban centres on the route will be accessible from the Project.





----- TOTAL PROPOSED ROUTE DISTANCE = 2.5 Kilometers



Figure 2: Site Location Map Showing the Proposed Route

## 4.0 Limiting Damages during and a prior to construction

### 4.1 Control of Pollutants during construction

- The work areas must be kept to the minimum area required to carry out the proposed works and the area should be clearly marked out and cordoned off in advance of work commencement.
- The drains on site should be cordoned off prior to the commencement of the development. Vegetation along the riparian zones of the drains should be preserved. Any waste arising from the construction works must be disposed of to a licensed waste facility by a licensed waste haulier. Topsoil must not be stored in the woodlands and must be removed from the site regularly. Cavan County Council must be notified regarding the location of this material.
- There must be no direct or indirect discharge of any surface water or groundwater to any water body during construction activities.
- Works must not take place in periods of heavy precipitation.
- Bare soil should be seeded as soon as possible with grass seed or native wildflower seed (local source if possible). This will minimise erosion into local drains and watercourses.
- Wet concrete is corrosive and can cause serious pollution to watercourses. Best practice in bulk-liquid concrete management must be employed addressing pouring and handling, secure shuttering, adequate curing times etc.
- Wash water from cleaning ready-mix concrete wagons and mixers may be contaminated. Wagons and mixers must be washed off site or in a bunded, designated area.
- Concrete batching will take place off-site.
- Cement dust must be controlled as it is alkaline and harmful to the surrounding ecology. Activities which result in the creation of cement dust should be controlled by dampening down areas.
- Raw or uncured waste concrete should be disposed of by removal from the site in a location in a manner that shall not impact on any watercourse.



- All fuels, lubricants and hydraulic fluids will be kept in secure bunded areas remotely from any watercourse. The bunded area will accommodate 110% of the total capacity of the containers within it. Containers will be properly secured to prevent unauthorised access and misuse.
- An effective spillage procedure will be put in place with all staff properly briefed.
- Any waste oils or hydraulic fluids must be collected, stored in appropriate containers and disposed of offsite in an appropriate manner.
- Storage areas, machinery depots and site offices will be located remotely from the watercourse.
- All refuelling and lubrication of equipment will take place on sealed and bunded surfaces to avoid the potential for accidental spillage of hydrocarbons.
- All plant and machinery will be regularly maintained and serviced to minimise release of hydrocarbons.
- Spill kits should be present in all plant machinery.
- Oil booms and oil soakage pads will be kept on site to deal with any accidental spillage.
- Waste oils and hydraulic fluids will be collected in leak-proof containers and removed from the site for disposal or recycling.
- The construction compound will include adequate staff welfare facilities including foul drainage. Foul drainage discharge from the construction compound will be tankered off-site to a licensed facility until a connection to the public foul drainage network has been established.

#### **4.2 Control of pollutants post-construction**

- A surface water drainage design should be carried out in accordance with the GSDS and SuDS methodologies and implemented as part of a treatment train approach.
- Bicycle lanes and walking access routes encourage the use of alternative transport means and reduce traffic.
- All hedgerows / treelines are to be retained and incorporated into the development during the landscaping..
- Site verges and gardens should be managed at a low intensity level to provide maximum habitat availability for pollinators and prevent intensive pesticide run-off.
- Riparian buffer zones should be implemented along drains which run adjacent to access roads to avoid non-point source pollution. A riparian area is the strip of land alongside watercourses. This buffer can be planted by a variety of vegetation – trees, bushes, grasses, etc. Riparian buffers reduce the momentum and magnitude of surface runoff, thereby reducing soil and sediment losses, allowing nutrient removal



and enabling uptake of nutrients in the runoff water. It is recommended that riparian buffers should be at least 2 m wide.

## 2.1 Screening Considerations

Having regard to the 'wide scope and broad purpose' of the Directive, it is appropriate to consider if it is likely to cause significant environmental impacts by reference to the relevant criteria for determining same, as set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations.

Given the scale of the proposed development it is unlikely to cause sufficiently significant effects to warrant a sub-threshold EIA. However, in order to provide a comprehensive screening, this screening proceeds to consider it against the Schedule 7 criteria nonetheless. Schedule 7 specifies 'Criteria for determining whether a development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment' under these three headings:

1. Characteristics of Proposed Development
2. Location of Proposed Development
3. Characteristics of Potential Impacts

The tables below and overleaf provide sets out these considerations using both the main and sub-criteria which are specified in Schedule 7.





SCHEDULE 7 CRITERIA		Relevance	Commentary
Characteristics of Proposed Development  The characteristics of proposed development, in particular:	The size of the proposed development.	No	The proposed 3m wide route extends for a distance of approximately 2.5KM from Errigal along the R188 Cootehill-Cavan Road as far as Magheranure, R188 Cootehill-Monaghan Rd.
	The production of waste.	No	Waste produced during the construction process is anticipated to be insufficient to cause significant effects.
	Pollution and nuisances	No	The impacts including noise within acceptable standards are anticipated to be negligible. A Construction Management Plan will be required at contract stage.
	The risk of accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used.		The potential impacts are anticipated to be negligible given the nature of the proposed development.
Location of Proposed Development  The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development, having regard in particular to:	The existing land use	No	There is minimal change in existing land use associated with this proposed development. There will be no trees or hedgerows removed along the route. The majority of the off-road route will be existing agricultural



			lanes. There will be no public lighting along the off-road routes and will only be provided at junctions to the public footpaths. Existing lighting will be used and that will negate any impacts upon wildlife.
	The relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area	No	The impacts are anticipated to be negligible given the scale of the proposed development.
	The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following;		
	Wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;	No	There is no loss of any of these specified habitats associated with the overall project.
	Coastal zines	No	N/A
	Mountain and forest areas	No	N/A
	Nature reserves and parks	No	N/A
	Areas classified or protected under legislation, including special protection areas designated pursuant to Directive 79/409/EEC and 92 / 43 /EEC	No	The Appropriate Assessment Screening Report submitted as part of Part VII application concludes that the proposed development is not foreseen to give rise to any significant adverse effects on designated European sites.
	Areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the EU have already been exceeded	No	N/A
	Densely populated areas	No	N/A
	Landscapes of historical, cultural archaeological significance	No	The impacts particularly those of historical, cultural



			and archaeological significance are anticipated to be negligible.
Characteristics of Potential Impacts	The nature of the impact	No	The impact of the proposal will be negative during construction stage but will be positive once complete.
The potential significant effects of proposed development in relation to criteria set out in the introduction:			
	The transboundary nature of the impact	No	Not considered relevant
	The magnitude and complexity of the impact.		
	The probability of the impact.	No	There are no significant environmental effects anticipated.
	The expected onset duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact,	No	There are no significant environmental effects anticipated.
	The cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment	No	There are no significant environmental effects anticipated.
	The possibility of effectively reducing the impact	No	There are no significant environmental effects anticipated



## 5.0 Conclusion

Measures for impact reduction have been incorporated into the project proposal, including avoidance, in addition to mitigation measures proposed by the NIS for the avoidance and reduction of impacts on the qualifying interests.

There will be no trees or hedgerows removed along the route. The majority of the off-road route will be existing agricultural lanes. There will be no public lighting along the off-road routes and will only be provided at junctions to the public footpaths. Existing lighting will be used and that will negate any impacts upon wildlife.

With the implementation of these measures, the proposed cycling + pedestrian route will not result in direct, indirect or cumulative impacts which would have the potential to adversely affect the qualifying interests/special conservation with regard to the range, population densities or conservation status of the habitats and species for which these sites are designated (i.e. conservation objectives).

It is concluded that there is no requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment to be carried out for the proposed 'cycling and pedestrian route at Errigal, Cornacarrow, Magheranure, Cootehill, Co.Cavan and there is no requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment Report to be prepared.





## Appendices

- Photographic Survey



*Fig 1.3 Existing laneway along the Errigal route to be upgraded to facilitate proposed cycle / pedestrian route. Existing trees and hedgerows to be retained along the route.*







*Fig 1.4 Existing laneway along the Errigal route to be upgraded to facilitate proposed cycle / pedestrian route. Existing trees and hedgerows to be retained along the route.*



*Fig 1.5 Existing Junction to the R188 Cootehill-Cavan Road along the Errigal route to be upgraded to facilitate proposed cycle / pedestrian route. Proposed timber gate staggered junction and signage to be provided for traffic safety reasons.*







*Fig 1.7 Existing public roadway and footpath along the R188 Cootehill-Cavan Road shall be upgraded to facilitate cycle / pedestrian lanes subject to detail design and land acquisition.*



*Fig 1.6 Existing Junction at Cootehill Industrial Park entrance along the R188 Cootehill-Cavan Road shall be upgraded to facilitate cycle lane.*







*Fig 1.8 Existing Junction at Cootehill Industrial Park entrance along the R188 Cootehill-Cavan Road shall be upgraded to facilitate cycle lane.*



*Fig 1.9 Existing laneway along the Cootehill Industrial Park boundary to be upgraded to facilitate cycle / pedestrian lane.*







*Fig 1.10 The route diverts towards existing agricultural laneways, existing hedgerow to be removed approx. 3m wide to form new access at this location. Junction to include staggered timber barriers and signage for traffic safety reasons.*



*Fig 1.11 Existing agricultural laneways to be upgraded to facilitate propose cycle / pedestrian route. Existing trees / hedgerows to be retained along the route.*







*Fig 1.12 Existing agricultural laneways to be upgraded to facilitate propose cycle / pedestrian route. Existing trees / hedgerows to be retained along the route.*



*Fig 1.13 Existing hedgerow and trees along the Cootehill Harps Sports Ground to be retained, proposed new cycle / pedestrian route along existing boundary.*





*Fig 1.14 Existing laneway towards Magheranure, R188 Cootehill-Monaghan Rd Junction to be upgraded to facilitate proposed cycle / pedestrian route. Existing trees and hedgerows to be retained along the route.*



*Fig 1.15 Existing laneway towards Magheranure, R188 Cootehill-Monaghan Rd Junction to be upgraded to facilitate proposed cycle / pedestrian route. Existing trees and hedgerows to be retained along the route.*

