

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT IN ACCORDANCE WITH  
SECTION 179 3(a) OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT  
ACT 2000 (as amended)**


**Re:**     **Permission for the following:**

Construction of the Limerick Greenway Hub at Newcastle West. The proposed development will include for the provision of a public plaza, space for temporary bike hire facilities, car parking spaces, universal access parking, electric vehicle charging points, coach and mini bus parking facilities, additional public realm elements including benches, bins, bike stands, bike repair station and provision of a new signalized pedestrian and cycle crossing point on Station Road

**At:**     Station Road, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick

**Planning Reference No. 22/8019**

  
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**Darragh Ryan**  
Assistant Planner

  
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**Donogh O' Donoghue**  
Senior Executive Planner

  
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**Nuala O'Connell**  
Senior Planner

  
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**Nuala Gallagher**  
Director of Service

Pursuant to Section 179 3(a) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) this report is submitted to the members of Limerick City & County Council. In accordance with Section 179(4) (b) of the above Act, it is proposed to proceed as indicated in Section 7 of this report.

  
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**Dr. Pat Daly**  
Chief Executive  
Limerick City & County Council

**Date:** 25.11.2027

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## **1.0 Foreword**

This Chief Executive's Report has been prepared pursuant to Section 179 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended), and Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

## **2.0 Description of the nature and extent of the proposed development**

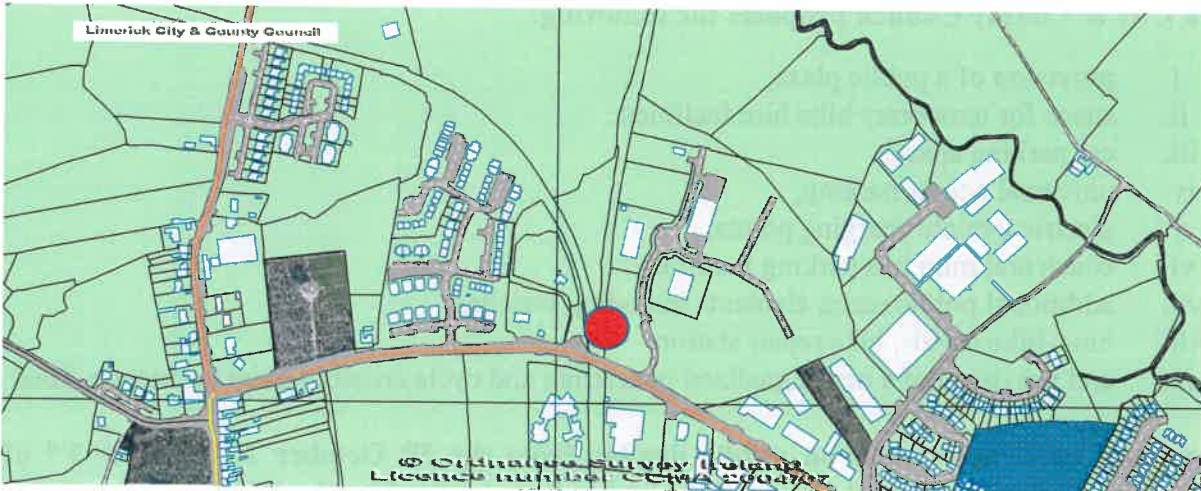
The Limerick Greenway follows the former route taken by the Limerick-Tralee/Fenit railway line, which opened in stages between 1867 and 1887. Most of the route closed between 1975 and 1978 but remains the ownership of CIE (the National Transport Company). In Limerick, approximately 40km of the former route has been developed for off road walking and cycling from Abbeyfeale to Rathkeale. The route passes through the countryside allowing the walker/cyclist the opportunity to stop off in towns and villages along the route including Abbeyfeale, Templeglantine, Newcastle West, Ardagh and Rathkeale. Kerry County Council are also currently working on extending the Greenway in stages to Tralee/Fenit.

**Under this planning application the Applicant, Community, Tourism & Culture Directorate, Limerick City & County Council proposes the following:**

- i. provision of a public plaza,
- ii. space for temporary bike hire facilities,
- iii. car parking spaces,
- iv. universal access parking,
- v. electric vehicle charging points,
- vi. coach and mini bus parking facilities,
- vii. additional public realm elements including benches,
- viii. bins, bike stands, bike repair station
- ix. and provision of a new signalized pedestrian and cycle crossing point on Station Road

**The plans and particulars went on public display from the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022 to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2020. Submissions and observations had to be submitted by the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2022.**

**Site Location:**



### **3.0 Likely implications, if any, with respect to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area**

#### **3.1 Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028**

The key policy provisions are as follows:

##### **Objective CGR O11 Level 2: Key Town Newcastle West**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a. Promote Newcastle West as a key service centre and to promote the sustainable growth of the town to become a self-sufficient settlement and act as a service centre for its inhabitants and rural hinterland. At least 30% of all new homes shall be located within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement, in order to deliver compact growth and reduce unsustainable urban sprawl.
- b. Support and promote the role of Newcastle West as a strategically located urban centre of significant influence in a sub-regional context. In particular, it is an objective to promote the opportunity for interregional collaborations across county boundaries with Abbeyfeale, Listowel and Rathkeale and locations identified in the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary, which offer collective strengths and potential for project partnerships to drive sustainable economic growth in the West Limerick/ North Kerry area;
- c. Support the initiatives of the Atlantic Economic Corridor to realise the full potential of the Newcastle West enterprise assets to support job creation, improve competitiveness, attract investment and create future economic growth;
- d. Support the delivery of the infrastructural requirements identified for Newcastle West subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments;
- e. Support and promote the tourism potential of Newcastle West's historical heritage to facilitate the expansion of the existing tourism offer and to develop connectivity to, and synergies with, Newcastle West and the Great Southern Greenway;
- f. Support the identification of opportunities for investment in incubation and innovation infrastructure for ICT and related companies and capitalise on Newcastle West's ability to accommodate remote working, enterprise start-ups and up-scaling companies.

##### **Objective ECON O48 Limerick Greenways**

It is an objective of the Council to support:

- a. The provision of car parking, bike hire and ancillary facilities at suitable locations along the Limerick Greenway.
- b. Extend the Limerick Greenway from Rathkeale to Adare/Patrickswell.
- c. Extend the greenway from the University of Limerick to Annacotty.
- d. Develop a greenway from the University of Limerick to Montpelier.
- e. Support the development of the Limerick to Scariff/Tuamgraney Greenway in partnership with Waterways Ireland and Clare County Council.
- f. Examine the potential for a greenway from Patrickswell, Bruree to the Limerick/Cork Border (Charleville).
- g. Support the development of a greenway link from Limerick City to connect with the Suir Blueway in Cahir, County Tipperary, in so far as it falls within County Limerick, subject to ecological assessment and design.  
Tourism projects will be required to adhere to adequate environmental and ecological assessment to ensure that they do not cause adverse environmental and ecological effects.

### **Objective ECON O50 Facilities and Amenities incidental to Tourist and Recreational Attractions and Scenic Views**

It is an objective of the Council to consider public facilities and amenities of a type and scale that are incidental to tourist attractions and associated services where they would:

- a. Allow these attractions to be enjoyed and accessed by the public;
- b. Cater for basic needs of the public, incidental to the enjoyment of these attractions;
- c. Help to protect sensitive features through information and by appropriate management;
- d. Be adequately serviced and managed;
- e. Be inclusive to all members of the community. Applications must be accompanied by a management plan and justified by reference to a coherent, evidence-based tourism and recreational strategy applicable to the area. Such development should not impair the capacity of the road network.

### **Objective EH O12 Blue and Green Infrastructure**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a. Promote a network of blue and green infrastructure throughout Limerick.
- b. Promote connecting corridors for the movement of species and encourage the retention and creation of features of biodiversity value, ecological corridors and networks that connect areas of high conservation value such as woodlands, hedgerows, earth banks, watercourses, wetlands and designated sites. In this regard, new infrastructural projects and linear developments in particular, will have to demonstrate at design stage, sufficient measures to assist in the conservation of and dispersal of species. Projects which would be detrimental to existing blue and green infrastructure features will not be permitted.
- c. Ensure the integration and strengthening of green infrastructure into the preparation of Local Area Plans.
- d. Where possible remove barriers to species movement, such as the removal of in-stream barriers to fish passage for example.
- e. Seek to advance the use of an ecosystem services approach and ecosystem services valuation as a decision-making tool in plans and projects, subject to appropriate ecological assessment

### **Policy TR P3 Integration of Land Use and Transport Policies**

It is a policy of the Council to support and facilitate the integration of land use and transportation policies ensuring the delivery of sustainable compact settlements served by sustainable modes of transport

### **Objective TR O4 Universal Design**

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that all transport schemes incorporate high-quality urban realm design that is attractive, safe, comfortable and accessible for all individuals.

### **Objective TR O8 Walking and Cycling Infrastructure**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a. Improve and provide clear, safe and direct pedestrian linkages, cycle networks, including the greenways and primary segregated cycle routes, between the employment zones, shopping areas and residential areas throughout Limerick;
- b. Maintain and expand the pedestrian route network, infrastructure and where possible, retrofit cycle and pedestrian routes into the existing urban road network, to provide for accessible safe pedestrian routes within Limerick

### **Objective TR O9 Limerick Cycle Network**

It is an objective of the Council to implement in full, the Cycle Network, which will be set out in the final LSMATS, with priority given in the short term to delivering the primary cycle network and cycle routes serving schools.

### **3.2 Newcastle West Local Area Plan 2014-2020 (as extended)**

The Newcastle West Local Area Plan sets out the following in relation to the site:

- Land Use Zoning Map – The site is zoned “Open Space and Recreation”.

The key policy provisions are as follows:

#### **Objective C1: Community and Civic Facilities.**

It is the objective of the Council to seek where practicable and appropriate, that community facilities are located within the town, in the interest of sustainable development. The proposal should demonstrate that the principles of accessibility for all and Ireland’s Age-friendly Cities and counties Programme’ were incorporated.

Overall the proposed works are consistent with the policy objectives of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Newcastle West LAP 2014-2022 (as extended). The proposed works will enhance the attractiveness of the existing Limerick Greenway for the benefit of all users.

### **3.3 Habitats Directive Project Screening Assessment:**

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report was submitted as part of this application prepared by Rory Dalton, Fehily Timoney Planning & Environmental Consultants. The report concludes *‘that there are not likely to be significant effects from the proposed development on the three Natura sites identified for consideration (or any other European site), either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.’* Overall the Planning Authority is satisfied that the development as proposed should not exercise a significant effect on the conservation status of any SAC or SPA and therefore an Appropriate Assessment is not necessary.

### **3.4 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening**

An EIAR screening report was undertaken for the proposed development by Fehily Timoney Planning & Environmental Consultants. The development does not fall within any of the threshold requirements for a mandatory EIA as specified in Section 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). The size of the development is limited, located within a modified environment, the development as proposed does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

### **3.5 Ecological Appraisal Report**

An Ecological Appraisal Report was submitted as part of this application prepared by Rory Dalton, Fehily Timoney Planning & Environmental Consultants. Details of locally important flora and fauna

and works to be undertaken to protect the local habitats have been indicated, including hedgerow and tree retention.

#### 4.0 Submissions with respect to the proposed development

A total of 4 no. written submissions/observations was received and are listed below:

Submission Ref.	Submitted By
1	Grainne O Keefe
2	Transport Infrastructure Ireland – Regulatory and Administration Unit
3	Mid West Road Design Office (MWRDO)
4	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

#### 4.1 Submissions:

##### **SUB (1) Grainne O’Keeffe**

###### **Submission Summary:**

1. Toucan Crossing is welcome
2. Please consider retaining the greenway route on the original rail track bed as this forms part of the local rail heritage. The V-SHAPE of the rail track that appears on the site location plan is a unique feature of this railway station.
3. Link Greenway to public Bus Stops. The use of this service could be encouraged by signposting a safe cycle/walkway between the Greenway and the existing bus stops on the N21
4. Can charging stations for electric bicycles and mobility scooters also be included?
5. Can a public toilet be included in the proposals?

###### **Community, Tourism & Culture Directorate Response**

1. Noted.
2. The site has been designed to deliver a safe and functional car park. Patrons of the Greenway, both those parking at the site and entering from the various trailheads by bicycle or foot will be able to do so in a safe manner based on the design. There will be demarcation of the rail line on the car park surfacing where it is possible to do so.
3. Directional and information signage forms part of this project along with other tourism projects being undertaken by LCCC.
4. LCCC are currently examining suitable charging stations for electric bicycles for the site.
5. Temporary public toilets will be located on the site. Plans for further development of the site include public toilets.

###### **Planning Authority Response**

Noted

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##### **SUB (2) Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)**

###### **Submission Summary:**

1. Transport Infrastructure Ireland has no specific observations in relation to the planning referral for this Part VIII for the Limerick Greenway Hub at Newcastle West.



**Community, Tourism & Culture Directorate Response**

Noted

**Planning Authority Response**

Noted

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**SUB (3) Mid West Road Design Office (MWRDO)**

**Submission Summary:**

1. No comments to make on the proposed Part VIII application for the Limerick Greenway Hub at Newcastle West Car Park with respect to the N21 Newcastle West Road Scheme.

**Community, Tourism & Culture Directorate Response**

1. Noted

**Planning Authority Response**

Noted

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**SUB (4) Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage**

**Submission Summary:**

1. No specific comment to make

**Community, Tourism & Culture Directorate Response**

1. Noted

**Planning Authority Response**

Noted

## 5.0 Summary of key planning issues

The proposed development is located within the town of Newcastle West. The site is zoned 'Open Space & Recreation' in the Newcastle West Local Area Plan. Under Planning Ref 20/8005 a Part 8 application for the provision of a car park comprising of 50 car parking spaces was permitted. The proposed development is for a revised layout from that originally permitted under plan ref 20/8005. The current proposal includes

- A public plaza located to the front of the site and is to offer a welcoming entrance plaza for the development.
- Car parking is to be provided as per previous permission with the addition of universal access parking and EV parking. Coach and mini bus parking facilities are also to be provided.
- To the rear of the site a temporary bike hire depot is to be provided. Bins, bike stands, bike repair stations are all to be offered throughout the scheme.

- A new signalized and cycle crossing point on Station Road is to be provided.
- A full revised landscaping plan for the entire scheme has been provided.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

It is considered that the proposed development is in accordance with the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028, the Newcastle West LAP 2014-2020 (as extended) and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle and shall be carried out in accordance with the actions for the Local Authority hereby attached.

## **7.0 Action taken by Local Authority**

1. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application on the 5/10/2022 except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following actions.

Reason - In order to clarify the development to which this permission applies.

2. During construction of the proposed development, the following shall apply:

- a. No work shall take place on site outside the hours of 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. Monday to Friday and 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Saturday, or on Sundays or public holidays, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.
- b. No surface water run-off shall be discharged onto public roads, foul sewers or adjacent property.
- c. Adequate car parking facilities shall be provided on site for all workers and visitors.

Reason – To protect the residential amenities of the area in the interest of proper planning and sustainable development

3. The wheels and underside of all construction traffic leaving the site shall be cleaned, as required, to prevent soiling of public roads. A wheel washing facility, including water jets or other approved cleansing method shall be provided close to the site exit. In the event that any public roads become soiled by construction traffic from the site, these roads shall be cleaned immediately.

Reason - In the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, road safety and to protect the amenity of the area

4. A Construction and Environmental Management Plan shall be prepared prior to commencement of development. This plan shall provide details of intended construction practice for the development, including surface water management, noise/vibration, traffic management, tree protection measures and off-site disposal of construction/demolition waste. The plan shall outline clearly the location of the bring bank service currently located at the entrance to the Civic Amenity Site.

Reason - In the interests of public safety and residential amenity.