

Memo

To: Pat Daly, Chief Executive

From: Vincent Murray, Director of Planning Environment and Place-Making

Date: 19/01/2024

Re: Part 8 proposal, Reference 23/8015- Permission for the construction of a services building at the Limerick Greenway Hub @ Newcastle West for commercial, community and tourism use. The building will include bike hire, coffee dock, toilets, store and services. Works to include all site development works for the building including utilities, landscaping and public realm around the building.

Dear Chief Executive,

Please find attached for your consideration report prepared in accordance with Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in respect of the proposed Part 8 for the construction of a services building at the Limerick Greenway Hub at Newcastle West for commercial, community and tourism use. The building will include bike hire, coffee dock, toilets, store and services. Works to include all site development works for the building including utilities, landscaping and public realm around the building.

The proposal prepared by the Economic Development, Enterprise and Tourism Directorate has been evaluated taking into consideration all submissions received. It is concluded that the proposed development is in accordance with the objectives of the Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028, the Newcastle West Local Area Plan 2023-2029 and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

It is recommended that the proposed development be recommended to the Elected Members of Limerick City & County Council for their approval.

Signed: Mary O'Malley
Mary O'Malley, Executive Planner

Signed: Donogh O'Donoghue, Senior Executive Planner

Signed: Vincent Murray
Vincent Murray, Director of Services, Planning, Environment & Place Making

**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 a services building at the Limerick Greenway Hub at Newcastle West for commercial, community and tourism use. The building will include bike hire, coffee dock, toilets, store and services. Works to include all site development works for the building including utilities, landscaping and public realm around the building.

At: Station Road, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick

Planning Reference No. 23/8015

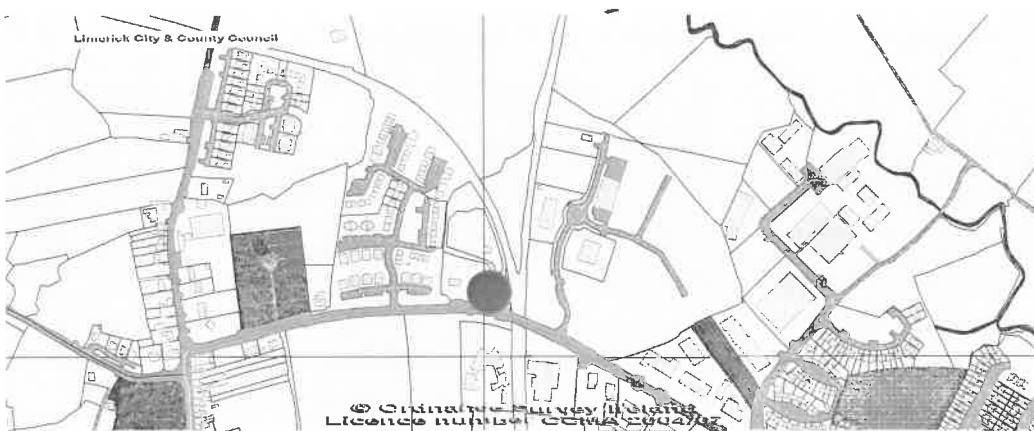
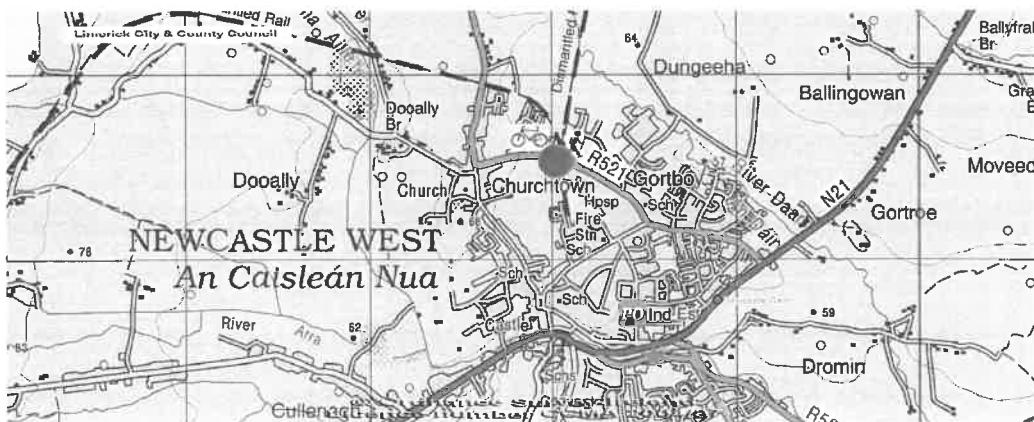
1.0 Foreword

This Chief Executive's Report and Recommendation 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 proposed greenway enhancement development is located on the outskirts of Newcastle West on the confluence of the eastbound and westbound lines from Newcastle West Station on the Southern Railway's Limerick to Tralee line. This location will provide greenway users starting their journey at Newcastle West with the choice of travelling east towards Ardagh and Rathkeale or west towards Templeglantine and Abbeyfeale. The current proposal is a continuation of the previously approved Part 8 development of a carpark, Ref No. 22/8019. It includes the construction of a services building for commercial, community and tourism use. The building will include bike hire, coffee dock, toilets, store and services. Works to include all site development works for the building including utilities, landscaping and public realm around the building.

2.1 Site Location:



2.2 Public Consultation:

The plans and particulars were placed on public display from the 10th November 2023 until the 7th of December 2023. Submissions and observations were invited up to the 21st December 2023.

3.0 Submissions with respect to the proposed development

A total of - no. 5 written submissions/observations was received and are listed below:

No.	Name
1	Leo Dillon via MyPoint
2	Grainne O'Keeffe via MyPoint
3	Liam O'Mahony via email
4	Uisce Eireann via email.
5	Transport Infrastructure Ireland via email

Submission No. 1 Leo Dillon

Submission Summary:

Submission received from Leo Dillon via My Point Portal welcomed the proposal with a number of suggestions namely to develop a better link to the town centre from Bishops Court. He also suggested that the hub be more centrally located in the town and adjacent to bus routes.

Chief Executive's Response:

Points raised are noted and will be considered further.

Submission No. 2 Grainne O'Keeffe

Submission Summary:

Submission received from Grainne O'Keeffe via MyPoint with a number of comments and suggestions. These are summarised below.

1 – Can a sheltered area be included for people to congregate and shelter from the elements?

Chief Executive's Response:

A canopy shelter has been included as part of the building, but the suggestion is noted and will be considered further.

2 – Can the building be futureproofed for future cycle related uses, by the inclusion of additional floor space?

Chief Executive's Response:

Noted.

3 – Can options for a future pump track and skills area be considered?

Chief Executive's Response:

Noted.

Submission No. 3 Liam O'Mahony

Submission Summary

Submission received from Liam O'Mahony via email. Welcomed the development of the Hub as it would be beneficial to the town. Also suggested, the commissioning of a railway model of the original station and providing an audio-visual area within the building where cine films of the railway station can be displayed to maintain heritage.

Chief Executive's Response:

Noted and will be considered further

Submission No 4. Uisce Eireann

Submission Summary

Submission received from Uisce Eireann via email. Uisce Eireann have no objection to the proposed development subject to conditions.

Chief Executive's Response:

Points Noted. All items conditioned will be adhered to, and all permissions and works will be carried out, designed and constructed in accordance with all relevant Uisce Eireann Guidelines and Best Practice.

Submission No 5. TII

Submission Summary

Transport Infrastructure Ireland has no specific observations to make.

Chief Executive's Response:

Noted.

4.0 Habitats Directive Project Screening Assessment

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report was submitted as part of this application prepared by Rory Dalton, Ecologist. 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.

5.0 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

An EIAR screening report was undertaken for the proposed development by Fehily Timoney Environmental Consultants. The development does not individually or cumulatively 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 report identifies slight visual impacts as a result of the proposed development but these are not considered significant type. The proposed design has been selected to minimize loss of the most valuable portion of the habitat at the northern end of the site. Due to the scale of the development any habitat loss is not considered to have a significant impact. The report concludes that sub-threshold EIA is not required for the subject remediation works due to the projects limited impact on the receiving environment. The size of the development is limited and located within a modified environment. Overall having reviewed the EIAR screening report and considered other additional information the Executive is satisfied that the proposal as outlined does not require a sub threshold Environmental Impact Assessment Report

6.0 Ecological Appraisal Report

An Ecological Appraisal Report was submitted as part of this application prepared by Rory Dalton, Ecologist. 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.

7.0 Key Policy Provisions

7.1 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/Patrickwell.
- 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.

7.2

Newcastle West Local Area Plan 2014-2020

The site is zoned Tourism Related Development. The objective of this zoning is to provide for tourist facilities, which would improve the tourism opportunities associated with the Limerick Greenway and its connection to the town. Purpose: To recognise the tourism potential of the Newcastle West Greenway and it's physical connection with the town and architectural and cultural heritage.

Tourism and Heritage Strategy will:

- Focus on the expansion of the tourism sector within town centre through the development and enhancement of amenity areas, such as the Demesne, the River Arra walkway and Desmond Castle and build on the linkage to the Limerick Greenway through enhancement of the walking and cycling amenity routes to the town centre.
- Support and build community and business capacity to invest in and optimise outcomes from recreation, environment, food, heritage and cultural development to generate Draft Newcastle West Local Area Plan 2023 - 2029 40 jobs for residents, revenues for businesses and income through increased visitor numbers.
- Focus on enhanced public realm. Public realm supports public interaction, contributes to place making and has the capacity to transform towns into high-quality places to live, visit and invest - encouraging day and evening economies.

- Implement the Streetscape Enhancement Initiative. The initiative is a key part of Our Rural Future and will make rural towns and villages in County Limerick and across the country more vibrant and attractive places to live, work and visit.

Objectives CIO4 Walkways, Cycleways and the Limerick Greenway:

It is an objective of the Council to: (a) Encourage walking and cycling as more convenient, popular and safe methods of movement in Newcastle West, and facilitate the provision of an attractive and coherent network of off-road footpaths Draft Newcastle West Local Area Plan 2023 - 2029 63 and cycle facilities. This will be achieved by:

- Providing a safer connection between the Limerick Greenway and the town centre.
- Development of a greenway hub in Newcastle West.
- Providing secure cycle parking infrastructure at appropriate locations as opportunities arise.
- (b) Support of development of the Limerick Greenway, ancillary facilities, connectivity between the Greenway and the town centre and connectivity to the heritage and cultural assets of the town.
- (c) Continue to facilitate the development of walkways as indicated on the Amenity Map (Appendix 1, Map 3) in co-operation with local interested parties including the private, voluntary and public sector. Any proposed development adjacent to such walkways must incorporate connecting pathways into the designated walkway in their design. Developments shall be designed to ensure that properties over look proposed walkways.
- (d) Proposals for new Walkways/Cycleways, Greenways and Blueways will be subject to appropriate environmental assessments. Any development which would have adverse effect on the integrity of European sites or cause a net loss of bio-diversity will not be permitted.

Objective TO1 – Tourism:

It is the objective of the Council to:

- (a) Support growth in the tourism sector in Newcastle West ensuring that the economic and societal benefits of tourism are effectively distributed throughout the town by making vital connections between complementary sites and attractions, and ensuring visitors can avail of Newcastle West's services attracting visitors from the Greenway into the town centre, and enabling them to do so with ease.
- (b) Support the provision of a range of tourist accommodation types and infrastructure including, hostel accommodation, campervan/caravans sites, subject to them being located on suitably zoned lands.
- (c) Support Newcastle West's role in the Limerick Tourism Development Strategy 2019 - 2023 and any subsequent replacement document.
- (d) Require tourism projects to adhere to appropriate environmental and ecological assessment and to mitigate any adverse environmental, biodiversity and ecological impacts.
- (e) Support community engagement in the development of tourism and amenity projects in the town. (f) Seek to improve public realm opportunities, to make available spaces to facilitate the tradition of festivals in the town.
- (g) Support development of the Limerick Greenway, ancillary facilities, connectivity between the Greenway and the town centre, Newcastle West as a Greenway hub, with enhanced accessibility to the heritage and cultural assets of the town.
- (h) Require new tourist projects to be located within the town to foster synergy with the services and retail business located in the town.
- (i) Facilitate Tourism development opportunities in Newcastle West in accordance with the Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028 as they apply to Newcastle West. All development proposals comply with the Development Management Standards of the Limerick Development Plan 2022 - 2028. (j) Develop Newcastle West as 'Destination Town' and to

seek funding to realise this objective in accordance with Fáilte Ireland's Destination Town Guidelines.

Objective SMT02 - Supporting Modal Split:

It is an objective of the council to:

- a) Encourage, promote and facilitate a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport in Newcastle West, including the Limerick Greenway. Draft Newcastle West Local Area Plan 2023 - 2029
- b) Support and facilitate implementation of an integrated, multi-modal and accessible public transport network for Newcastle West and its hinterland.

Objective SMT03 - Walking and Cycling:

It is an objective of the council to:

- (a) Enhance the walking and cycling networks through the town within the lifetime of the Plan and seek to improve direct pedestrian linkages, cycle networks and infrastructure throughout the town Draft Newcastle West Local Area Plan 2023 - 2029 77 and improve connectivity to the town centre and existing services.
- (b) Incorporate Sustainable Travel measures in all new developments in the town.
- (c) Support the progression of enhancing connectivity between the Limerick Greenway and the town centre by safe walkway/cycleway route, subject to the necessary environmental assessments.
- (d) To develop a pedestrian and cycle route between the Greenway to the Demense and improve the linkage to the town centre.
- (e) Facilitate school zone measures, including slow zones around the schools, and promote/facilitate active travel options for students to reduce the health and safety risks associated with traffic congestion, pollution and inactive lifestyles.

8.0 Appraisal

The proposed development is located within the town of Newcastle West. The site is zoned 'Tourism Related Development' in the Newcastle West Local Area Plan. Under Planning Ref 22/8019 a Part 8 application for the provision of a public plaza, temporary bike hire facilities and car /bus parking was permitted. The current proposal includes the construction of a services building for commercial, community and tourism use. The building will include bike hire, coffee dock, toilets, store and services. This project will enhance the town of Newcastle West and improve the tourism offering in the area and compliment the Greenway amenity.

A detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to include a traffic management plan, which will take account of the site location, access issues, hydrocarbons, earth works, run-offs and location of services, will be prepared before any development is carried out and will include input from the design team, all specialist consultants and Limerick City & County Council.

The proposal as set out is considered to be in compliance with the objectives of the Limerick Development Plan, 2022-2028, the Newcastle West Local Area Plan 2023-2029 and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

9.0 Conclusion

Having regard to the foregoing evaluation and the reasons and considerations as set out, the Chief Executive is satisfied that the proposal is in accordance with the objectives of the Limerick Development Plan, 2022-2028, the Newcastle West LAP 2023-2029 and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Pursuant to Section 179 3(a) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) this the proposed development is recommended to the Elected Members of Limerick City & County Council for their approval.

P. Daly.

Dr. Pat Daly

Chief Executive,

Limerick City & County Council

Date: 14.1.2024