**Leitrim County Council**



**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT, 2000 (As Amended)**

**PART 8**

***PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 (As Amended)***

**PART 8**

**BRIEFING REPORT**

***Roosky Towns & Villages Public Footpath Scheme.***

**Introduction and Background to Project**

Leitrim County Council proposes to construct a new footpath with public lighting on the L-1601 (the old N4 route) traversing the townlands of Moher, Knockmacrory and Killinaker at Roosky, County Leitrim. The main objective of this proposal is to provide walking infrastructure to the 80km/hr speed limits of the village whilst also incorporating a reduction in the road carriage width to the centre of Roosky. It is envisaged that this will aid in reducing the speed of vehicles entering the village and deliver a safe pedestrian route to the outer extents of the village

Roosky is on the banks of the River Shannon and providing the crossing into County Roscommon, it is an increasingly busy hub for traffic and social activity. Creation of this section of public footpath in the direction of Dromod village may lead to an eventual connection linking the two rural villages. access to the shore and a car park would increase visitor numbers to the area and boost the local economy.

Leitrim County Council is proposing the development of a public footpath to the 80km/hr speed limits from the existing footpath infrastructure in Roosky Village.

These works include

1. **Construction of a public footpath of 2.0m wide and associated public lighting along the L-1601 outbound from Roosky Village, from the end of the existing footpath as far as the 80km/hr speed limit north of the village, extending for a distance of approximately 340m. By doing this, the road carriageway will be reduced from a width of 7.3m to 6.2m**
2. **The scheme will also include landscaping,** **the replacement of an existing hedgerow with a wall, underground of ESB overhead lines, the installation of timber fencing**
3. **Removal and reinstatement of road line marking.**
4. **All necessary ancillary works.**

**Scheme Overview**

The scheme is located in Roosky Village. The scheme will start from the public road L1601. There is an existing footpath from the centre of the village to the start of the scheme. It will follow the existing roadway to the village boundaries at the 80km/hr speed limits. This roadway will be narrowed in an effort to reduce vehicle speeds entering the village.

A footpath constructed to a width of 2m integrating public lighting along the route is proposed for the scheme. Accommodation works along with some drainage, line marking, and road signage is also to be incorporated into the works.

On completion, there will be a pedestrian route to the extents of the village along with the combined safety factor of narrowing the road carriageway in a bid to reduce the speed of vehicles into the village.

The location and details of the project accompany the Part 8 application drawings.

**Landownership**

The project is taking place in the verge of the road carriageway giving no land take requirements necessary as part of the scheme. Some section of hedgerow may be required to be pruned back to allow for construction space during the construction works. Consent has been agreed with land owners regarding some drainage and accommodating works.

**Planning Policy Context**

***National Policy***

Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future, (2009) is the transport policy for Ireland for the period 2009-2020. It recognises the vital importance of continued investment in transport to ensure an efficient economy and continued social development, but also promotes more sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.

***Leitrim County Development Plan 2015 – 2021***

Leitrim County Council has a number of policies and objectives set out in our County Development Plan which supports the proposed development. Policy No 1 states that it is the policy of the Council to deliver a *County Tourism Strategy* which will, inter alia, forge strategic and operational partnerships in tourism planning, marketing, and promotion with surrounding Counties in the Northwest and Northern Ireland.

Section 4.6.1 of the County Development Plan deals with Sustainable Transportation. The policies and objectives contained therein are guided by the national policy document “*Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future*, (2009)” which is referred to above. The promotion of initiatives that can reduce congestion, improve local environments, and encourage healthier and safer lifestyles are key features of sustainable transportation. Leitrim County Council seeks to influence people’s travel behaviour towards more sustainable options and seeks to do so by working closely with relevant organisations in improving public transport facilities and promoting opportunities for alternative transportation such as walking and cycling.

Leitrim County Council also recognises the importance of walking and cycling to the wellbeing and quality of life of residents. It will support and encourage the continued development of walking as a sustainable form of transportation and will work with organisations and groups in the promotion of safe walking throughout the county, including heritage walks and the protection of public rights of way, which are an important amenity and tourism resource.

In accordance with the principles of sustainable development, the basis of the Council’s transportation policies include the encouragement of walking and cycling as a recreational activity and a healthy exercise.

Relevant policies and objectives in this regard include:

**Policy 44** It is the policy of the Council to support the National Policy document Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future and implement, where feasible, guidance provided within the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, or any updated versions of these documents issued within the lifetime of the Plan.

**Policy 46** It is the policy of the Council to encourage safe walking and cycling by providing linear parks, footpaths, cycle paths and public lighting in towns and villages.

**Policy 47**  It is the policy of the Council to seek to improve the facilities for pedestrians and access facilities for people with special mobility needs in line with the aims of the European Charter of Pedestrian Rights.

In relation to Natura 2000 sites which refer to Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, the County Development Plan states that the Council shall take appropriate steps to avoid, in these areas, the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species, as well as disturbance of the species for which the areas have been designated, in so far as such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of the *EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC Directive)*.

With regard to Natura 2000 sites, the County Development Plan includes the following policies:

**Policy 76** It is the policy of the Council to protect and conserve Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas including ‘Candidate’ and ‘Proposed’ areas.

**Policy 77** It is the Policy of the Council to ensure that all Plans and Projects that have the potential to negatively impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, will be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA), in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and in accordance with best practice and guidance.

**Appropriate Assessment**

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared to assist the Planning Authority in their determination. The Appropriate Assessment Screening Report concludes that the project will have no significant effect on any Natura 2000 sites and that the project does not require to be progressed through to Stage II Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive.

**Archaeological Assessment**

There is a mound recorded in the townland of Moher which has archaeological importance and is recorded in the National Monuments under LE037-001. While the works are located within the zone of notification of this recorded monument, given the limited nature of the proposed works it is not expected that the works will likely have a direct impact either physical or visual on this archaeological monument.

**Environmental Impact Assessment**

The proposed footpath does not correspond to any project type in the relevant legislation. It can be considered not to comprise ‘sub-threshold development’ and it can be ‘screened out’ for Environmental Impact Assessment purposes on this basis.

For the avoidance of doubt, the project has nonetheless been reviewed against prescribed criteria for determining whether or not a sub-threshold development is required to be subject to EIA. A global consideration of the criteria finds that the environmental effects of the project are not likely to be significant within the meaning of the Directive. It is therefore concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the development.

**Appendix I Photographs of Proposed footpath route**

A road with houses along it

Description automatically generated with low confidence

Fig 1 : Beginning of scheme, footpath to the left of the carriageway

A road with trees on the side

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Fig 2: Mid-section of proposed scheme

A road with trees on the side

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Fig 3: View going around the long bend

A car driving down a road

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Fig 4: The end stretch of the scheme to the 80km/hr speed limits