

SHANNON – ERNE WATERWAY BLUEWAY TRAIL
LOCK 16 KILLARCAN TO LOCK 9 KILCLARE SECTION
PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Description

Waterways Ireland is the navigation authority for the Shannon-Erne Waterway. Along the banks of the canalised river and canal sections of the Shannon-Erne Waterway, Waterways Ireland owns and maintains a 2m strip on one side and a 7m strip on the opposite side.

At various locations along the Shannon-Erne Waterway walkways and cycle routes have been developed in both the rural and urban environments which have proven to be very popular attractions to the Shannon-Erne Waterway.

Lock 9 Kilclare is approximately 10km by road, northeast of the town of Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim and approximately 5km east of Leitrim Village. Lock 16 at Killarcan is 0.5Km east of Leitrim Village.

Currently a walkway exists between Lock 16 Killarcan, adjacent to Leitrim Village, and Lock 9 Kilclare. The majority of this walkway is along the route of the old towpath and it also crosses a number of local and regional roads. The existing surface is mainly a maintained grassed surface with some short sections of unbound dust surface where poor ground conditions existed.

The proposal is to develop a 4.9km section of Blueway Trail from Lock 16 Killarcan and Lock 9 Kilclare which can cater for walkers and cyclists. This would involve constructing a 4m wide compacted stone unbound dust surface along most of the route and this would narrow at particular locations to suit the local environment. This proposal would also involve a number of road crossing over the local and regional road network.

A new bridge structure would be required at Lock 12 Lisconnor to span the existing Lock to facilitate the passage of users of the recreational trail.

The route of the proposed Blueway will pass through Kilclaremore Td, Kilclarebeg Td, Lisconnor Td, Newbrook Td, Sheffield Td, Ballinwing Td, Tirmactiernan Td, Killarcan Td and Tullylannan Td.

The unbound dust surface will provide vehicular access, for Waterways Ireland approved vehicles only, to carry out various maintenance tasks, e.g. maintaining walkway, cutting grass/hedges, maintaining boundary fencing, carrying out bank repairs, providing better pedestrian access for anglers.

The benefit of the proposal would be the provision of a new facility could be used as an off road cycle trail, therefore creating a recreational trail which has a shared use incorporating both walking and cycling.

Local business and tourist stakeholders in the area such as Electric Bike Trails and Leitrim Village Development Ltd have sought for this walkway to be improved and extended further to enhance the overall tourist potential of the area.

Proposed Structures - Pedestrian/Cycle Bridge at Lock 12 Lisconor

The only new structure is a proposed pedestrian / cycle bridge spanning the lock structure at Lock 12 Lisconor. The structure comprises of a 2.5m wide prefabricated bridge manufactured from steel and clad in timber. The bridge will be positioned as close as possible to the existing masonry arch bridge.

Car Parking and Access Arrangements

There is no proposed additional car parking facilities to be provided. It is envisaged that the existing car parking facilities adjacent to Lock 9 Kilclare, Lock 12 Lisconor, Lock 13 Newbrook and Lock 16 Killarcan which are in the ownership of Waterways Ireland will be sufficient.

Public Lighting

There is no proposal to provide any additional public lighting due to the rural location of the proposed development.

National Policy

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

National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020

The National Cycle Policy Framework (as part of Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009) sets out a national policy for cycling, in order to create a stronger cycling culture, a more friendly environment for cycling and improved quality of life. The vision is that all cities, towns and rural areas will be bicycle friendly. The policy document sets a target of 10% of all trips by bicycle by 2020 and places emphasis on promoting and integrating cycle networks.

Leitrim County Development Plan 2015 – 2021

Leitrim County Council have a number of policies and objectives set out in the Development Plan which support this development.

3.6 Transportation

3.6.1 Sustainable Transportation

The council policies and objectives in relation to Sustainable Transportation are guided

by National Policy document “Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future, (2009)”. This document recognises the vital importance of continued investment in transport to ensure an efficient economy and continued social development, but also promotes more sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. The promotion of initiatives that can reduce congestion, improve local environments and encourage healthier and safer lifestyles are key features of sustainable transportation.

The Council seeks to influence people’s travel behaviour towards more sustainable options and seeks to do so by working closely with relevant organisations in improving public transport facilities and promoting opportunities for alternative transportation such as walking and cycling.

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

Policy 44 It is the policy of the Council to support the National Policy document “Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future, (2009)” and implement, where feasible, guidance provided within the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* or any updated version of the document issued within the lifetime of the Plan.

In accordance with the principles of sustainable development, the basis of the Council’s transportation policies will be to;

3. Encourage walking and cycling as a recreational activity and a healthy exercise.

3.6.3 Walking and Cycling

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

3.10.2 Provision for Recreation and Amenity

The Council is aware that the tourism potential of its amenities has not yet been fully developed and will facilitate, and where necessary become directly involved in, the promotion and development of amenities such as;

3. The work of Waterways Ireland in extending and promoting the Shannon Navigation, Lough Allen and the Shannon-Erne waterway.

Policy 115 It is the policy of the Council to co-operate with representative bodies, such as Comhairle na Tuaithe, the Mountaineering Council of Ireland, Irish Farmers Association, Irish Cattle Farmers Association, Keep Ireland Open, local groups and others, to support the improvement and development of walking routes throughout the County in an environmentally sustainable manner.

The Council supports the strategic objectives, as identified in the Failte Ireland North West, Regional Tourism Development Plan 2008-2010, which are as follows:

1. Strategic Objective 1: Develop Reasons to Visit while Maintaining the environment of the region
2. Strategic Objective 2: Develop Access
3. Strategic Objective 3: Strengthen Soft Adventure Products in an Environmentally Friendly Way
4. Strategic Objective 4: Utilise and Grow the Cultural and Heritage Resources of the Area.

Leitrim Recreational Strategy 2014

One of the key themes of this new Strategy is to develop walking and cycling routes along the Shannon-Erne Waterway.