

# Environmental Impact Assessment

## Screening Report

### Carlingford Lough Greenway

September 2019

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Comhairle Contae Lú  
Louth County Council



Paul McMonagle

**Our reference**  
DORB3009

September 2019



# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Environmental Impact Assessment Screening report (EIASR) has been prepared by Turley, on behalf of Louth County Council (LCC), in association with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC).
- 1.2 It accompanies two separate planning applications under Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) (the 2001 Regulations) for the following new sections of greenway:
  - Section I - from/to Carlingford to/from Carlingford Marina; and
  - Section II - from/to Omeath Pier to/from the County Bridge at the ROI/NI Border.
- 1.3 This report also makes reference to an emerging third and connecting section of greenway, which can be described as follows:
  - Section III - from/to the County Bridge at the NI/ROI Border to/from Victoria Lock.
- 1.4 This report defines the general principles for Section III of the greenway, however it withholds a detailed description of this length of the greenway as it is presently at concept stage. Sections I & II are to be delivered as a single package of works, separate from Section III and within the respective project programmes.
- 1.5 Section III, which is located within Northern Ireland and within the boundary of Newry Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC), is classified as a 'major' development and will be the subject of a different regulatory planning process, including Pre-Application Discussions, a Proposal of Application Notice and a Public Information event (in accordance with Section 27 and 28 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011).
- 1.6 A separate planning application for Section III will be accompanied by a full suite of technical and supporting material, such as an EIA Screening report, Ecological Impact Assessment and Habitats Directive Appraisal.
- 1.7 The **purpose of this EIASR** is to determine, having regard to the relevant mandatory and discretionary provisions, if a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) should be undertaken and an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) prepared so as to assess the likelihood of any potential significant effects on the environment.
- 1.8 This EIASR exercise has been undertaken in compliance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the 2001 Regulations.
- 1.9 This report documents the methodology employed to complete the screening exercise, having regard to relevant legislation and guidance documents. It also sets out a clear rationale for each decision made in the process.

1.10 We set out below a list of reports which have informed the content and findings of this EIA Screening exercise, and which this EIASR should be read in conjunction, and identify who has prepared each report:

- Full suite of plans - Doran Consulting;
- Community Consultation report - Doran Consulting;
- Design and Access Statements - Doran Consulting;
- Flood Risk and Surface Water Management reports - Doran Consulting;
- Route Assessment reports - Doran Consulting;
- Habitats Directive Appraisal Screening report - RPS;
- Ecological Impact Assessment - RPS;
- Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Assessments - Gahan & Long;
- Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment - Consarc Design Group;
- Arboricultural Assessment - J M McConville & Associates;
- Stage 1 Road Safety Audit - CST Group; and
- LUX Lighting report - SSE Airtricity.

1.11 The above referenced reports also set out details on the authors and their respective competence/experience.

## 2. Project Context

### Carlingford Lough Greenway

- 2.1 The Carlingford Lough Greenway is a cross border project which has been developed through a signed Memorandum of Understanding between Louth County Council (LCC), Newry, Mourne & Down District Council (NMDDC) and the East Border Region.
- 2.2 The Carlingford Lough Greenway, when completed, will provide approx. 52km of scenic, safe and attractive cross-border greenway which will join Newry City in Northern Ireland to Carlingford in the Republic of Ireland and form the northern section of a proposed greenway link from Belfast to Dublin, often referred to as the Great Eastern Greenway.
- 2.3 The Greenway project is primarily financed by the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme which is managed by the Special EU Programmes Body.
- 2.4 This is one of numerous programmes across the European Union designed to promote greater levels of cross-border co-operation. The Carlingford Lough Greenway applied for INTERREG VA funding through a two stage competitive application process.
- 2.5 Doran Consulting has been appointed by LCC to carry out, in an integrated, comprehensive and planned manner, the construction of three new sections of greenway to form part of the existing cross-border Carlingford Lough Greenway.

### Current Proposals

- 2.6 The current proposals comprise three new sections of greenway, identified in Appendix 1, which aim to deliver a total of 8.75 km of new cross-border greenway and can be summarised as follows:
  - **Section One** – From Carlingford to Carlingford Marina (approx. 2.65 km in length);
  - **Section Two** – From Omeath Pier to the County Bridge at the RoI/NI Border (approx. 4.2 km in length); and
  - **Section Three** – From the County Bridge at the NI/RoI Border to Victoria Lock (approx. 1.9 km in length).
- 2.7 The proposed sections of greenway, when completed, will connect with existing sections of the greenway<sup>1</sup> so as to deliver a fully functioning and connected trail that will provide additional active-travel opportunities for residents, visitors, tourists and commuters alike and help to encourage more people to walk and cycle and undertake more cross border trips for recreational, amenity and travel-to-work purposes.
- 2.8 The overarching objectives/goals of the Carlingford Lough Greenway are:

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<sup>1</sup> Such as the route from/to Omeath Pier to/from Carlingford Marina (opened in 2014)

- inspire active travel;
- meet local and regional strategies in terms of tourism and healthy and active living;
- enable more sustainable forms of mobility on a cross-border basis;
- increase cross-border commuting by cycling or walking from 2.7% to 10%;
- improve cross-border social cohesion;
- improve cyclist safety through the construction of a predominantly 'off road' shared cycle/pedestrian network; and
- reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions.

### 3. Methodology

3.1 This EIASR has had regard to the following:

- the relevant EU Directives (85/337/EEC, 2011/92/EU (codified) and 2014/52/EU);
- the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), particularly Part X;
- the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) (the 2001 Regulations), particularly Part 10 and Schedules 5 and 7A;
- European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018;
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (August 2018); and
- Circular Letters (PL10-2018, PL05-2018, PL01-2017, etc).

3.2 It is noted that Article 1 of Directive 2011/92/EU was amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (the 2014 Directive) with the insertion of the following definition for 'Environmental Impact Assessment':

*environmental impact assessment" means **a process** consisting of:*

*(i) the preparation of an environmental impact assessment report by the developer, as referred to in Article 5(1) and (2);*

*(ii) the carrying out of consultations as referred to in Article 6 and, where relevant, Article 7;*

*(iii) the examination by the competent authority of the information presented in the environmental impact assessment report and any supplementary information provided, where necessary, by the developer in accordance with Article 5(3), and any relevant information received through the consultations under Articles 6 and 7;*

*(iv) the **reasoned conclusion** by the competent authority on the **significant effects of the project** on the environment, taking into account the results of the examination referred to in point (iii) and, where appropriate, its own supplementary examination; and*

*(v) the **integration** of the competent authority's reasoned conclusion into any of the **decisions** referred to in Article 8a.'*

3.3 This definition serves to emphasise the procedural nature of the EIA process which is in keeping with the procedural nature of the EIA Directive.

- 3.4 The 2014 Directive introduces new requirements in relation to screening for EIA, including issuing determinations as to whether sub-threshold development requires EIA.
- 3.5 The provisions of the 2014 Directive have been transposed into Irish planning law by the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (the 2018 EIA Regulations). These regulations also introduced a mandatory process for screening of all sub-threshold developments.
- 3.6 The 2018 EIA Regulations defines sub-threshold development as follows:

*‘sub-threshold development’ means development of a type set out in Part 2 of Schedule 5 which does not equal or exceed, as the case may be, a quantity, area or other limit specified in that Schedule in respect of the relevant class of development;*

- 3.7 There have not been any changes to the list of projects contained in Schedule 5 of the 2001 Regulations, which derives from Annex I and II of the 2011 Directive.
- 3.8 Thus, there are 3 clear steps in the EIA Screening stage, which can be summarised as follows and which apply to all relevant projects including development by Local Authorities:
- Pre-Screening
  - Preliminary Examination
  - Screening Determination

### **Pre-Screening**

- 3.9 Pre Screening seeks to determine if the proposed development is ‘sub-threshold’ for EIA purposes by reviewing Schedule 5 of the 2001 Regulations, which sets out the prescribed classes of development and thresholds/criteria that trigger the need for an EIA.
- 3.10 The findings of the following An Bord Pleanála decision are noted as it assists with informing the ‘Pre Screening’ exercise for the proposed sections of greenway:
- **ABP 301076** – Application by Wexford County Council for approval of a 10.7km coastal cycle and pedestrian access route (greenway) under Section 177(AE) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000.
- 3.11 At Paragraph 8.2.2 of the Inspector’s Report of ABP 301076, the Inspector states the following:

*‘**Screening** for EIA is **only required** either if the proposed development (a) **constitutes a sub threshold development** being of a class of development as set out in Part 1 or Part 2, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations **or** (b) having regard to the definition of a road (Part 1 Section 2 Roads Act 1993 as amended), **falls within a class of development set out in Section 50 (1) (a) of the***

**Roads Act, 1993**, as substituted by S. 9 (1) (d) (i) of the Roads Act 2007' (our emphasis).

3.12 So far as Schedule 5 of the 2001 Regulations is concerned, the Inspector advises:

*'Having regard to the Planning and Development Regulations, the **only class relevant** [for the proposed greenway] **is 10 (dd)** All private roads which would exceed 2000 metres in length. The **subject greenway is not a private road** (our emphasis).*

3.13 The Inspector also reviews the greenway proposal against the provisions of the Roads Act 1993(as amended) and confirms that the greenway does not constitute any of the types of development listed under Section 50(1)(a) and concludes the following:

*'...as the proposed development **does not meet the criteria** either under the Planning and Development Regulations or the Roads Act, an **EIA or screening for EIA** is in my opinion **not required**' (our emphasis).*

3.14 However, Section 68(1) of the Roads Act, 1993 (as amended) states the following:

*'In this section "cycleway" means a public road or proposed public road reserved for the exclusive use of pedal cyclists or pedal cyclists and pedestrians'*

3.15 It is arguable that a 'greenway' and 'cycleway' are one of the same thing under the above definition provided in the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) and so the greenway could be considered a 'public road'.

3.16 Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994 (S.I. 119 of 1994) states the following:

*'The prescribed types of proposed road development for the purpose of subsection*

*(1)(a)(iii)<sup>2</sup> of section 50 of the Act shall be-*

*(a) the construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500m or more in length in an urban area;*

*(b) the construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100m or more in length.*

3.17 As the proposed greenway does not propose 'four or more lanes' and it will not comprise the 'construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100 metres or more in length', it is considered that mandatory EIA is not required.

3.18 Noting the above, it is considered that the proposed development does not fall into any of the classes prescribed in Schedule 5 of the 2001 Regulations nor does it exceed any of the thresholds/criteria.

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<sup>2</sup> The Roads Act 2007 introduced changes to Article 8 – hence the reference to subsection (1)(a)(iii) rather than subsection (1)(a)(iv)

- 3.19 The Inspector's comments seem to suggest that a greenway, such as the greenway proposed under this application, is not a 'subthreshold development' and so it is not certain that the Council is required to undertake a Preliminary Examination for the proposed sections of greenway.
- 3.20 Nevertheless, in the interest of robustness and to ensure that the precautionary principle is applied, it was concluded that the Council should undertake a Preliminary Examination in line with the provisions of Article 120 of the 2001 Regulations.

### **Screening Exercise**

- 3.21 Article 120 of the 2001 Regulations states the following:

*'Where a local authority proposes to carry out a subthreshold development, the authority shall carry out a preliminary examination of, at the least, the nature, size or location of the development'*

- 3.22 In accordance with Article 120 of the 2001 Regulations (as amended), a high level screening was undertaken to establish if the proposed development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of its nature, size or location.
- 3.23 As there was 'realistic doubt' with regard to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, particularly noting its sensitive coastal location, it was held that a Screening Determination would be required in accordance with Article 120(1)(ii) of the 2001 Regulations.
- 3.24 We also note that Section 50(1)(c) of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) requires that where a road authority considers that any proposed road development, while being below the relevant threshold for which an EIS would be mandatory, would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, it shall inform the Board in writing.
- 3.25 In light of the above requirements, we have prepared the information specified in Schedule 7A of the 2001 Regulations for the purposes of a screening determination, in accordance with Article 120(1)(ii) of the same regulations so that this report can determine whether or not the proposed sections of greenway are likely to create any significant effects on the environment.

## 4. Schedule 7A Screening Determination

4.1 Schedule 7A of the 2001 Regulations sets out the information that is to be provided for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for EIA.

4.2 For ease of reference, the provisions of Schedule 7A are set out below:

*1. A description of the proposed development, including in particular—*

*(a) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development and, where relevant, of demolition works, and*

*(b) a description of the location of the proposed development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.*

*2. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.*

*3. A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the proposed development on the environment resulting from—*

*(a) the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant, and*

*(b) the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.*

*4. The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take into account, where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7.*

## 5. Description of Development

- 5.1 The following section seeks to outline the main design and construction components of the proposed sections of greenway. Further design details are provided in the Design and Access Statements (DAS) prepared by Doran Consulting and which also accompany the Part 8 applications.
- 5.2 A number of route corridor options were considered and assessed for each of the proposed sections of greenway. The proposed preferred routes comprise a combination of elements of the route options as described in the Route Corridor Assessment reports prepared by Doran Consulting.
- 5.3 This EIASR should be read in conjunction with all of the other supporting Part 8 application documents.

### Section I – Carlingford to/from Carlingford Marina

- 5.4 The section of the proposed greenway can be described as an ‘urban greenway’ as it will be predominantly located within the town realm of Carlingford and it will predominantly traverse existing hard surfaced areas. It is also noted that the currently proposed greenway will comprise separate routes for cyclists and pedestrians and is not atypical of greenways as they tend to comprise a single shared use path for both pedestrians and cyclists.
- 5.5 After consultations with the local community, prescribed bodies, Council’s officers (such as the Roads Section) and the wider design team, it was decided that separate routes for pedestrians and cyclists would be required for this section of the Greenway. Indeed, the provision of separate routes will help to ensure that users of the greenway can safely navigate the townscape of Carlingford without causing any undue safety or amenity impacts for the existing road network/users, residents and businesses.
- 5.6 Each of the routes are described in further detail below, but essentially, the new ‘urban greenway’ will comprise the following:
- **Pedestrian Route:** to/from the ‘Trail Head’ at Carlingford Station House to/from the Carlingford Marina via the R173 and under the bridge of King John’s Castle;
  - **Cyclist Route 1:** from the ‘Trail Head’ at Carlingford Station House to the Carlingford Marina via an unnamed lane adjacent to the Station House and the one-way flow of traffic along Newry Street, the Back Lane and the R173; and
  - **Cyclist Route 2:** from the Carlingford Marina to the Trail Head at Carlingford Station House via the R173, along Back Lane and Dundalk Street.
- 5.7 The new ‘Trail Head’ (starting point) for this section of the greenway will be located within the parking area of Carlingford Station House and it will be provided with new decorative paving, asphalt pedestrian paving, bicycle parking facilities and information boards/directional signage for visitors.

### **Pedestrian Route**

- 5.8 The new information boards/directional signage at the 'Trail Head' (i.e. the parking area of Carlingford Station House) will direct pedestrians to/along the existing coastal footpath adjacent the R173 which currently terminates at the access road to Carlingford Pier.
- 5.9 At the pier, a new 2m wide asphalt pedestrian footway will be constructed along the R173 to the bridge of King John's Castle. The asphalt footway will be constructed under the bridge to King John's Castle and towards the existing car parking area along the R173. From here the route will continue as a 3m wide asphalt footway following the line of the existing stone wall.
- 5.10 At the end of the parking area, the proposed 3m asphalt pedestrian footway will continue along the coastal side of the R173 within the existing grassed verge up to the junction of the Carlingford Marina access and the R173.
- 5.11 Pedestrians will cross the marina entrance via a new uncontrolled pedestrian crossing point and utilise the existing footways down to the marina before connecting to the existing greenway and continue north towards Omeath.

### **Cycle Route 1**

- 5.12 The new information boards/directional signage at the 'Trail Head' (i.e. the parking area of Carlingford Station House) will direct cyclists onto the adjacent unnamed road which will be utilised as a shared use vehicle and cycle facility.
- 5.13 Cyclists will be directed to follow the existing one-way flow of traffic along the new shared surface route of Newry Street and past the entrance to King John's Castle to Back Lane towards the R173.
- 5.14 A new 2m wide segregated cycle lane will be provided at the junction of Back Lane and the R173 (on the western side of the R173) and it will terminate opposite the entrance to Carlingford Marina.
- 5.15 Cyclists will then dismount and cross the R173 via a new uncontrolled at-grade cyclist crossing point at the entrance of the Carlingford Marina and enter the shared pedestrian/cyclist footway to travel down to the marina where they can connect to the existing greenway and continue their journey north towards Omeath.

### **Cycle Route 2**

- 5.16 On the return route, cyclists will dismount and cross the new uncontrolled at-grade cyclist crossing at the entrance of Carlingford Marina and utilise the new 2m wide segregated cycle lane to connect to Back Lane.
- 5.17 Cyclists will travel along the shared vehicle and cyclist surface of Back Lane until Dundalk Street where they will be directed to enter the existing one way system along Dundalk Street which will also be a shared vehicle and cyclist surface.
- 5.18 Cyclists will be directed along this one way system until they reach the 'Trail Head' (i.e. the parking area of Carlingford Station House Office).

### **Additional Components**

5.19 The proposals will also require the following:

- introduction of 30km/h speed limit along Back Lane, Newry Street and Dundalk Street;
- introduction of 50km/h speed limit along the length of the pedestrian route;
- upgrading of the existing Carlingford Station House uncontrolled at-grade crossing point;
- installation of additional uncontrolled at-grade crossing points;
- installation of new road cushions, anti-skid surfacing, traffic warning/calming signals and a traffic calming gateway comprising a centre island and gateway signs;
- realignment of existing road markings;
- installation of 125mm wide bull nose kerbs or 220mm high cadet kerbs for vehicle deflection;
- replacement of vehicle restraint barrier with a 1.22m timber post and tension wire mesh fence (per TII RTS-ADW-0003);
- relocation of existing signs, lighting and street furniture (seating, tables, bins); and
- installation of additional information boards/directional signage;

5.20 The above works will be required to enable and accommodate the proposed 'urban greenway' and provide a safe environment for its users and those who visit and live in Carlingford Town. The greenway does not require the demolition of any properties.

### **Widths / Gradients**

- 5.21 The proposed new greenway from Carlingford to Carlingford Marina will be an all ability footway suitable for all ability walkers and will be a minimum of 2m wide along the majority of the route. The proposed new on-road shared cycle/vehicular surface will be a minimum of 3m wide along the majority of the route.
- 5.22 Constraints along the greenway require a reduction in width where the new footway is constructed beneath King John's Bridge.
- 5.23 To allow the greenway to be adequately drained and avoid difficulties with standing water and ice; cross falls along the new footway will be between 1% and 3% with a maximum of 5% where necessary.
- 5.24 The greenway will aim to have maximum vertical gradients of 3% along the majority of the route. Where increased gradients are due to existing localised steep R173 Road; gradients will be a maximum of 10% (two steps below desirable maximum) and these reaches will be less than 100m in length.

5.25 The greenway is relatively straight; to direct the route around the existing R173 parking area and existing marina entrance features; bends with a radius of <4m are required as shown on the drawings listed below; signage will be provided to slow cyclists and warn them of the upcoming hazard:

- DC-CM-XX-GA-C-303 – to direct the greenway from the R173 parking area to the verge of the R173; and
- DC-CM-XX-GA-C-304– to direct the greenway towards the Carlingford Marina access road.

## **Section II – Omeath Pier to/from County Bridge at the RoI/NI National Border**

5.26 This section of the proposed greenway will incorporate a 5-6m wide corridor along the route which will be comprised of a 2-3m greenway with buffer areas for drainage and offset boundary fencing.

5.27 The proposed greenway can be broken into the following key areas (as illustrated in Figure 3.1 of the Route Corridor Assessment which accompanies the Part application prepared by Doran Consulting):

- Key Area 1 – Omeath Pier to L30541
- Key Area 2 – Lands North of L30541
- Key Area 3 – Land South of L70541/Shore Road
- Key Area 4 – Land South of Cornamucklagh Round Tower

5.28 It is noted that the existing 'Trail Head' at Omeath will serve this section of the greenway as well as the existing section of the greenway from Omeath to Carlingford Marina. However, additional facilities will be provided such as new bicycle parking spaces and information boards/directional signage.

5.29 Each of the Key Areas are considered in details as follows:

### **Key Area 1 – Omeath Pier to L30541**

5.30 This section of the proposed greenway will commence at Omeath Pier and traverse along the coast of Carlingford Lough through Omra Park adjacent to the existing stone wall. It is noted that access (for greenway users and emergency vehicles) to this section of the greenway will also be achievable via an existing access lane, i.e. the L30541.

5.31 To accommodate the preferred greenway route, a short section (approx. 6 m) of Omra Park's curtilage wall will need to be temporarily removed for construction; with the wall reinstated to connect to the proposed new fencing re-using existing stone and leaving only a 4m wide permanent gap to accommodate the greenway. It is noted that this stone wall is a protected structure as it forms part of the curtilage of Omra Park house.

5.32 The proposed greenway within Key Area 1 will predominantly comprise a 3m wide shared use cycle and pedestrian facility with an unbound blinded granular surface. A

short section of L30541 (of approximately 140m), being an existing access lane, will be utilised by greenway users to connect back to the next section of proposed greenway (i.e. Key Area 2).

#### **Key Area 2 – Lands North of L30541**

- 5.33 This section of the proposed greenway will commence at the L30541 minor road and traverse across an existing hard surfaced area adjacent to the coastline. It will then traverse a grassed area (formerly agricultural land) and travel along the coast of Carlingford Lough to where the coastline curves in to meet the line of the former Dundalk, Newry and Greenore railway corridor.
- 5.34 The proposed greenway within Key Area 2 will predominantly comprise a 3m wide shared use cycle and pedestrian facility, with an unbound blinded granular surface along the coast.

#### **Key Area 3 – Land South of L70541/Shore Road**

- 5.35 This section of the proposed greenway will turn inland before coming to Rose Cottage, and run along the route of the former Dundalk, Newry and Greenore rail line to the west of Rose Cottage and three existing properties along Lower Shore Road towards Ballykeel House.
- 5.36 When the route meets the southern boundary of Ballykeel House it will turn south west along to the end of this boundary and then turn north west as it meanders along existing field boundaries until it meets the L70541.
- 5.37 Greenway users will utilise the existing L70541 lane and travel east until reconnecting with a new proposed section of greenway that will run between the existing residential properties along Lower Shore Road in a northern direction to again connect into the former Dundalk, Newry and Greenore rail line for approx. 140m.
- 5.38 It is noted that greenway users and emergency vehicles will be able to obtain access to/from this section of the greenway will also be achievable via an existing access lane, i.e. the L70541, which connects to the R173.
- 5.39 Furthermore, this section of the route will incorporate fence screening in locations where the route comes into close proximity with existing residential properties so as to reduce any potential privacy impacts. Consultations have been undertaken with landowners on the proposed route through/nearby residential properties located along/off Lower Shore Road which have informed the proposed route at this location.

#### **Key Area 4 – Land South and North of Cornamucklagh Round Tower**

- 5.40 This section of the proposed greenway will turn east from the former rail line towards the coast and then turn north along, but setback from, the shore/coastline of Carlingford Lough for approx. 500m until it meets a woodland area nearby the Cornamucklagh Round Tower.
- 5.41 The route will turn inland again when it meets the southern fringes of the woodland area and travel along and around the boundary of the woodland area in a western and then northern direction until it meets the route of the historic rail line.

5.42 The greenway will follow the line of the former railway travelling under an existing bridge and up to the county bridge on the RoI/NI border.

#### **Additional Components**

5.43 The majority of the greenway will be an unbound surface but an asphalt section is proposed for a short section (approx. 140m) near Shore Road. The proposed greenway will utilise existing hard surfaced areas where available and include the following additional components:

- installation of staggered approach barrier at crossing points with minor roads, i.e. L30541 and L70541 (known locally as Shore Road);
- reduction of speed limit of R173 from 80km/h to 60km/h from approx. 40m south of Cornamucklagh House to the border (approx. 575m in total).
- installation of a 0.5-1m buffer to provide appropriate boundary fencing offset 500mm from the edge of the greenway, where required;
- installation of a 0.5-1m wide buffer area for drainage along the route, where required;
- installation of a 1.2m post and rail timber fence along the majority of the route;
- installation of stock fencing, where required;
- installation of screening in locations where the route is located in close proximity to sensitive receptors (as shown on the submitted plans);
- installation of new cycle parking stands at Omeath Pier;
- installation of new directional/warning signage and information boards, where required;
- repairs to existing paths/hard surfaced areas and walls, where required;
- removal of trees as identified in the Arboricultural Assessment prepared by J M McConville & Associates;
- removal of vegetation, where required; and
- relocation of existing signs, where required.

5.44 The above works will be required to enable and accommodate the proposed greenway and provide a safer environment for its users and those who live along the route.

#### **Widths / Gradients**

5.45 To allow the greenway to be an all ability cycleway suitable for all abilities of cyclists and walkers the greenway will be 3m wide along the route.

- 5.46 Any constraints along the greenway noted during detailed design which require a reduction in width will be identified and the greenway width can be reduced to 2m minimum if required.
- 5.47 To allow the greenway to be adequately drained and avoid difficulties with standing water and ice; crossfalls along the route will be between 1% and 3% with a maximum of 5% where necessary. Cross falls will also be directed towards the inside of all bends to prevent negative cross fall and its impact on cyclist safety.
- 5.48 The greenway will aim to have maximum vertical gradients of 3% along the majority of the route. Where increased gradients are due to existing localised steep ground levels gradients will be a maximum of 10% (two steps below desirable maximum) and these reaches will be less than 100m in length.
- 5.49 An assessment of 1m LiDAR data has indicated that these gradients should be achievable along the majority of the route; where gradients are greater than 3%; signage will be provided to slow cyclists and warn them of the upcoming hazard.
- 5.50 The greenway will be relatively straight; to direct the route around existing landowner boundaries. Where bends are required to direct the greenway along existing boundaries a minimum radius of 4m is proposed signage will be provided to slow cyclists and warn them of the upcoming hazard.
- 5.51 Departure from standards will be required at locations where proximity to existing residential properties and existing ground levels restrict the greenway in width, vertical gradients and horizontal alignment as shown on the proposal drawings; signage will be provided to slow cyclists and warn them of the upcoming hazard.

### **Section III – County Bridge at ROI/NI National Border to/from Victoria Lock**

- 5.52 Sections I & II are to be delivered as a single package of works, separate from Section III and in accordance with the respective project programmes.
- 5.53 As stated previously, Section III of the greenway is located wholly within the jurisdiction of Northern Ireland and will be the subject of a separate planning application to NMDDC. This route is currently at concept stage and while a preferred route has been identified initial consultations are ongoing with planning consultees and stakeholders.
- 5.54 In addition, this section of the route is classed as a ‘major development’ in Northern Ireland and is required to undergo a statutory community consultation process in accordance with Section 27 and 28 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
- 5.55 In light of this, this report does not provide a detailed description of Section III as there is the possibility that the route could be subject to change having considered feedback received from both planning and community consultations.
- 5.56 General principles are established to guide the design of the future route:

- This proposed section of greenway will extend northwards from the county bridge at the national border of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland along the R173 and connect to the existing 'Trail Head' Victoria Lock Amenity Site;
- Greenway will mainly comprise of a corridor approximately 5m width along the route and comprise a shared pedestrian and cycle greenway; providing buffer areas for surface water drainage where required; and an area to provide a suitable boundary fence;
- Greenway will be designed and constructed in line with best practice using the guidelines outlined below and designed to incorporate feedback from the statutory consultees and community consultations;
- At all locations where the greenway interacts with public roads a crossing will be established comprising; drop kerbs at the boundary of the carriageway, road markings and signage outlining that cyclists will be required to give way to motor vehicles at conflict points, and a gate will also be provided at the start and end of each section;
- Access points and construction compounds in proximity to the public road network are proposed along the route; proposed locations aim to avoid close proximity to any watercourses and will be closed off. Lands shall be reinstated on completion of the adjacent section of works;
- Greenway is to be an all ability cycleway suitable for all abilities of cyclists and walkers the greenway will be 3m wide along the route;
- Any constraints along the greenway noted during detailed design which require a reduction in width will be identified and the greenway width can be reduced to 2m minimum if required;
- Greenway is to be adequately drained and avoid difficulties with standing water and ice; crossfalls along the route will be between 1% and 3% with a maximum of 5% where necessary. Cross falls will also be directed towards the inside of all bends to prevent negative cross fall and its impact on cyclist safety; and
- Greenway will aim to have maximum vertical gradients of 3% along the majority of the route. Where increased gradients are due to existing localised steep ground levels, gradients will be a maximum of 10% (two steps below desirable maximum) and these reaches will be less than 100m in length. Where gradients are greater than 3% signage will be provided to slow cyclists and warn them of the upcoming hazard.

## **Components Relevant to All Three Sections of Greenway**

### **Construction and Design**

5.57 The greenway will be designed and constructed in line with best practice using the following guidelines:

- TII DN-GEO-03047 Rural Cycleway Design (Offline)
- TII DN-DNG-03073 Grassed Surface Water Channels for Road Runoff
- TII DN-PAV-03026 Footway Design
- The National Cycle Manual
- DN-DNG-03071 Design of Outfall and Culvert Details
- DN-DNG-03063 Vegetated Drainage Systems for Road Runoff

5.58 No new vehicular access onto the road network in accordance with policy TC10 of the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021. It is noted that where the greenway interacts with public roads, drop kerbs will be provided and crossing facilities will include road markings and signage outlining that cyclists / pedestrians will be required to give way to motor vehicles at conflict points.

5.59 Access points for greenway users, emergency services and farmers are proposed along the route. Access for local landowners and farmers will be provided by gates at agreed locations along the greenway to provide crossing points to lands on the shore side of the path. Where livestock are required to cross the greenway suitable gates and cattle stops will be provided.

5.60 Site compounds will also be established at suitable locations along the route following agreements with landowners and these will be secured at all times using suitable boundary fencing.

5.61 Access points and construction compounds are proposed along the route and will be closed off. Locations will be assessed for suitability with the aim of avoiding construction phase compounds in close proximity to any watercourses. Lands will be reinstated on completion of the adjacent section of works.

5.62 Standard greenway signage and information panels shall be installed along the route to provide continuity with the existing greenway sections from Carlingford Marina to Omeath and from Victoria Lock to Albert Basin.

5.63 No bins are proposed along the greenway – to be consistent with both the existing and new reaches of the Carlingford Lough Greenway, where a ‘leave no trace’ initiative is operated to encourage environmental awareness and sustainable behaviour among users.

#### **Cycle and Parking Facilities**

5.64 Vehicular parking for the proposed new sections of greenway will utilise existing parking areas at the ‘Trail Heads’ as follows:

- 30 no. car parking spaces within car parking area adjacent Carlingford Station House;
- 43 no. car parking spaces at Omeath Pier; and

- 40 no. car parking spaces at Victoria Lock.

5.65 Cycle parking for the proposed new sections of greenway will utilise existing and proposed cycle parking facilities at the 'Trail Heads' as follows:

- 20no. Sheffield style cycle stands within car parking area adjacent Carlingford Station House;
- 3no. existing and 7no. new Sheffield Style cycle stands at Omeath Pier; and
- 15no. existing rural style (timber) racks at Victoria Lock.

5.66 The above locations are considered to be: accessible and convenient; close to the 'Trail Heads'; prominently located with sufficient surrounding space; and unlikely to cause obstruction to pedestrians or vehicles.

5.67 The proposed cycle racks will enable the bicycle frame and at least one wheel to be locked, catering for different sizes and shapes of bikes – promoting the use of the greenway for both individual cyclists and family groups.

## 6. Location of Development

- 6.1 The following section seeks to outline a description of the location of the proposed greenway having regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.
- 6.2 Section I will be located approximately 6 km south of proposed Section II and Section I and Section II will be connected through an existing section of greenway, this being the Carlingford Marina to/from Omeath Pier greenway.
- 6.3 The siting and location of the greenway and working areas have been informed by consultations with members of the public, the Council's internal departments, with the prescribed bodies and discussions among the wider design team and are located in a manner to reduce the potential for impacts and to maximise the quality of the proposed route

### Section I – Carlingford to/from Carlingford Marina

- 6.4 The location and extent of this section of the greenway is illustrated in the site location plan (Ref. No. 181146-DC-CM-XX-GA-C-001) prepared by Doran Consulting. An aerial extract from the Design and Access Statement prepared by Doran Consulting is at Figure 6.1 below.

**Figure 6.1: Aerial Extract showing Proposed Site Boundary**



- 6.5 The site takes the form of a long linear and looped corridor which will measure approx. 2.65km in length and cover a total site area of approx. 3.8 ha. The proposed route will link the Carlingford Station House (which will become a new 'Trail Head') in Carlingford

Town to/from the Carlingford Marina via the existing town lanes/streets and via the R173 under the bridge of King John's Castle.

- 6.6 This section of the Carlingford Lough Greenway will be different from existing and proposed sections as it will:
- comprise separate routes for pedestrians and cyclists;
  - be predominantly located in the town realm of Carlingford; and
  - predominantly traverse existing hard surfaced areas.
- 6.7 In terms of existing and surrounding land uses, the routes of the proposed greenway within Carlingford Town are located along the existing streets and are therefore bounded by existing residential properties, town centre uses, roads/lanes, footpaths, walls, fences, grassed verges, lay-by areas, car parking areas the Carlingford Lough and the Carlingford Pier.
- 6.8 The section of the proposed greenway that is located north of the stone bridge leading to King John's Castle, along the route of the R173, is bound to the west by the main R173 Road which runs from Carlingford to Newry and to the east by the Carlingford Lough with existing intervening components such as a lay-by area/car parking area, amenity areas, street furniture (seating, benches, bins), signage, grassed verges of varying widths, vehicle restraint barriers and vegetated embankments separating the greenway from the banks of the Carlingford Lough.
- 6.9 In terms of sensitive designations, the following is relevant:
- this section of the proposed greenway abuts the Carlingford Shore SAC (IE002306) as it follows the R173 coastal road;
  - the Carlingford Mountain cSAC (IE000453) is located 610m west of and upslope of the proposed development at North Commons, where Section I of the greenway terminates;
  - the Carlingford Lough SPA (IE004078) is located 300m east of the proposed development at Carlingford, where Section I of the greenway terminates - this represents the northern boundary of the SPA which extends southwards from here – however it is noted that this SPA is separated from the proposed development by Carlingford Harbour;
  - the closest point of the marine extension to the Carlingford Lough SPA (UK9020160) is 1.2km northeast of the northern end of Section I where it terminates at North Commons in Carlingford;
  - the closest intertidal part of the Carlingford Lough SPA (UK9020160) is 2.2km northeast of this location also;
  - the Carlingford Lough SPA (UK9020160) is separated from the proposed development by open water in Carlingford Lough

- this section of the greenway flanks the Carlingford Lough proposed Natural Heritage Area (000452) as it follows the R173 coastal road but it is noted that the pNHA overlaps a section of the application boundary at IG313385 318060 and north of Carlingford Town;
- part of this section of greenway will travel under the bridge to King John's Castle which is a National Monument; and
- part of this section of greenway is located close to/within the curtilage of a number of Protected Structures;
- part of this section of greenway will traverse through the designated Carlingford Architectural Conservation Area;
- part of this section of greenway is located within the National Monuments Service-Zone of Notification for Carlingford Town; and
- part of this section of greenway is located within an Area of Special Archaeological Interest.

6.10 The extent of the site boundary extends beyond the width of the proposed greenway hard surfaced area to account for working areas along the greenway and along adjacent roads for both construction and operational access.

6.11 The siting and location of the greenway and working areas have been informed by consultations with members of the public, the Council's internal departments, with the prescribed bodies and discussions among the wider design team and are located in a manner to reduce the potential for impacts and to maximise the quality of the proposed route.

### **Section II – Omeath Pier to/from County Bridge at ROI/NI National Border**

6.12 The location and extent of this section of the greenway is illustrated in the site location plan (Ref. No. 81146-DC-OB-XX-GA-C-002) prepared by Doran Consulting and which is submitted as part of the respective Part 8 planning application.

**Figure 6.2: Aerial Extract showing Proposed Site Boundary**



- 6.13 The site represents a long linear corridor measuring approx. 4.2 km in length and covering a total site area of approx. 9.5 ha.
- 6.14 The proposed greenway will traverse the townlands of Cornamucklagh, Drummullagh, Knocknagoran and Lislea. It will commence at, and connect to, the existing 'Trail Head' at Omeath and the existing Carlingford Marina to Omeath Pier greenway.
- 6.15 The proposal will provide a new section of greenway extending northwards from Omeath Pier to/from the county bridge at the national border of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland along the R173<sup>3</sup>.
- 6.16 The proposed route will be predominantly located along the shore/coastline of Carlingford Lough and along the Old Dundalk, Newry and Greenore rail line through grassed agricultural areas including Omra Park, along the high level railway embankment and through unmanaged woodland and scrub areas.
- 6.17 The application site will be bound by Carlingford Lough to the east and its shoreline with an area of mud and shingle running along the edge as well as the following features (to the east, west, north and south):
- existing hard standing areas (such as Omeath Pier, footways, roads, lanes);
  - existing boundaries (such as walls, fences, hedgerows, trees, etc);
  - residential properties (clustered and dispersed);
  - Omra Park and its curtilage wall;
  - managed and unmanaged wooded areas,

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<sup>3</sup> It is noted that a further section of greenway is proposed from the county bridge at the national border to Victoria Lock and this section of the greenway will be applied for separately to the relevant Local Authority under the NI planning system.

- agricultural land;
- scrub land;
- former railway line and railway embankments;
- the R173 Road (running from Carlingford to Newry); and
- the county bridge at the NI/ROI border.

6.18 There is an eclectic mix of land uses within and surrounding the proposed greenway and the agricultural grazing of cattle, sheep and horses represents the main use to be found along/within this section of the proposed greenway.

6.19 Each of the respective expert reports deal with any relevant sensitive designations, but we note the following:

- this section of the greenway flanks the Carlingford Shore SAC (IE002306) boundary along terrestrial scrub, woodland and grassland habitats of the Old Dundalk, Newry and Greenore rail line as far as Cornamucklagh where the SAC terminates at the ROI-NI border;
- the Carlingford Mountain cSAC (IE000453) is located 530m southwest and upslope of the proposed development at the NI-ROI border which is the interface of Sections II and III;
- this section of the greenway flanks the Carlingford Lough proposed Natural Heritage Area (000452) as it follows the R173 coastal road but it is noted that immediately south of Ferry Hill Wood the application boundary falls inside this non-statutory designated site, where the pNHA extends beyond the SAC boundary into an improved agricultural field;
- part of this section of greenway is located close to/within the curtilage of Omra Park House being a Protected Structures; and
- monuments have been noted close to the greenway; but this section of greenway is not located within an area of high archaeological potential.

6.20 The redline application boundary extends beyond the width of the proposed 3 metre greenway to account for working areas along the greenway and along adjacent roads for construction access.

6.21 The siting and location of the greenway and working areas have been informed by consultations with members of the public, the Council's internal departments, prescribed bodies and discussions among the wider design team and are located in a manner to reduce the potential for impacts and to maximise the quality of the proposed route.

### **Section III – County Bridge at RoI/NI National Border to/from Victoria Lock**

- 6.22 Sections I & II are to be delivered as a single package of works, separate from Section III and in accordance with the respective project programmes.
- 6.23 As also stated previously, Section III of the greenway is located wholly within the jurisdiction of Northern Ireland and will be the subject of a separate planning application to NMDDC. This route is currently at concept stage and while a preferred route has been identified initial consultations are still being undertaken with statutory consultees.
- 6.24 In addition, this section of the route is classed as a ‘major development’ in Northern Ireland and is required to undergo a statutory community consultation process in accordance with Section 27 and 28 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
- 6.25 In light of the above and the aforementioned points, this report does not provide a detailed description of the location of the route as there is a possibility that the route could be subject to change following receipt of feedback received from both statutory consultations and community consultations
- 6.26 This proposed section of greenway will extend northwards from the county bridge at the national border of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland along the R173 and connect to the existing ‘Trail Head’ Victoria Lock Amenity Site.
- 6.27 The general area either comprises or is located in close proximity to the following features and designations:
- Carlingford Lough;
  - Carlingford Lough SPA, Carlingford Lough ASSI, Carlingford Shore SAC, Carlingford Shore proposed NHA and Carlingford Lough Ramsar site;
  - the R173 Road (running from Carlingford to Newry); and
  - the county bridge at the NI/RoI border.
  - existing hard standing areas (such as Victoria Lock Amenity Site, footways, roads, lanes);
  - existing boundaries (such as walls, fences, hedgerows, trees, etc);
  - residential properties (dispersed);
  - derelict commercial properties (dispersed);
  - managed and unmanaged wooded areas within Fathom Forest;
  - existing forest tracks where present;
  - a mix of land uses dominated by agricultural grasslands;

6.28 The final route will be fully informed by consultations with members of the public, the Council's internal departments, statutory consultees and discussions among the wider design team. In addition, the design and siting of the preferred route will also take into account the following principles:

- It is noted that the existing 'Trail Head' at Victoria Lock Amenity Site will serve this section of the greenway as well as Section II of the greenway from Omeath. However, additional facilities will be provided such as new bicycle parking spaces and information boards/directional signage.
- Standard greenway signage, information panels and lookout points with benches shall be installed along the route.
- Vehicular parking and new cycle parking for the proposed new section of greenway will utilise existing parking areas at the Trail Head. Locations will aim to be accessible and convenient, close to the trail head, prominently located with sufficient surrounding space and unlikely to cause obstruction to pedestrians.
- Generally greenways are not illuminated; and the existing constructed sections of the proposed Carlingford Lough Greenway are currently not illuminated. New sections will be in line with this to provide continuity along the greenway and maintain the rural aesthetics; however proposals will take into account any road safety requirements for lighting where the greenway interacts with public roads.
- To allow the greenway to be an all ability cycleway suitable for all abilities of cyclists and walkers the greenway is to be min. 3m wide along the majority of the route. The proposal will be designed in a manner which takes into account gradients and surrounding landscape; using bound or unbound construction where required.
- A new suitable boundary fence or suitable kerbing will be installed along the R173 where the greenway runs adjacent. Within Fathom Forest boundary fencing will be designed to match the environment comprising suitable timber fencing or similar approved.
- Existing drainage / culverts will be retained and any additional drainage outfalls discovered during the works will be reviewed to determine if they require replacement or extension of the existing pipe as part of the works.
- Current Pollution Prevention Guidelines shall be adhered to for all work around watercourses to prevent pollution (including muddy run-off) for both construction of the greenway and future maintenance work.
- Minimal earth works are required as part of the works. Minor areas of cut and fill will be required to create the required drainage and cross falls.
- The trail will manoeuvre around existing trees to avoid felling where possible and any protected trees identified during the tree survey shall be retained.

- Alternate boundary fencing including screening or similar will be considered if the greenway is in close proximity to residential properties to reduce potential noise or visual impacts.

6.29 Similar to the other proposed sections of greenway in the Rol and existing section in both Rol and NI, the future redline boundary of this section of the greenway will extend beyond the width of the proposed 3m greenway to account for working areas and construction access.

## 7. Characteristics of Potential Impact

7.1 The proposed development has the potential for a number of different effects which are considered in turn below under the following sub-headings<sup>4</sup>:

- Population & Human Health
- Biodiversity
- Land, Soil and Water
- Air and Climate
- Material Assets
- Cultural Heritage (including architectural and archaeological aspects)
- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Traffic and Transport
- Noise
- Flooding and Drainage
- Construction
- Risk of Major Accidents
- Cumulative Impacts
- Transboundary Impacts

7.2 As previously stated and for the reasons set out in the introduction section of this report, the general guiding principles for Section 3 of the proposed greenway have been identified, but this report does not provide an assessment of the potential environmental impacts associated with 'Section 3' as this route.

### **Population & Human Health**

#### **Sections I and II**

7.3 As set out in the foregoing sections, the proposed cross-border greenway, once completed, will provide a significant amenity and recreational opportunity for locals and tourists alike. We also note the following significant economic, social and environmental benefits that the proposals will provide:

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<sup>4</sup> These sub-headings do not follow the formal headings as in EIA Directive 2014, but are considered most relevant to the proposed project in determining its potential broader environmental impacts.

- it will provide a safe route and alternative means for people to travel, even for work purposes, between Carlingford, Omeath, Victoria Lock and Newry;
- it will assist with the NPF place-making policy priority for the Eastern and Midland Region by building on the progress made in developing an integrated network of greenways;
- it will help to improve the quality of life credentials and attractiveness of this part of County Louth;
- it will support the diversification of rural and regional economies;
- it will promote more sustainable forms of travel and activity based recreation;
- it will support the development of rural communities and job creation in the rural economy;
- it will support the protection and promotion of natural assets and biodiversity development ;
- it will offer a unique alternative means for tourists and visitors to access and enjoy rural Ireland;
- it will contribute to the rural recreation and adventure tourism offering in County Louth; and
- it will enhance transport connectivity between Ireland and Northern Ireland and improve social cohesion between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

- 7.4 During the construction period there will be some short term and temporary impacts due to the operations required to construct the greenway. Indeed, there are a number of existing properties (residential and commercial) located along/in close proximity to the route, particularly in Carlingford Town, Omeath Village and near Lower Shore Road.
- 7.5 The Council and Project Team have been actively engaging with landowners, business owners and local stakeholders to seek agreement on the preferred routes and to ensure that their potential impacts are explained and identified.
- 7.6 In addition, a public consultation event was held in Carlingford and Omeath to discuss the emerging proposals in detail and to enable the Council and Project Team to take account of any potential issues or impacts identified by land and property owners and members of the community.
- 7.7 The route has been designed and sited in a manner to reduce the potential impacts on human beings (as addressed further under each of the respective sub-headings below), where possible and the Design and Access Statement includes an Outline Construction Methodology which will implement best practice construction techniques and mitigation measures to minimise construction impacts.

- 7.8 The greenway will be at least 10m from any rural private residences and noting the low intensity of the proposed construction works, it is envisaged that there will be no significant impacts to human beings arising from the proposals.
- 7.9 In terms of the operational phase, the greenway would provide many economic, social and environmental benefits (as outlined above) noting particularly the projects recreational and amenity value, which collectively will provide positive impacts on human health.
- 7.10 However, it is also noted that the greenway will bring people closer to private homes and the potential for amenity impacts (noise and privacy) has been taken into account in the design of the development, such as the inclusion of screen fencing, and the Council has been in contact with affected owners to ensure that they are aware of the proposed route and to discuss potential impacts. Individual boundary requirements will be taken into account following additional landowner consultations at detailed design stage.
- 7.11 LCC will maintain and manage proposed Sections I and II of the greenway and an Environmental Operating Plan will be developed for the project in coordination with the wider consulting team.
- 7.12 It is considered that the proposed sections of greenway will not create any significant adverse effects with respect to population or human health.

## **Biodiversity**

### **Sections I and II**

- 7.13 The greenway proposals are accompanied by a suite of supporting information, which includes a Habitats Directive Appraisal Screening report and an Ecological Impact Assessment report which have both been prepared by RPS. In addition, an Arboricultural Assessment has also been undertaken for the proposed greenway sections.
- 7.14 The above-mentioned reports review and assess the potential biodiversity impacts of the proposed sections of greenway and conclude that no significant adverse effects are anticipated. Please refer to these accompanying reports, which form part of the overall Part 8 application packages, for further details.
- 7.15 An Environmental Operating Plan will also be developed for the greenway in coordination with the wider consulting team comprising civil engineers, structural engineers, ecologists and archaeologists

## **Land and Soil**

### **Section I**

- 7.16 Starting at the Station House pedestrians and cyclists will use existing roads and footways and no surfacing works are proposed. The proposed new greenway under King John's Bridge and along the R173 will be an asphalt footway with suitable kerbing and boundary fencing along the coastal edge.

- 7.17 The proposed greenway from Carlingford to the Marina is located within public lands (footways and road verges) with a minor area within the privately owned Carlingford Marina.
- 7.18 This section of the greenway does not require any demolition activity.
- 7.19 Minimal earthworks are required as part of the proposed works. Minor localised areas of cut and fill will be required to create the required corridor levels and to provide drainage and cross falls along the R173.
- 7.20 The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) mapping was assessed and the following was noted:
- There are no records of landslides along the route however the new footway from King John's Castle northward is within an area defined as having moderately high landslide susceptibility.
  - The new footway from King John's Castle northward is within The Carlingford Area & King John's Castle Geological Heritage Site.
  - The route is not within a drinking water protection zone.
- 7.21 The GSI classifies the bedrock along the greenway as Turbidite with red mica & red shale of the Inniskeen Formation, and there are no significant superficial deposits along the route with sediments described as bedrock outcrop or subcrop.
- 7.22 Loss of soil resource under the proposed greenway footprint is deemed to be minimal in the context of the wider area.
- 7.23 No new car park areas are being proposed as part of this proposal as existing trail head facilities will be utilised.
- 7.24 There is the potential for contamination sources on site as a result of historical contaminative site use comprising the Old Dundalk, Newry & Greenore rail line. Site investigations will be undertaken and samples collected for chemical laboratory analysis for waste classification before any spoil is removed and disposed off-site
- 7.25 The construction of this section of the proposed greenway will involve minimal excavation works and so the proposed development is unlikely to create any significant adverse environmental impacts on the soils and geology of the area.

## **Section II**

- 7.26 In the vicinity of Omeath Pier, the proposed greenway will utilise the existing Cluain Na Mara (Shore Road) to connect to the existing greenway section. The proposed greenway will predominantly comprise an unbound surface. An unbound surface is proposed due to the setting to give a sense of the rural environment.
- 7.27 Dust path / loose material construction is proposed to allow the proposed greenway to blend with the environment in the rural setting and along the lough shoreline, and provide a more natural aesthetic.

- 7.28 No new surfacing is proposed along an existing dust bound area immediately after the crossing of the L30541. Along this area the existing surfacing is considered suitable; isolated patch repairs and filling of potholes is proposed.
- 7.29 An area of bound / asphalt surfacing providing vehicular access will be provided for a 75m section of the proposed greenway off the L70541 Shore Road as shown in the accompanying plans.
- 7.30 This section of the proposed greenway does not require the demolition of any properties but it is noted that a short section of the boundary wall of Omra Park will be removed to accommodate the proposed route. For further details please refer to the accompanying plans, the Design and Access Statement and the Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Assessment.
- 7.31 Minimal earth works are required as part of the works. Minor localised areas of cut and fill will be required to create the required corridor levels and to provide drainage and suitable cross falls.
- 7.32 An area of earthworks are required as part of the works adjacent to the coast at Cornamucklagh Round Tower to address surface water ponding / flooding issues, and an area of earthworks is required where the proposed greenway route travels up onto the railway embankment and back down again at the corner of Fairy Woods. Any soil removed from site will be used elsewhere to allow a cut/fill balance.
- 7.33 In terms of understanding the geology of the area, the GSI mapping was assessed and it was noted that there are no records of landslides along the route and that the route is not within a drinking water protection zone nor within an area of Irish Geological Heritage.
- 7.34 The GSI classifies the bedrock along the proposed greenway as Turbidite with red mica & red shale of the Inniskeen Formation, and superficial deposits along the route are classified as till derived from Granites with isolated areas of marine gravel and sands.
- 7.35 Loss of soil resource under the proposed greenway footprint is deemed to be minimal in the context of the wider area.
- 7.36 It is also noted that no new car park areas are being proposed as part of this proposal as existing trail head facilities will be utilised.
- 7.37 It has been identified that there is the potential for contamination sources on site as a result of historical contaminative site use comprising the Old Dundalk, Newry & Greenore rail line. Site investigations will be undertaken and samples collected for chemical Laboratory analysis for waste classification before any spoil is removed and disposed off-site. Any fill identified as being contaminated will be removed and stockpiled separately to avoid spread of contamination within materials removed off site.
- 7.38 The construction of this section of the proposed greenway will involve minimal excavation works and so the proposed development is unlikely to result in any significant adverse environmental impacts on the soils and geology of the area.

## **Water**

### **Section I**

- 7.39 Section I of the proposed Carlingford Lough greenway is within the Newry, Fane, Glyde and Dee Catchment / Hydrometric Area, within the Carlingford sub-basin and runs alongside the Carlingford Lough Coastal Waterbody.
- 7.40 The greenway runs along Carlingford Lough and is approximately 10m from the Carlingford Lough coastal waterbody shore at its closest point, and up to a maximum of 45m at farthest proximity. The greenway crosses no designated watercourses (water features which are classified and monitored by the EPA under the Water Framework Directive).
- 7.41 The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) classifies the groundwater vulnerability along the route as 'X' where rock is at or near the surface, and classifies the aquifers underlying the site at PI poor (PI) aquifers.
- 7.42 The CEFRAM Groundwater report indicates that for PI aquifers in low-lying areas; the water table is generally near the ground surface, especially in winter when the aquifer's limited porosity and permeability may lead to waterlogging. Based on GSI records the proposed route is not within a drinking water protection area.
- 7.43 The proposed route utilises the existing marina access road and footway which crosses a minor unnamed watercourses which flows into Carlingford Lough downstream. No works are proposed in the vicinity of the existing crossing point.
- 7.44 Current Pollution Prevention Guidelines (PPGs) shall be adhered to as standard practice for all work around watercourses to prevent pollution (including muddy runoff) for both construction of the greenway and future maintenance work.
- 7.45 During the operational phase, surface water from the development will directly infiltrate into underlying sub-soil as the majority of the greenway construction will be granular.
- 7.46 Surface water runoff from adjacent catchments will be managed by adjacent v-notch grassed drainage ditches or French drains. Existing surface water flow paths will be maintained by maintaining existing or installing new piped culvert crossings under the greenway where required.
- 7.47 Please refer to the Flood Risk Assessment that has been prepared by Doran Consulting for this section of the greenway and which is submitted in support of the Part 8 application.
- 7.48 Noting the scale, nature and characteristics of the proposed sections of greenway, there will be no requirement for significant site works or excavation. In light of this, and the Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Doran Consulting, it is not anticipated there will be any significant adverse environmental impacts on the existing groundwater conditions.

## Section II

- 7.49 This section of the proposed greenway is located within the Newry, Fane, Glyde and Dee Catchment / Hydrometric Area, within the Knocknagoran sub-basin and runs alongside the Carlingford Lough Coastal Waterbody (refer to Figure 5.6 of the Design and Access Statement).
- 7.50 The greenway runs along Carlingford Lough and is approximately 1m from the Carlingford Lough shore at its closest point, and up to a maximum of 70m away at the farthest proximity.
- 7.51 The greenway does not cross any designated watercourses (water features which are classified and monitored by the EPA under the Water Framework Directive).
- 7.52 The GSI classifies the groundwater vulnerability along the route as varying from High to Extreme with areas where rock is at or near the surface, and classifies the aquifers underlying the site at PI poor (PI) aquifers.
- 7.53 The CEFRAM Groundwater report indicates that for PI aquifers in low-lying areas, the water table is generally near the ground surface, especially in winter when the aquifer's limited porosity and permeability may lead to waterlogging. Based on GSI records the proposed route is not within a drinking water protection area.
- 7.54 The proposed route crosses one undesignated water feature (unnamed) along the Shore Road (L70541). The water feature flows into Carlingford Lough downstream.
- 7.55 At this location a new culvert and gabion bank reinforcement will be constructed to provide access for the proposed greenway, improve access for adjacent residential properties and reduce existing erosion/scour of the banks.
- 7.56 Where new culverts are required across designated watercourses, or other water features which are tributaries of a designated waterbody Section 50 applications will be made to the OPW.
- 7.57 The proposed route crosses two known undesignated land drains along the coastal section (refer to drawing DC-OB-XX-XX-GA-C-310).
- 7.58 The proposals will maintain existing surface water channels and outfalls. Proposals will retain, replace, or extend any existing culverts / outfalls which are in the path of the greenway. Any upstream open surface watercourses will remain open to maintain access to the water for adjacent landowners.
- 7.59 There are four other existing land drains / pipes recorded along the route from Omeath to the Border during the site walkover. These and any additional drainage outfalls discovered during the works will require replacement or extension of the existing pipe as part of the works.
- 7.60 The assessment of the above change in runoff rates indicates that the change of land use and any resulting increase in runoff rates are considered minimal due to the proposed surface being predominantly granular. The development is therefore in

compliance with Policy WS 10 of the Louth County Development Plan 2015-21 in relation to run-off quantity.”

- 7.61 Current Pollution Prevention Guidelines (PPGs) shall be adhered to as standard practice for all work around watercourses to prevent pollution (including muddy runoff) for construction of the greenway and future maintenance work.
- 7.62 An Outline Construction methodology is include within the DAS but it is noted that a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan will be prepared by the contractor and will be required to adhere to the relevant guidelines.
- 7.63 During the operational phase, surface water from the development will directly infiltrate into underlying sub-soil as the majority of the greenway construction will be granular.
- 7.64 Surface water runoff from adjacent catchments will be managed by adjacent v-notch grassed drainage ditches or French drains. Existing surface water flow paths will be maintained by maintaining existing or installing new piped culvert crossings under the greenway where required.
- 7.65 Please refer to the Flood Risk Assessment that has been prepared by Doran Consulting for this section of the greenway and which is submitted in support of the Part 8 application.
- 7.66 Noting the scale, nature and characteristics of the proposed sections of greenway, there will be no requirement for significant site works or excavation. In light of this, and the Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Doran Consulting, it is not anticipated there will be any significant adverse environmental impacts on the existing groundwater conditions.

## **Flooding and Drainage**

### **Section I**

- 7.67 A separate flood risk assessment and surface water management report has been prepared for this section of the greenway and has been submitted in support of the respective Part 8 application.
- 7.68 Within Carlingford Town, drainage will remain as existing with proposed road markings and signage the only works proposed within this section. The majority of the new greenway construction will be asphalt footway and will utilise the existing R173 road drainage with new gullies, or repositioning of gullies, where required.
- 7.69 Existing surface water flow paths will be maintained by maintaining existing or installing new culvert crossings under the greenway where required.
- 7.70 Increases in hardstanding areas are considered minimal as outlined within the Flood Risk and Surface Water Management Report.
- 7.71 LCC will maintain and manage proposed Section I of the greenway and the following is proposed:

- Grass cutting of grassed drainage channels (blades ideally maintained at <75mm in length);
- Removal of litter and debris from the greenway and adjacent drainage channels;
- Patching of grass along the drainage channels where grass has died or become damaged;
- spraying or cutting of the grassed edge every 2-3 years to maintain greenway width at approximately 3m.

7.72 Noting the scale, nature and characteristics of the proposed section of greenway, it is not anticipated there will be any significant adverse environmental impacts as a result of the development proposals in terms of flooding or drainage.

## **Section II**

- 7.73 A separate flood risk assessment and surface water management report has been prepared for the proposed greenway and has been submitted as part of this Part 8 Application.
- 7.74 In the vicinity of Omeath Pier where the proposed greenway will utilise the existing asphalt carpark, drainage will remain as existing with proposed road markings and signage the only proposed works within this section.
- 7.75 The majority of the proposed greenway construction will be granular and will allow direct infiltration of rainfall into underlying sub-soil. In addition the provision of suitable crossfalls to allow the greenway to be adequately drained (>1%) and prevent water standing on the greenway during larger rainfall events.
- 7.76 Surface water runoff from adjacent catchments will be managed by adjacent v-notch grassed drainage ditches or French drains as outlined within the Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Management Report (Doran Consulting, 2019).
- 7.77 The drainage works along the majority of the greenway will comprise the construction of v-notch ditches (seeded grass drainage channels), or French drains (perforated pipe laid in a shingle-filled trench lined with a geotextile filter membrane) along the upper edge of the proposed greenway.
- 7.78 The drains are considered to be a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and will allow ease of maintenance and efficient construction of long lengths of the proposed greenway and will offer aesthetic value and environmental benefits such as a habitat for local fauna.
- 7.79 This is also in line with recommendations of The National Cycle Manual (National Transport Authority, Dublin; June 2011) advises the use of French drains to reduce the effects of ground saturation locally by lowering the water table in the vicinity of the edge, and limit erosion or rutting along the surface of the facility.

- 7.80 The drains will prevent surface water from adjacent agricultural lands running across or ponding on the granular greenway and will discharge downhill across the remaining agricultural lands or into adjacent water bodies as per the existing scenario.
- 7.81 The ditches will minimise the impact of the runoff onto the adjacent lands by using existing drainage runs where possible. The use of the ditches will provide attenuation for any excess surface water runoff from the greenway and reduce the likelihood of water logging on site. Grassed channels will allow lower flow velocities to be generated thereby reducing the sediment transport ability of the channel flow.
- 7.82 Existing surface water flow paths will be maintained by maintaining existing or installing new culvert crossings under the greenway where required.
- 7.83 Increases in hardstanding areas are considered minimal as outlined within the Flood Risk and Surface Water Management Report.
- 7.84 LCC will maintain and manage proposed Section I of the greenway and the following is proposed:
- Grass cutting of grassed drainage channels (blades ideally maintained at <75mm in length);
  - Removal of litter and debris from the greenway and adjacent drainage channels;
  - Patching of grass along the drainage channels where grass has died or become damaged;
  - spraying or cutting of the grassed edge every 2-3 years to maintain greenway width at approximately 3m.
- 7.85 Noting the scale, nature and characteristics of the proposed section of greenway, it is not anticipated there will be any significant adverse environmental impacts in terms of flooding or drainage.

## **Air Quality and Climate**

### **Sections I and II**

- 7.86 In terms of Air Quality, it is noted that the proposed sections of greenway are located in an area defined by the EPA as 'Region: Rural East' and it is also noted that at the time of writing this report that the interactive Air Quality Index for Health accessible at <https://www.epa.ie/air/quality/> states that the air quality for this region is '2 - Good'<sup>5</sup>.
- 7.87 Thus, it is considered that the route of the proposed sections of greenway is not considered to be particularly sensitive to additional emissions and that the surrounding environments are mainly influenced by emissions from road transport on the adjacent roads.

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<sup>5</sup> This index ranges from 1 – Good to 10 Very Poor

- 7.88 The overall objective of the proposed sections of greenway is to deliver a fully connected shared cycle and pedestrian path from Newry to Carlingford. This will ensure that there will be no operational impacts on air quality and climate.
- 7.89 Indeed, the proposals will provide an alternative and sustainable mode of transport for cyclists and pedestrians undertaking recreational and/or commuting trips and as such will make a positive contribution to air quality and also to the climate as it will help to reduce car borne trips.
- 7.90 So far as the construction phase is concerned, this stage of the project will lead to the production of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from traffic and the fuel used by mobile plant and equipment. However, these impacts are not anticipated to create any significant adverse effects as they will be short term and temporary in nature and will also be transient as construction moves along the route.
- 7.91 It is assumed that a Site Waste Management Plan will be developed and there will be contractual requirements for the principal contractor to demonstrate best practice principles and procedures to minimise the consumption of resources such as fuels and raw materials.
- 7.92 There is potential for dust from site construction works such as excavations, earthworks and the movement of site traffic on paved and unpaved roadways. Dust can be spread onto the public highway and along public access paths by vehicles entering and exiting the site.
- 7.93 It is anticipated that the appointed contractor will be required to implement dust measures to reduce/avoid any potential dust impacts as outlined in the Outline Construction Methodology.
- 7.94 Noting the above and the nature, size and location of the development, significant adverse effects on the environment are considered to be unlikely with respect to climate change, GHG emissions and air quality.

## **Material Assets**

### **Section I**

- 7.95 Land use within the proposed site comprises existing public roads and footways, the road side verge along the R173, public parking areas / amenity sites, and an area of private land within the Carlingford Marina.
- 7.96 It is not envisaged that this section of the greenway will lead to any significant adverse effects on material assets noting its location, scale and nature and noting that it will connect into the existing footpath and road leading to the Carlingford Marina which is already being used to access/exit the existing Omeath Pier to Carlingford marina greenway.

### **Section II**

- 7.97 Land use within the proposed site comprises existing public roads and footways, a public right of way at the terminus of the L30541, an area of private land, two private access lanes (one located off the R173 midway between the L70541 and the L30541

and the second off the L70541) and sections of the former Dundalk to Greenore rail line.

- 7.98 Landowners were consulted at an early stage in the project to discuss the viability of using the former Newry-Greenore railway line. The issue of land severance was discussed and a preferred route along the shore of Carlingford Lough was developed with input from landowners. Land severance has been kept to a minimum as the proposed Greenway flanks the shore of Carlingford Lough within agricultural lands for the most part. Where the Greenway deviates inland to avoid residential areas it is aligned alongside existing hedgerows and boundary fences as much as practicable.
- 7.99 It is noted that the route of the Greenway shares a private lane for 110 metres midway between the L70541 and the L30541 and access will not be restricted to the private landowners.
- 7.100 LCC are currently in discussions with 27 landowners and are progressing permissive access agreements with each of the landowners. The proposed Greenway will maintain any existing access to landowners where lands are severed along the route.

### **Cultural Heritage (including architectural and archaeological aspects)**

#### **Sections I and II**

- 7.101 The greenway proposals are accompanied by a suite of supporting information, which includes an Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Assessment prepared Gahan & Long and an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment report prepared by Consarc Design Group which assesses the impact of Section I on the Carlingford Architectural Conservation Area.
- 7.102 The reports prepared by Gahan & Long (one for each section) and Consarc (Section I only), review and assess the potential cultural heritage including archaeological and architectural impacts of the proposed sections of greenway and conclude that no significant adverse effects are anticipated. Please refer to these accompanying reports, which form part of the overall Part 8 application packages, for further details.

### **Landscape and Visual Impact**

#### **Section I**

- 7.103 This section of the proposed greenway will predominantly be located within the urban realm of Carlingford Town and its potential impact on the following components has been assessed in the accompany Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Assessment, prepared by Gahan & Long :

- the designated Carlingford Architectural Conservation Area;
- the bridge to King John's Castle which is a National Monument;
- the curtilage of a number of Protected Structures;
- the National Monuments Service-Zone of Notification for Carlingford Town; and

- the Area of Special Archaeological Interest.

- 7.104 It has been concluded that the proposal will not create significant adverse visual or landscape environmental effects.
- 7.105 To the north of the town, this section of proposed greenway along the R173 will be similar in appearance to a roadside footpath and will incorporate minor infrastructural improvements such as directional signage, tensioned wire mesh fencing along the edge, new kerbing and traffic calming measures elements including road cushions, traffic calming gateway and antiskid surfacing.
- 7.106 Existing picnic tables, benches and recycling bins within the parking area along the R173 shall be relocated or replaced to provide amenity facilities at this location.
- 7.107 No bins are proposed along the greenway – both the existing and new reaches of the Carlingford Lough Greenway will continue to operate a ‘leave no trace’ initiative to encourage environmentally aware and sustainable behaviour among users.
- 7.108 To accompany the new pedestrian route; new traffic calming will be installed along the R173 Associated new signage will be installed highlighting the speed limit change and traffic calming to motorists.
- 7.109 In terms of lighting, greenways are generally not illuminated (stated within TII DN-GEO-03047), however due to the interactions with vehicular traffic the proposals for Section I of the Carlingford Lough Greenway will include new street lighting along approximately 635m from King John’s Bridge to Carlingford Marina to provide lighting for the proposed new crossing points and associated traffic calming measures (speed ramps, speed limit reductions and new signage / road markings).
- 7.110 It is considered, noting the location, nature and scale of the proposed development, i.e. a greenway with limited associated infrastructure, that this section of the proposed greenway will not create any significant adverse environmental effects in respect of landscape or visual impacts.

## **Section II**

- 7.111 The route of this section of the greenway will traverse a mixture of environments including Omeath Pier, agricultural lands, coastline areas and areas adjacent the R173. Similar to Section I, it will include limited supporting infrastructure as outlined in the Description of Development section of this report.
- 7.112 No bins are proposed along the greenway – both the existing and new reaches of the Carlingford Lough Greenway will continue to operate a ‘leave no trace’ initiative to encourage environmentally aware and sustainable behaviour among users.
- 7.113 In terms of lighting, it is noted that the existing constructed sections of the Carlingford Lough Greenway (such as Carlingford Marina to Omeath Pier) are currently not illuminated. As mentioned above, greenways are not generally illuminated (stated within TII DN-GEO-03047).

7.114 However, it is noted that the road safety audit has highlighted the need for lighting where the greenway interacts with public roads. To address this aspect, the following is proposed:

- L30541 – existing street lighting column to be utilised; and
- L70541 (locally known as Shore Road) – one new street lighting column to be installed.

7.115 This section of the proposed greenway will be in line with the already constructed sections, such as Omeath Pier to Carlingford Marina, to provide continuity along the greenway and maintain the rural aesthetics.

7.116 It is considered, noting the location, nature and scale of the proposed development, i.e. a greenway with limited associated infrastructure, that this section of the greenway will not create any significant adverse environmental effects in respect of landscape or visual impacts.

## **Traffic and Transport**

### **Sections I and II**

7.117 The overall objective of the proposed sections of greenway is to deliver a fully functional and connected shared cycle and pedestrian path from Newry to Carlingford.

7.118 The proposals will provide an alternative and sustainable mode of transport for cyclists and pedestrians undertaking recreational and/or commuting trips and as such will make a positive contribution with respect to traffic and transport.

7.119 It is noted that a suite of traffic and transport design measures (as identified in the supporting plans and Design and Access Statement) are being implemented to ensure that the greenway can be safely accommodated and that these design measures have been informed through discussions with local community, local stakeholders, LCC and NMDDC officers (including Roads section) and through a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit undertaken by CST Group.

7.120 Access to the route will be via the Trail Heads at the Station House within Carlingford, at Omeath Pier and within the Victoria Lock Car Park & Amenity Site. Vehicular parking and bicycle parking arrangements have already been set out in the Description of Development section of this report.

7.121 The proposed parking locations are considered to be: accessible and convenient; close to the 'Trail Heads'; prominently located; and with sufficient surrounding space so as to be unlikely to cause obstruction to pedestrians or vehicles.

7.122 The proposed cycle racks will enable the bicycle frame and at least one wheel to be locked, catering for different sizes and shapes of bikes – promoting the use of the greenway for both individual cyclists and family groups.

- 7.123 Information boards and signage will be provided at all Trail Head locations and signage for the greenway will be in keeping with the signage for the existing Marina-Omeath greenway and will be in line with the "Traffic Signs Manual".
- 7.124 This application will not seek to be create any new vehicular access onto the road network in compliance with policy TC10 in the Louth County Development Plan (page 224) relating to no new access or intensification of existing access onto Regional Routes.
- 7.125 In terms of construction traffic, the submitted Outline Construction Methodology advises that the Principal Contractor shall prepare and implement a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) outlining procedures to follow and prescribed routes when working on the site.
- 7.126 Access points and construction compounds are proposed along the route and will be closed off. Locations will be assessed for suitability with the aim of avoiding construction phase compounds in close proximity to any watercourses. Lands will be reinstated on completion of the adjacent section of works.
- 7.127 The Principal Contractor shall ensure that Construction Traffic Routeing Signs are erected prior to works commencing, and that these are maintained in good and clean condition throughout the duration of the works.
- 7.128 In light of the above, it is not envisaged that the proposals will result in any significant adverse environmental effects on the environment occurring as a result of traffic and transportation matters.

## **Noise**

### **Sections I and II**

- 7.129 The proposed greenway will traverse a range of environments from the urban realms of Carlingford Town and Omeath Pier to the open countryside and along areas close to the R173 road and the Carlingford Lough. In light of this, there are a number of receptors which experience varying existing noise environments.
- 7.130 As stated previously, both sections of the proposed greenway will come into close proximity with existing residential and commercial property owners, particularly in Carlingford Town, Omeath Village and near Lower Shore Road. To ensure that the project is appropriately designed and sited to address any potential conflict or amenity impacts, the Council has been actively engaging with land and property owners.
- 7.131 Indeed, direct conversations with affected landowners have been undertaken by the Council and a community consultation event was held in Carlingford and Omeath to inform members of the public, local stakeholders and land/property owners of the proposed greenway routes. The event was attended by members of Louth County Council, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and the professional Project Team.
- 7.132 It is noted that the proposed greenway, similar to the existing sections of greenway, will only be operational during the daytime and that users will be discouraged from

accessing the greenway at night. This will help to limit potential noise creation to daytime and typically active hours so as to reduce impacts.

- 7.133 The route has been designed and sited in a manner to ensure that a balance is achieved between providing a high quality greenway route and ensuring that there will be a limited amount of residential receptors in the vicinity of the greenway outside of the urban realms.
- 7.134 Where the route is located nearby/adjacent existing dwellings, particularly Section II, mitigation measures such as an alternate to the proposed post and rail timber boundary fence will be considered. Consultations with individual landowners at detailed design will be carried out to determine their requirements and an alternate screening fence will be installed to help reduce any impacts.
- 7.135 So far as the construction stage is concerned, and noting the nature of the development, it is expected that there will be a limited and temporary increase in noise and vibration levels at construction stage with any disturbance being transient and moving with the construction progress. It is also noted that the Principal Contractor will be required to implement construction noise reduction measures in line with best practice guidelines.
- 7.136 Please refer to the Habitats Directive Appraisal (HDA) Screening report and the Ecological Impact Assessment report, both prepared by RPS, for noise impacts with respect to biodiversity.
- 7.137 On this basis and taking account of the existing and surrounding environment and the nature, size and location of the proposal, as well as the findings in the HAD and the measures outlined in the DAS, we do not consider there to be likely significant adverse effects arising due to noise either during the construction or operational phases.

## **Construction**

### **Sections I and II**

- 7.138 During the construction phase there is potential for effects to arise such as the movement of the stockpiled material, vehicle noise and vibration, traffic disturbance and any dust from site preparation and ground works. Any impact will be limited to the site and the immediate locality and will be short-term and temporary.
- 7.139 The potential impacts have been addressed under their respective subheadings above and it has been demonstrated that no significant adverse environmental effects will be created as a result of the construction stage of the proposed development.

## **Risk of Major Accidents**

### **Sections I and II**

- 7.140 Noting the nature, size and location of the proposed development as well as the proposed design and mitigation measures, it is not considered that the proposal will create a risk of major accidents.

## **Cumulative Impacts**

### **Sections I and II**

- 7.141 Having reviewed the Council's online map viewer, there do not appear to be any other planned or approved large-scale projects located in close proximity to or nearby Section I of the greenway which could result in a cumulative impact which would be significantly adverse on the environment.
- 7.142 With respect to Section II, it is noted that Irish Water was granted planning permission in August of this year for a new wastewater treatment plant, pumping station, connecting pipelines and all associated equipment under planning ref. no. 19/187.
- 7.143 The Case Officer held that Irish Water's proposal would not result in any significant or adverse impact on the Natura 2000 network. In addition, the Case Officer also concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.
- 7.144 A short section of the northern red line boundary of proposed Section II will be located adjacent the southern boundary of this site, which will be defined by paladin fencing and a row of buffer planting.
- 7.145 However, noting the nature, scale and location of the proposed greenway corridor, it is considered that there will be no cumulative impacts which would be significantly adverse on the environment.

## **Transboundary Impacts**

### **Sections I and II**

- 7.146 The proposed Carlingford Lough Greenway, once completed will connect Newry City with Carlingford Town. It is noted that the overall greenway is a transboundary project which aims to enhance transport connectivity and improve social cohesion between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- 7.147 Both Louth County Council (LCC) and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC) have been closely collaborating and engaging with respect to the emerging and proposed sections of greenway. The currently proposed sections of greenway have been informed by both Councils through regular meetings between the respective officers.
- 7.148 Noting the: nature, scale and location of the proposed sections of greenway; the continued and ongoing liaison between LCC and NMDDC; the findings of this report that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment; and the findings of the accompanying Part 8 supporting information, it is considered that the proposals will not lead to the creation of significant adverse transboundary impacts.

## 8. Conclusion

- 8.1 In accordance with Article 120 of the 2001 Regulations, a Preliminary Examination was undertaken and it was considered that there was 'realistic doubt' with regard to the likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, particularly noting its sensitive coastal location. In light of this, it was held that a Screening Determination would be required in accordance with Article 120(1)(ii) of the 2001 Regulations.
- 8.2 This report sets out the necessary information specified in Schedule 7A of the 2001 Regulations for the purposes of a screening determination, in accordance with Article 120(1)(ii) of the same regulations.
- 8.3 Proposed Sections I & II of the greenway are to be delivered as a single package of works, separate from Section III and within the respective project programmes. This report withholds a detailed description of proposed Section III as it is presently at concept stage.
- 8.4 It is considered that this report, along with the findings of the other supporting documents prepared and submitted with the Part 8 applications, demonstrates that the proposed sections of greenway will not have any significant adverse effects on the environment, whether in isolation or cumulatively with other planned projects.
- 8.5 Noting the guiding principles set out within this report with respect to Section III, it is unlikely that this section will lead to the creation of any significant adverse effects on the environment. Once a preferred route has been consulted on and finalised, Section III will be the subject of a separate planning application to NMDDC and this application will be accompanied by a full suite of technical and supporting material, such as an EIA Screening report, Ecological Impact Assessment and Habitats Directive Appraisal.
- 8.6 Noting the nature, scale and location of the proposed sections of greenway, It is considered that they will have an overall positive effect on the environment, particularly noting the below:
- they have been sensitively sited and designed to ensure that the proposals will integrate with the built, cultural and natural heritage and avoid the potential for adverse impacts;
  - they will assist with the NPF place-making policy priority for the Eastern and Midland Region by building on the progress made in developing an integrated network of greenways;
  - they will help to improve the quality of life credentials and attractiveness of this part of County Louth;
  - they will support the diversification of rural and regional economies;
  - they will promote more sustainable forms of travel and activity based recreation;

- they will support the development of rural communities and job creation in the rural economy;
- they will support the protection and promotion of natural assets and biodiversity development ;
- they will offer a unique alternative means for tourists and visitors to access and enjoy rural Ireland;
- they will contribute to the rural recreation and adventure tourism offering in County Louth; and
- they will enhance transport connectivity between Ireland and Northern Ireland and improve social cohesion between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

8.7 Having regard to the following, it is considered that: there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment as a result of the proposed sections of greenway; an EIAR is not required to be prepared; and the authority is not required to inform the Board in writing:

- nature, size and location of the development ;
- the foregoing sections of this report;
- the accompanying Part 8 support material;
- the above-mentioned benefits of the project; and
- the provisions of the relevant Directives, legislation, regulations, guidelines and circulars as set out in Section 2 of this report .

**Turley Office**  
Hamilton House  
3 Joy Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8LE

T 028 9072 3900