

Galway City Council

Bearna to Galway City Centre Greenway

Project Review

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1. Introduction

Galway City Council appointed WS Atkins in 2014 as technical consultants for the development of a Greenway project between Bearna and Galway City Centre (herein referred to as 'the Bearna Greenway'). Work undertaken included the identification of a preferred route and the development of a preliminary design for the scheme. This work was completed in 2017.

Subsequent to the completion of this work, there have been several changes to policy, design standards and assessment guidelines which may influence the outcomes of the work previously undertaken.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- The inclusion of the Galway Transport Strategy in the Galway City Development Plan;
- New guidelines from the Department of Transport from the Common Appraisal Framework for Transport Projects and Programmes on the appraisal of schemes;
- Changes to the Environmental Assessment processes;
- New national policy in relation to active travel and climate action; and
- The utilisation of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) / permissive access for active travel schemes.

Arup have been appointed by Galway City Council to provide a high level review the work undertaken to date and to understand if the work previously undertaken is materially impacted by the above.

2. Transport planning policy, standards and guidelines

The following section outlines key national and local transport policies and plans which have been considered as part of this review.

2.1 National policy

2.1.1 Climate Action Plan

The Climate Action Plan sets out an ambitious goal in delivering a 51% reduction in transport emissions by 2030. It states that

“Improved planning and radical redesign are required to shift our built environment from being “vehicle centred” to being “people centred”.

Promoting active travel, including improving and expanding the greenway network are identified as elements of the Climate Action Plan. Below are key actions set out in the Climate Action Plan, relevant to the project:

- Continue the improvement and expansion of the Active Travel and Greenway Network
- Development of a coherent and connected National Cycle Network Strategy
- Construct an additional 1,000km of cycling and walking infrastructure
- Encourage an increased level of modal shift towards Active Travel (walking and cycling) and away from private car use

2.1.2 National Cycle Network

Public consultation for the National Cycle Network (NCN) was undertaken in May and June 2022. The NCN has been designed to integrate with and complement other cycle infrastructure and networks – both existing and planned – to provide a comprehensive series of networks across Ireland.

“The National Cycle Network (NCN) aims to link towns, cities and destinations across Ireland with a safe, connected and inviting cycle network; encouraging more people away from their cars and onto their bicycles.”

The proposed network is presented in Figure 1. While the network is presented at a relatively high-level representation, it is noted that an east-west Greenway, along the coast from An Spidéal to Oranmore, has not been included. It is understood that a submission has been made by Galway City Council regarding this omission.

Interactive Map - Click the boxes in the key to see them on the map

Press 'Esc' key to exit full screen



- Proposed National Cycle Network (NCN)
- Existing Cycle Infrastructure
- TII Proposed Greenways
- Proposed NI Greenway Network
- EuroVelo 1*
- EuroVelo 2*
- All Proposed Networks
- Settlements over 1k population on the NCN

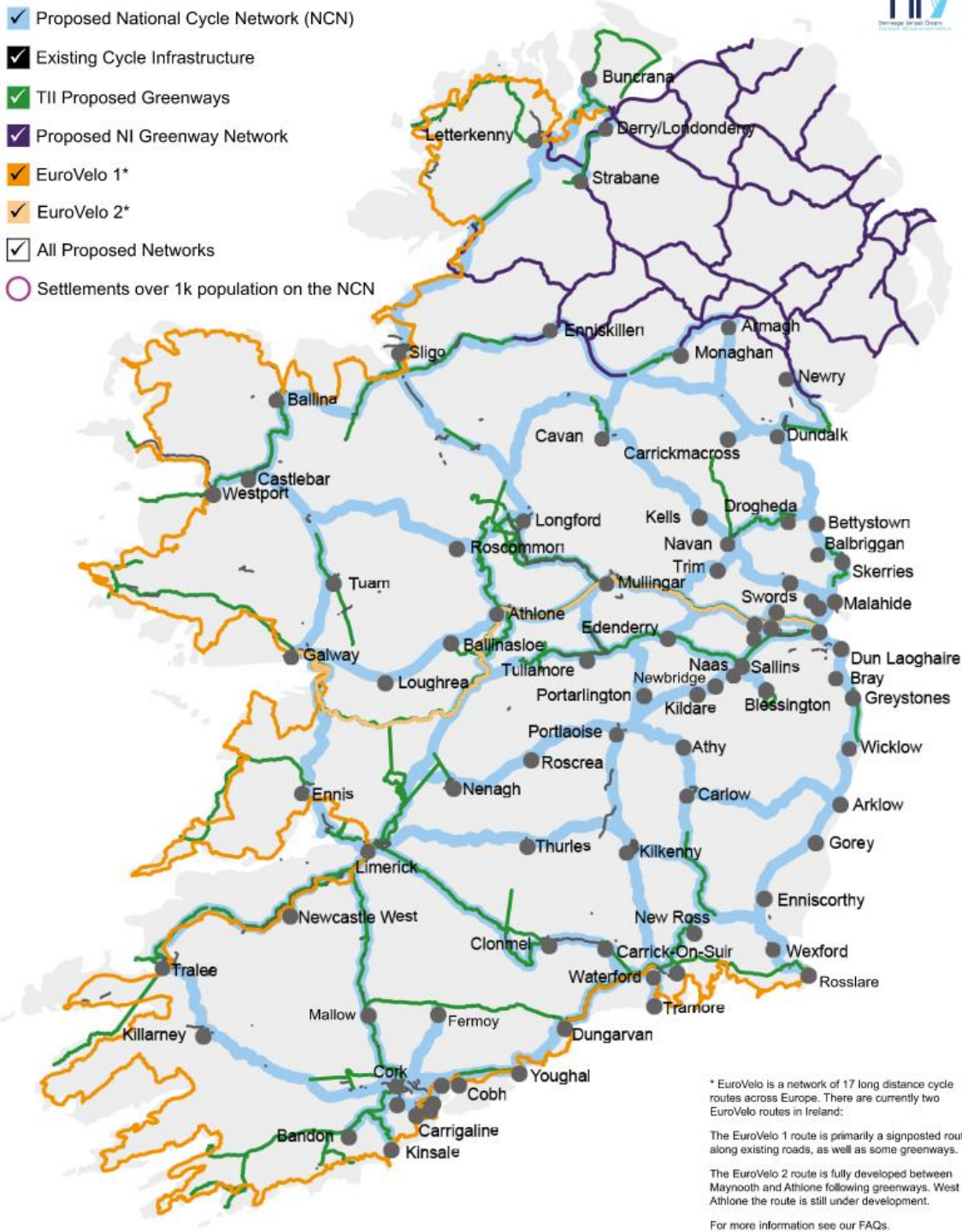


Figure 1 National Cycle Network Plan

2.1.3 National Sustainable Mobility Policy

The National Sustainable Mobility Policy is tied to the Climate Action Plan, with a target of reducing transport emissions by 51% by 2030 set.

The Purpose of the Policy is as follows:

“To set out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland’s overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions by the end of this decade.”

The Targets of the Policy are as follows:

“To deliver at least 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys and a 10% reduction in kilometres driven by fossil fuelled cars by 2030 in line with metrics for transport set out in the Climate Action Plan 2021.”

Of particular relevance to this project are:

- *Goal 3 - Expand availability of sustainable mobility in metropolitan areas*

Goal 3 aims to expand the capacity and availability of sustainable mobility in our five cities (Cork, Dublin, Galway, Limerick and Waterford). This will be done through improved walking, cycling, bus and rail infrastructure, improved transport interchange and expanded public transport services. Transformed active travel and bus infrastructure and services in all five cities is fundamental to achieving the targets of 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys and a 10% reduction in kilometres driven by fossil fuelled cars by 2030.

- *Goal 4 - Expand availability of sustainable mobility in regional and rural areas*

Goal 4 aims to expand the capacity and availability of sustainable mobility in a regional and rural context. This will be done through the delivery of improved active travel infrastructure, expansion of regional bus and rail services and local bus networks, and improved connectivity between different transport modes.

2.2 Local policy

2.2.1 Galway Transport Strategy

The Galway Transport Strategy (GTS), which forms part of the Galway City Development Plan (2017-2023) sets out the proposed cycle network for Galway City (see Figure 2). An east-west ‘Greenway Corridor’ which would connect Bearna and Galway City Centre is identified at a high-level in the GTS. The route is described as follows.

“The primary network includes two Greenways providing connectivity for cyclists from nearby towns and villages; one along the western bank of the River Corrib from Galway City to Oughterard, Maigh Culinn; and one along the coast from An Spidéal to Oranmore, passing through Galway City. The latter will continue east, connecting the Dublin – Galway Cycleway.”

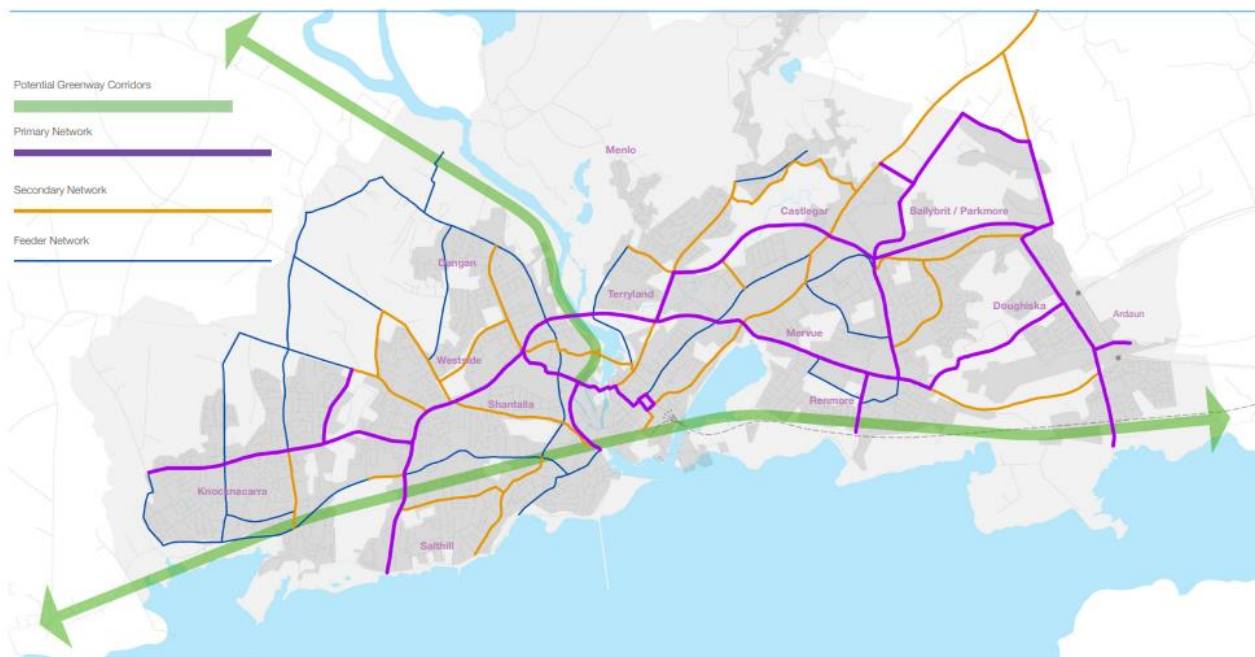


Figure 2 GTS Proposed Cycle Network

As the route for this greenway was not prescriptive in the GTS (i.e. only a start and end point identified), the selection of the route for the scheme would be subject to a detailed routes options assessment which considers the key constraints within the study area.

2.2.2 Bearna Local Area Plan (LAP) (2007 – 2017)

The Bearna LAP identifies the lack of adequate road infrastructure for public transport and cyclists and is supportive of the future development of cycling and walking infrastructure. No detailed plans or particular walking and cycling schemes are, however, set out in the LAP.

“...a shortage of adequate public transport services, including regular bus services and safe walking and cycling routes.”

“The Roads and Transportation Strategy for Bearna is to ensure the provision of a safe and convenient movement network that: caters for the future orderly and sustainable expansion of Bearna village and surrounds..... incorporates adequate traffic management measures; will guide future development in the Plan Area along an appropriate internal circulation network for vehicular, pedestrian and cycling movement; and that will facilitate appropriate public transportation to and from the village.”

2.3 Cycle design standards

The two main guidance documents for the design of cycling infrastructure are described below.

2.3.1 National Cycle Manual (NTA)

The National Cycle Manual (NCM) provides guidance on the design of cycling infrastructure and facilities. A review of the NCM is currently underway with an updated NCM expected to be published in the coming months.

Given the updated NCM is likely to be published prior to the submission of any planning application associated with the Bearna Greenway, it would be expected that the design of the scheme would be compliant with it.

It is noted that the existing NCM states that *“shared facilities should be avoided in urban areas as far as possible.”*

2.3.2 Rural Cycleway Design (TII)

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) have also published guidance on the design of rural greenways. This guidance is mainly applicable to routes through rural areas which provide regional connectivity (as opposed to connecting more urban areas). They are typically seen as a recreational facility, with TII defining a **Greenway** as *“a cycleway that caters for pedestrian and cyclists in a recreational environment”*.

It is noted that the guidance states that *“with very popular facilities the potential for conflict between pedestrians and cyclists should be minimised through the introduction of segregation between these users”*.

2.4 Assessment guidelines

2.4.1 Common Appraisal Framework

The Common Appraisal Framework for Transport Projects and Programmes was first issued in March 2016, with its latest revision in October 2021. It sets out the steps to be followed in the appraisal of transport projects and programmes for which the Department of Transport are funding through its agencies (i.e. TII or the NTA).

The purpose of this document is to develop a common framework for the appraisal of transport investments that is consistent with the Public Spending Code (PSC), this ensuring that robust and comparable business cases for schemes can be submitted. An overview of the framework is presented in Figure 3.

Common Appraisal Framework Overview

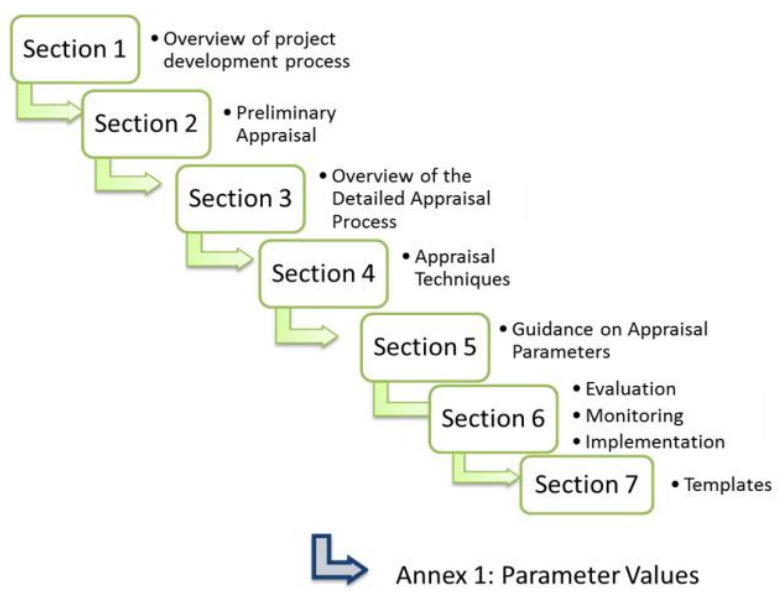


Figure 3 Common Appraisal Framework Overview

Section 4 ‘Appraisal techniques’ sets out the various methods which can be used. For projects such as this, a Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA) is required, with the criteria listed in Table 1 to be utilised.

“The Public Spending Code determines that Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) should be carried out at a minimum for projects between €5 million and €20 million.....it can provide a useful framework to evaluate different transport options with several criteria.”

Table 1 Project Appraisal Criteria

Economy	The impacts of a transport investment on economic growth and competitiveness are assessed under the economic impact and economic efficiency criteria.
Safety	Safety is concerned with the impact of the investment on the number of transport related accidents.
Integration	Integration considers the extent to which the project being evaluated promotes integration of transport networks and is compatible with Government policies, including national spatial and planning policy.
Environment	Environment embraces a range of impacts, such as emissions to air, noise, and ecological and architectural impacts.
Accessibility and Social Inclusion	Accessibility and social inclusion embraces the notion that some priority should be given to benefits that accrue to those suffering from social deprivation, geographic isolation and mobility and sensory deprivation.
Physical Activity (where applicable)	This relates to the health benefits derived from using different transport modes

On the basis of the above, any options appraisal / assessment for transport options considered for the Bearna Greenway would be expected to include a MCA process which considers the criteria listed in Table 1.

3. Review of previous work

A high level review of the following reports and drawings has been undertaken as part of this review:

- Constraints Report (August 2014)
- Draft Route Options Report (September 2014)
- Preliminary Design Report (July 2017) & Preferred Route Drawings (July 2017)

A brief summary of these reports is provided in the following sections. Observations are also provided in relation to the suitability of the work undertaken in the context of new policy and assessment guidelines (as described Section 2).

3.1 Constraints Report

The Constraints Report outlines the main engineering, environmental, and land ownership issues arising based on the study area of the scheme.

The aims and objectives of the Constraints Report were:

- *To consider the context of the scheme in terms of Local, Regional and National Planning Policy.*
- *To identify the main engineering, environmental and land ownership constraints.*
- *To summarise stakeholder consultation undertaken to date.*

A summary of the work undertaken and key findings are listed in Table 2.

Table 2 Summary of constraints study

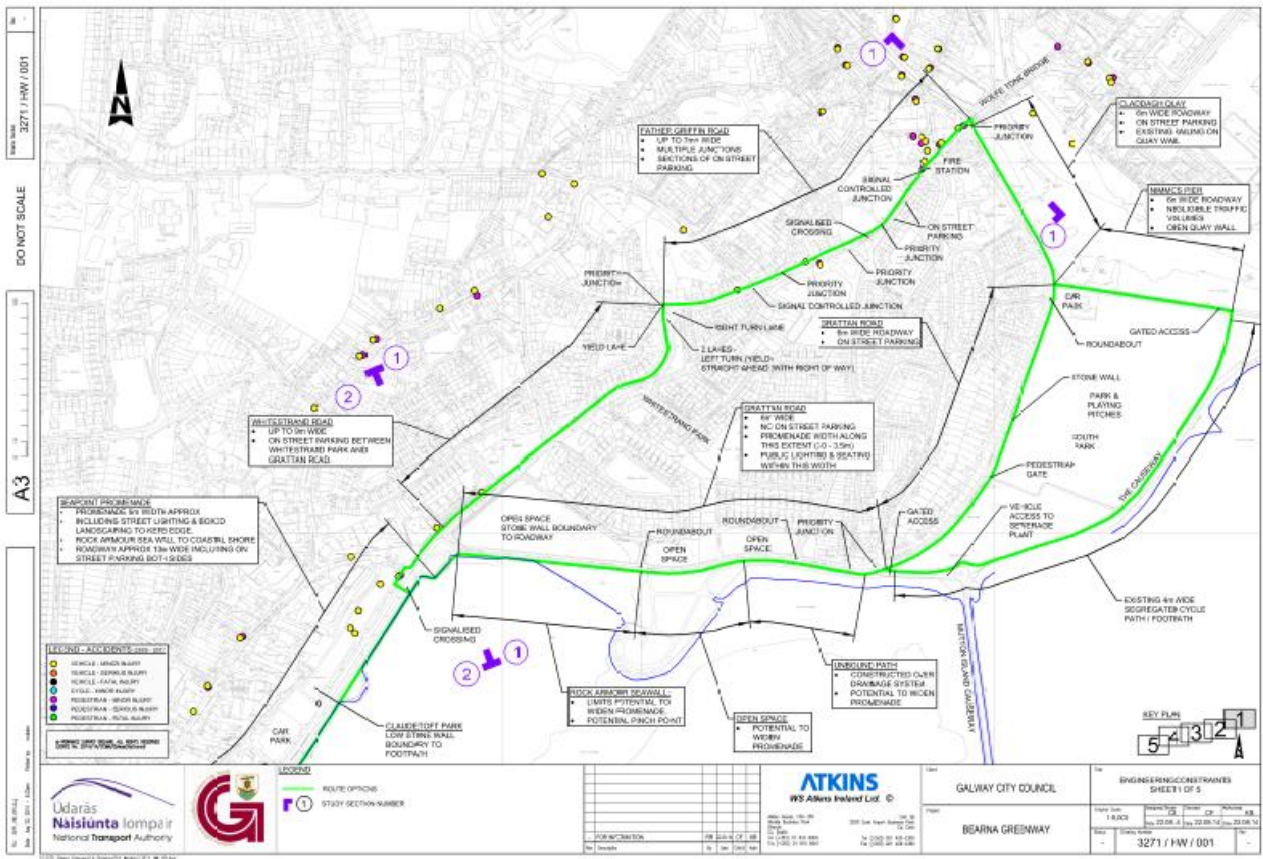
Constraint	Summary of work undertaken
Engineering	<p>The engineering constraints maps show widths of existing roadways along the proposed route, allowing for an image of areas where it is feasible / not feasible to widen etc. It also shows significant areas of interest along the scheme, such as: on-street parking, priority junctions, roundabouts, signalised crossings etc.</p> <p>It identifies areas of engineering interest such as the Quay Walls, rock armour sea wall etc, and where these might be potential pinch points along the areas chosen for route selection.</p> <p>In terms of traffic, it also discusses traffic volumes and road accident data.</p>
Environmental	<p>The environmental constraints maps highlight the sub soils in the study area along with proposed national heritage areas, special areas of conservation and special protection areas. The majority of the bay (sections 1-4) is a national heritage area and a special conservation area.</p> <p>The maps also show recorded site monuments and protected structures, protected views and national inventory of architectural heritage.</p>
Land Ownership	<p>The landowner maps highlight the areas in which the route will traverse through privately owned lands which are requiring topographical survey, and other relevant land owner folios. The maps also contain whether applications are pending for these folios and additional information such as whether these folios are associated with seaweed rights, fishing rights etc. for example there are 32 No folios along this coastline with associated seaweed rights.</p>

A key observation from the review of this report is the limited extents of the study area (see Figure 4). On the basis that the scheme was to be a greenway between Bearna and Galway City Centre, it would be expected that a wider study area would have been established to allow for consideration of alternative routes (i.e. those which do not route through Salthill). This study area was also utilised for the Route Options Report.

It is important to note that the GTS identifies a Greenway Corridor which would require consideration of alternative routes at an early stage in the project.



Figure 4 Study area



3.2 Draft Route Options Report

The main aims and objectives of the draft Route Options Report were:

- To set out the route options considered and to summarise their feasibility and relative ranking in terms of engineering, environmental and land ownership constraints.
- To appraise the findings of the route options study and make recommendations in relation to the preferred route.

In total 17 route options were assessed, allowing for scenarios where different link types were considered along the same route alignment. These route options were assessed with reference to three key themes:

- Engineering
- Environmental
- Land Ownership Constraints

Within each of the five study area sections various route options were assessed and summarised in a route appraisal matrix coded as follows:

- Green – Positive or neutral Impact
- Blue – Minor Negative Impact
- Red – Significant Negative Impact

An example of this appraisal matrix is presented in Figure 6.

Option Appraisal Matrix & Preferred Option

Table 5.1: Section 1 Option Appraisal Matrix

Section Option	Engineering	Environment	Land Ownership	Overall
1A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low interaction with traffic. • Existing pedestrian/cycle facility within Southpark utilised • Least direct route for commuters • Most convivial route for amenity cyclists • Low Cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential widening of cycleway / walkway within South Park would have nominal impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No impact on private lands. 	Preferred
1B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortest delay route for commuters • Moderate interaction with traffic • Minimal design intervention on Grattan Road • Low Cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Impact. 	Less Preferred
1C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most direct route for commuters but delays at junctions • High interaction with traffic • Not consistent with 'Greenway' characteristics • Moderate Cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential loss of some trees and some open space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Impact. 	Least Preferred

Figure 6 Appraisal Matrix used in Route Options Report

The main observations in relation to the route options assessment are:

- The limited extent of the study area (as discussed earlier in Section 3.1); and
- Methodology and criteria used as part of the options appraisal.

The Common Appraisal Framework (CAF) sets out the methodology to be utilised on projects such as this. It requires a ‘Multi Criteria Analysis’ (MCA) of transport options under the following topics:

- Economy;
- Integration;
- Accessibility and Social Inclusion;
- Safety;
- Environment; and
- Physical Activity.

An example of impacts to be considered under each topics is listed in Table 3.

Table 3 Topics to be considered as part of multi-criteria assessment

Topic	Impacts
1. Economy	1.a. Capital Cost
	1.b. Transport Reliability and Quality (Journey Time)
2. Integration	2.a. Land Use Integration
	2.b. Residential Population and Employment Catchments
	2.c. Transport Network Integration
	2.d. Cycle Network Integration
	2.e. Traffic Network Integration
3. Accessibility & Social Inclusion	3.a. Key Trip Attractors (Education/Health/Commercial/Employment)
	3.b. Deprived Geographic Areas
4. Safety	4.a. Road Safety
	4.b. Pedestrian Safety
5. Environment	5.a. Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
	5.b. Architectural Heritage
	5.c. Flora & Fauna
	5.d. Soils and Geology
	5.e. Hydrology
	5.f. Landscape and Visual
	5.g. Air Quality
	5.h. Noise & Vibration
	5.i. Land Use Character

As a result of the above, it is considered that the route options assessment is not consistent with the requirements of the CAF and requires updating. Any updates should consider a widened study area and the MCA topics set out in the CAF.

3.3 Preliminary Design Report and Drawings

The Preliminary Design Report examines the emerging preferred route in further detail, with preliminary design drawings developed, land ownership and environmental impacts identified and a preliminary cost estimate prepared. The preferred route is presented in Figure 7.

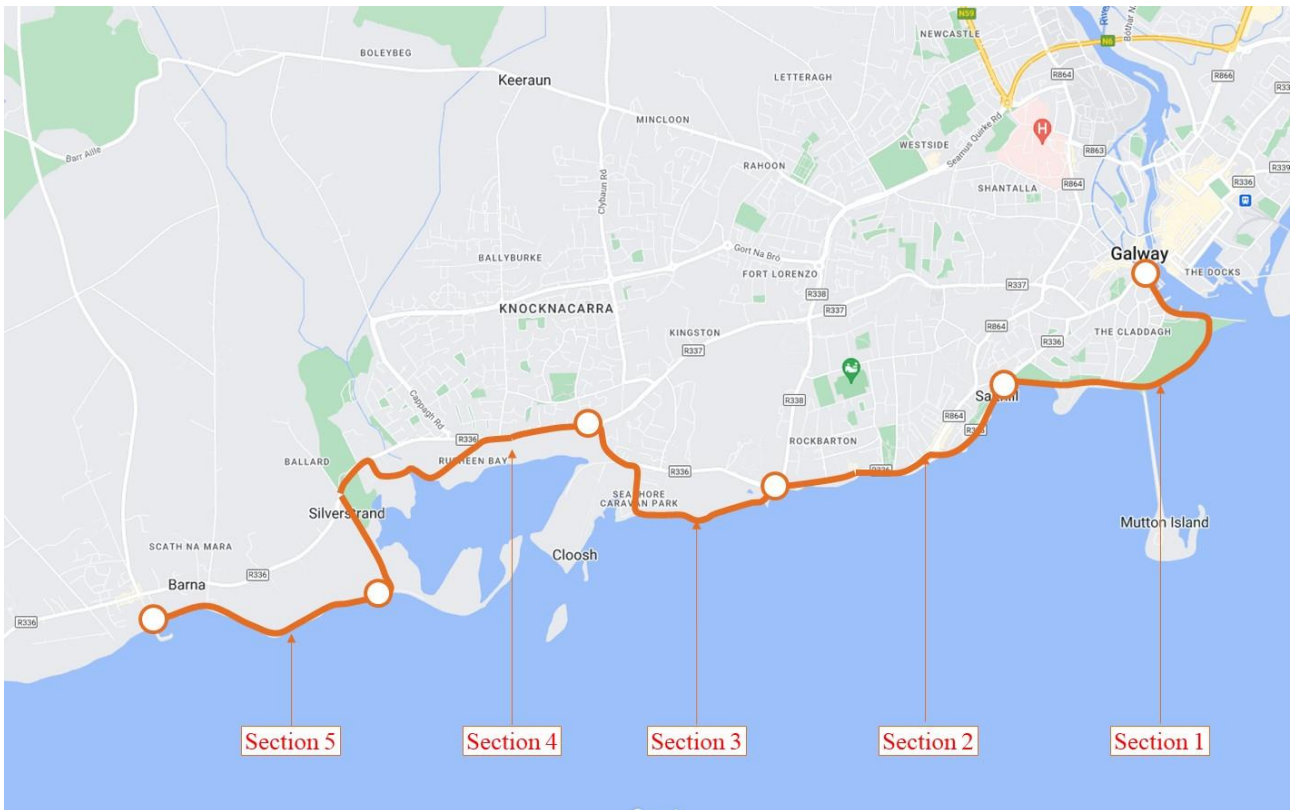


Figure 7 Bearn Greenway Preferred Route

Table 4 Route description

Section	Description
Section 1	<p>Section 1 was proposed to start at Wolfe Tone Bridge, and continue along Claddagh Quay with a shared street provision for cyclists and pedestrians. The route would then continue on to Nimmo’s Pier, this would too be a shared street which would then connect to the existing segregated pedestrian cycleway which extends along the eastern perimeter of Southpark.</p> <p>Beyond South Park it was proposed that the route proceeds along the southern side of Grattan Road with a Shared Adjacent Pedestrian Cycleway type cross-section, as per the existing promenade, up to the R33 Whitstrand Road / Grattan Road junction.</p>
Section 2	<p>Section 2 was proposed to continue along the promenade from the Seapoint Promenade to the Galway Golf Course.</p>
Section 3	<p>This section proposed extending west along the coast from the western end of Salthill Promenade to the Salthill Caravan Park. This particular section would be along an existing path.</p> <p>At the caravan park the route would then proceed north along the caravan park public access road as a Shared Street for circa 300m towards its junction with the Salthill Road Upper (R336). At this point the route would proceed as a Shared Adjacent Pedestrian Cycleway facility located on the southern side of the carriageway will continue towards the Salthill Road Upper (R336) / Bearn Road (R337) junction.</p>
Section 4	<p>Section 4 would commence at the Salthill Road Upper (R336) / Bearn Road (R337) junction. It would then proceed west along the Bearn Road for circa 650m before diverting along the local public road south of Bearn Road through the woods and continue for approximately 500m until the old bridge and then continue through a short section of private lands to Rusheen Park. The route would proceed through Rusheen Park and then along the Bearn Road as far as the Silverstrand Road.</p> <p>This section would be an off-road shared pedestrian / cyclist facility and a shared adjacent pedestrian cyclist facility.</p>

Section	Description
Section 5	<p>This section would start from the Bearna Road (R336) / Silverstrand Road junction and proceed south along the Silverstrand Road. The route was then proposed to proceed westwards along the coastline adjacent the northern side of the existing stonewall within the boundary of the adjacent field properties, thus necessitating CPO. It was proposed that no section of this route would be built on the foreshore. The route would then proceed in this form as far as the Bearna Pier access road.</p> <p>Here the route would then proceed north along the Bearna Pier access road up to its junction with the Bearna Road (R336) within Bearna village centre. The route would then continue westwards for 500m along the Spiddal Road (R336) from the village centre.</p> <p>This section would be an off-road shared pedestrian / cyclist facility and a shared street for a section.</p>

Key observations in relation to preliminary design report and drawings are:

- Shared paths proposed in busy urban areas which is not recommended (e.g. Grattan Road); and
- Although not explicitly stated in the Preliminary Design Report, it is understood that permissive access was the proposed mechanism where works on third party lands were required. Third Party lands were identified as required in the following sections:
 - Section 4: 31 No folios identified in section 4 between the Bearna Road and Rusheen Bay; and
 - Section 5: 81 No folios identified in the area bounded by the Bearna, Silverstrand, coastline and Bearna Pier Road.
- The use of permissive access would no longer be considered an appropriate mechanism for a capital project such as this and it would be expected that GCC would require full ownership of the land along the route.
- It is noted that the cost of land acquisition was not included in the cost estimate for the scheme.

3.4 Environmental Screenings

3.4.1 AA Screening and Natura Impact Statement

A Stage 1 screening for Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Statement was previously undertaken. The screening found that, although the majority of the route is not located within Galway Bay Complex SAC, there are four locations where the greenway encroaches upon the SAC.

It also found that to the west of Silverstrand Road the greenway could potentially interact with two habitats for which Galway Bay Complex SAC has been designated; but in this instance the areas of habitat lie outside the SAC.

The screening also concluded that the proposed scheme would not negatively impact upon the conservation status of bird species for which the Inner Galway Bay SPA has been designated. It should also be noted that surveys previously undertaken to inform the screening (e.g. habitat, bat, otter etc.) will need to be repeated given the length of time which has passed.

3.4.2 EIA Screening

No EIA Screening was previously undertaken for the scheme. It is now mandatory for a screening to be undertaken for a scheme such as this, with new regulations coming into Irish law in 2018. The current requirements for EIA for projects are set out by the European Union in Council Directive 2011/92/EU on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Public and Private Projects on the Environment as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU.

The Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2019 and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 to 2019 have been amended by the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (SI No. 296 of 2018) to take account of the requirements of the EIA Directive (Directive 2014/52/EU).

The Roads Act (1993), has also been amended by the European Union (Road Act 1993) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 (SI 296 of 2019) to take account of the requirements of the EIA Directive (Directive 2014/52/EU).

Usually, a local authority development which requires an EIA (i.e. of a class listed in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, which list projects requiring EIA) must be submitted to An Bord Pleanála for approval under Section 175 of the Planning and Development Act (2000), as amended. However, subsection 14 of Section 175 specifically excludes road developments: “(14) This section shall not apply to proposed road development within the meaning of the Roads Act, 1993, by or on behalf of a road authority.”

The proposed scheme would likely be considered to be a “road development” under the meaning of the Roads Act (1993), as amended. Therefore, the requirements for EIA Screening under the Roads Act (1993), as amended, would need to be followed.

Additionally, since 2017, there have been a number of guidance and consultation documents issued which would need to be considered in the preparation of an EIA Screening. This includes:

- Office of the Planning Regulator (2021) - *OPR Practice Note PN02 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening (June 2021)*;
- Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (2018) - *Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (August 2018)*;
- Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (2017) - *Implementation of Directive 2014/52/EU on the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (EIA Directive): Advice on the Administrative Provisions in Advance of Transposition*;
- Environmental Protection Agency (2017) - *Revised Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (Draft August 2017)*; and
- European Commission (2017) *Guidance on EIA Screening*.

4. Scheme status

This section sets several key questions and observations for the scheme in order to identify the most appropriate way forward for this project.

4.1 Scheme Vision

The vision for the scheme that was previously developed was to:

“Provide a high quality Greenway for pedestrians and cyclists linking Wolfe Tone Bridge in the city centre to Bearna Pier at the Western edge of Bearna Village. This Greenway would form part of a continuous network of Greenways with Galway City and County, and that the Greenway would provide both as an amenity route along Galway’s Atlantic Seaboard for recreational users and a commuter route from the key residential areas in the southwest of the city such as Knocknacarra”.

It is important to reaffirm this vision or amend as necessary given the changes that occurred in relation to policy, the planned cycle network and design standards since 2017.

For example, key questions to be considered when developing this vision would be:

- is Wolfe Tone bridge the appropriate start/end point of the scheme within the City Centre?
- should the focus of the scheme be on serving commuters and residential areas?
- does the scheme need to route along the Atlantic seaboard given the protected status of the area?

4.2 Network integration

It is important to consider how the scheme will integrate and form part of both the current and planned cycle network in Galway City. There are several schemes in progress which may influence the preferred route, including:

- Salmon Weir Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge – this scheme is presently under construction and will provide a new crossing of the River Corrib for pedestrians and cyclists
- Cross City Link – this scheme is expected to go to planning in 2022. It includes significant traffic management changes, reducing traffic volumes along key routes as well as providing new cycling infrastructure
- Wolfe Tone pedestrian bridge – this scheme is at planning stage and proposes a new cantilevered structure for pedestrians only
- Development of the cycle network in the western side of Galway City, including
 - Clybaun Road – Expected construction 2023
 - Bothar Stiofain – Expected construction 2024
 - Eglington – Expected construction 2023
- Ballyloughane to City Centre Greenway – feasibility stage
- Coirib go Cósta Galway City Flood Relief Scheme

4.3 Commuter or Amenity Route

The Bearna Greenway was primarily designed as an amenity route given the design predominantly consisted of shared use paths, with some sections segregated. Additionally, by routing along Salthill, some key attractors are not directly served (e.g. residential areas, workplaces and schools).

As a result, it is important for Galway City Council to establish what the function and purpose of the route is and what standard of facility is required to serve that function.

4.4 Land acquisition

The Bearna Greenway impacted a total of 112 no. folios in Section 4 and Section 5 of the scheme. It is understood that permissive access was the proposed strategy for the scheme at the time of development.

For capital projects such as this, it is generally preferred that the scheme (and land) would come into public ownership given the investment being made. As a result, this constraint can influence the preferred route of the scheme.

Given CPO and related costs can significantly increase the scheme cost, it is important that the strategy in relation to this is considered at the route options assessment stage.

4.5 Environmental considerations

Given the recent changes in the environmental screening process, a revised AA Screening, Natura Impact Statement and EIA Screening will need to be undertaken. It is also noted that the majority of the ecological surveys will need to be undertaken again as the data previously collected is no longer useable in the screening reports. Several of these surveys are seasonal which can impact programme.

5. Summary of key observations and next steps

This report provides a high level review of the work previously undertaken as part of the ‘Berna Greenway’. As a result of several changes in relation to policy, design and assessment since 2017 it is considered that all of the previous work undertaken will need to be reassessed and updated to ensure it is appropriate for the statutory process.

The following is a summary of key observations and recommendations emerging from this review which should be addressed (either by Galway City Council or the design team) prior to the scheme progressing.

- **Study Area Extents** – A wider study should be proposed which allows for the appraisal of all routes within the greenway corridor. The previous study only considered alternative designs through Salthill (not alternative routes).
- **Scheme vision, aims and objectives** – the vision for the scheme should be reaffirmed and/or updated given changes in national and local policy. The previous study was generally focussed on an amenity route, with shared pedestrian and cycling facilities for the majority of the scheme.
- **Network integration** – Based on recently approved and planned infrastructure projects (e.g. Salmon Weir Bridge, Cross-City Link), the integration of the scheme with the wider cycle network needs further consideration. For example, Wolfe Tone bridge may no longer be the preferred start/end point for the scheme.
- **Route Options Assessment** – The Route Options Assessment should be updated to be consistent with the MCA requirements set out in the Common Appraisal Framework.
- **Land Acquisition** - The strategy in relation to land acquisition needs consideration at the Route Options Appraisal stage given the impact it can have on the cost of the scheme. It is generally preferred that the scheme and land be fully in public ownership.
- **Environmental** – EIA Screening, AA Screening and Natura Impact Statement will need to be undertaken and/or updated along with new surveys undertaken.

It is recommended that the key next steps for the project are

- Secure NTA funding for initial scheme stages (estimated that the project is likely to fall within the > €10 million category when considering land acquisition costs); and
- Develop scheme brief (with extended study area) and appoint design team to undertake revised studies and surveys, including a revised route options appraisal. The recent consultations regarding the temporary cycle track through Salthill should also be taken into account.