

Non-Statutory Public Consultation Report

Miller's Lane

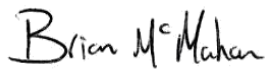
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1 Introduction

A non-statutory public consultation was undertaken in October 2021 for the Miller's Lane Upgrade.



Figure 1.1: Miller's Lane Public Consultation Brochure

A Public Consultation Brochure was circulated to all homes and businesses in the local area, and the consultation was advertised on the Galway City Council (GCC) Website news page (<https://www.galwaycity.ie/transport-news>) and publicised on GCC social media. The brochure and scheme drawings were made available on the dedicated project website (<https://www.galwaycity.ie/millerslane>).

Members of the public were invited to make submissions in writing, or online via email or a form on the project website. The consultation period opened on Tuesday 5th October 2021, and closed on Friday 22nd October 2021.

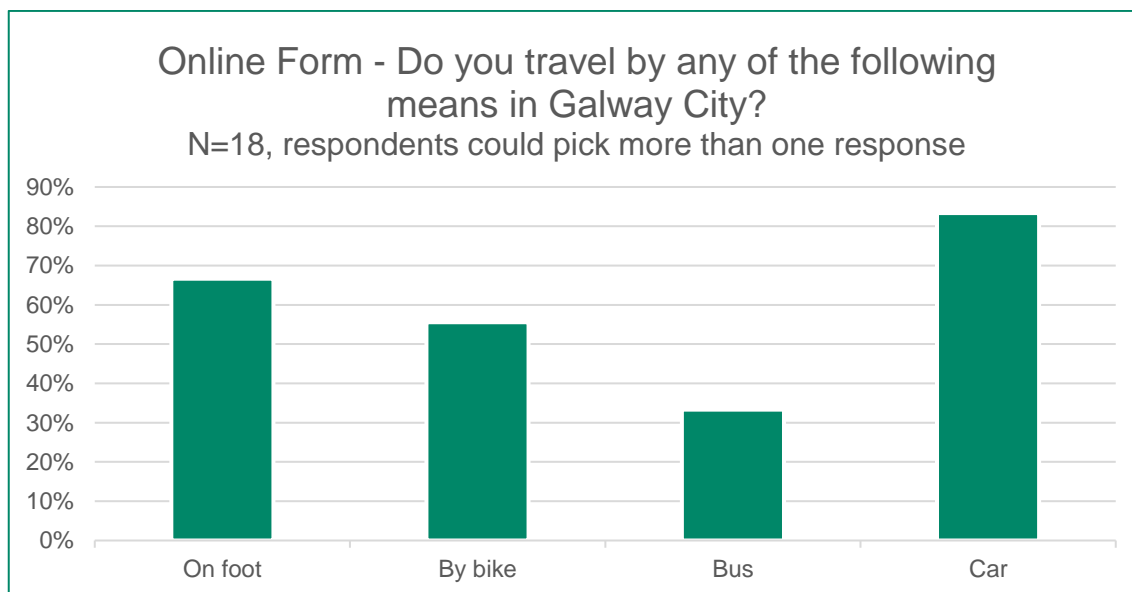
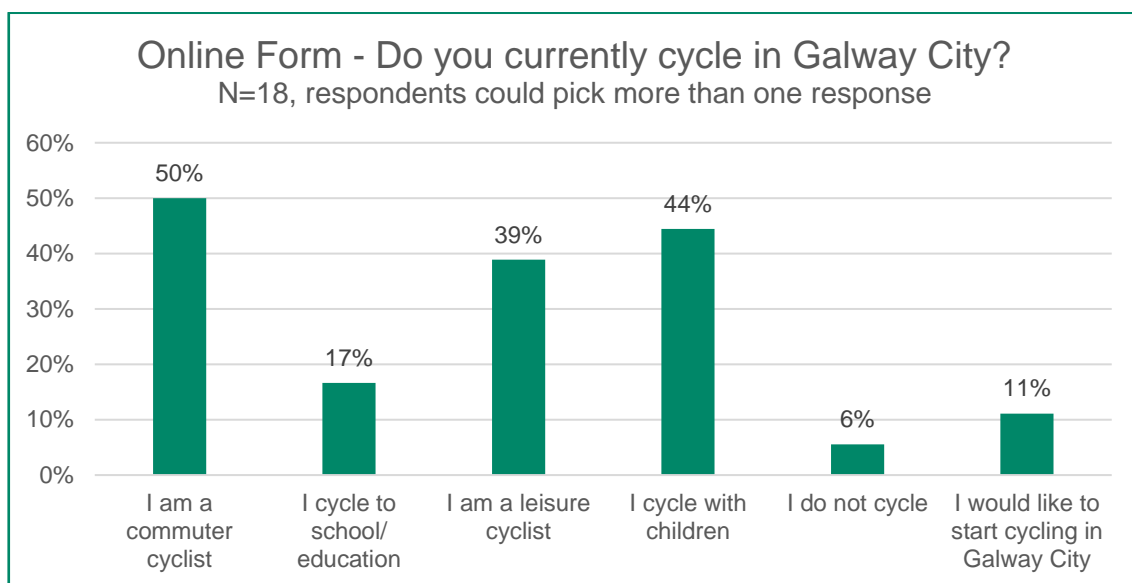
2 Respondents Profile

A total of 40 submissions were received, with 21 email submissions, one written submission and 18 responses to the online form.

Email and written submissions were received from residents along the route, including from Grangemore, Cruachan Park, Gort na Bro, the Orchard, Ros Geal, Garraí de Brun and Fort Lorenzo. Submissions were received from local organisations such as the Galway Cycling Campaign, the Community Road Safety Action & Information Network (Cosáin), Galway Bohemians Football Club and Gaelscoil Mhic Amhlaigh.

The majority of submissions on the online public consultation form were made by residents along the route, with responses also from commuters and other Galway residents.

Of the 18 responses to the online form, half were from residents along the route, with the rest made up of commuters, visitors, and users of the route. The majority of respondents to the online survey were cyclists, in addition to those who travel by walking, taking the bus and driving a car. The questions and full results of the survey are provided in Appendix A.



3 Submissions Summary

3.1 Submissions Summary

Broadly speaking, submissions on the Miller's Lane Upgrade were positive, with respondents noting their support for the provision of pedestrian and bike facilities in Galway City.

Respondents also requested some clarifications, and flagged potential issues, which are discussed below.

3.2 Support for Scheme

Over 80% of respondents to the online survey were positive about the scheme. Eleven respondents liked that the scheme would provide a safer cycling environment, and that it would improve footpaths and pedestrian crossings. 9 of the 18 respondents to the online survey liked that it improved public space, and 8 liked the design and look of the scheme. 7 of responses to the survey thought that it would have environmental benefits. Better connections to nearby destinations and improved lighting were other positive comments on the scheme.

Of those who responded to the online form, 13 indicated that they will use the lane when upgraded. 12 respondents said they thought the upgrades would make the route safer for pedestrians, and 8 of respondents think the route will be safer for cyclists after the upgrade.

There were also 11 email submissions that showed support for the scheme.

3.3 Residents' Concerns

The residents in various estates along Miller's Lane drew attention in their submissions to their concerns regarding the proposed development on Miller's Lane. A summary of these concerns is given below, with the Design Team's response.

4 responses to the online form said they had concerns about the pedestrian facilities or bike facilities, and one had concerns about access to the city centre. Other concerns mentioned by respondents included the environmental impact of the scheme, anti-social behaviour, conflict between pedestrians and cyclists, onward connections for cycling and walking. Two submissions express support for increased permeability between the adjacent estates and Miller's Lane.

In their responses to the consultation, residents noted the different types of antisocial behaviour that have occurred in recent times in the Lane. This was the most common cause of concern among the responses to the consultation, with 14 submissions citing anti-social behaviour as an issue.

- Littering is an issue, with dog foul, empty cans and other general rubbish reported to be regularly found in the vicinity. Residents highlight the need to keep up maintenance of the lane once the upgrade has taken place, including the emptying of rubbish bins long the route. It was also suggested that educational signage and CCTV could help to stop people from littering.
 - *Response – these reports will be shared with the Environmental Team for information.*
- Late night noise caused by gatherings in Miller's Lane is an existing issue that residents feel will be exacerbated if lighting and public seating is provided in Miller's Lane. With the Lane already being a popular place for people to gather in the summer evenings, it is feared that providing amenities will increase this problem.
 - *Response - the increase in pedestrian and cyclist usage of Miller's Lane will increase the passive surveillance, thus reducing the opportunities for anti-social behaviour. Furthermore, the design has been future-proofed so that if anti-social behaviour does become an issue, ducting will be in place and CCTV can be installed.*
- There have been incidents in the past with gravel being thrown from the lane into neighbouring housing estates. Reassurance that there will be no loose gravel along the route would assuage this particular worry.
 - *Response - will be fully paved, following review of submissions by the Design Team.*
- Clarification was sought on the proposed entry points into Grangemore Estate. There was previously a laneway that connected the estate with Miller's Lane, but it was closed after a petition from the residents

due to antisocial behaviour. Concerns were also raised about access to Gort na Greine, Ros Geal, Cruachan Park, Grangemore, Gort na Bró, and Manor Avenue.

- *Response – It is not GCC's intention to open up any permeability to the lane without the broad consensus of the residents' associations.*
- There are a varying opinions on providing access from the estates adjacent to Miller's Lane. Some residents fear that increased accessibility to Miller's Lane will increase anti-social behaviour within their estates, while others welcome the prospect of increased permeability and access to local amenities along the Lane such as to local shops and to Galway Bohemians football grounds. There were 4 email/written submissions opposing access to estates, 4 supporting access to estates, 2 seeking further information on access to estates and the rest did not comment on this matter. Among the respondents to the online form, there were 3 comments supporting the creation of accesses between housing estates and Miller's Lane.

Response - It is not GCC's intention to open up any permeability to the lane without the broad consensus of the residents' associations. Research on anti-social behaviour shows that there is a positive impact from passive surveillance, with many public policy initiatives employing watching eyes to reduce crime. The upgrade of Miller's Lane will make it more conducive to all types of users, making it less attractive as a space for anti-social behaviour, as more people will be using the Lane.
- Three of the residents' responses to the online survey said they had concerns about the pedestrian facilities or bike facilities, and one respondent had concerns about access to the city centre.
 - Design has been undertaken with respect to DMURS and the National Cycle Manual.
- Other concerns mentioned by respondents included the environmental impact of the scheme,
- Conflict between pedestrians and cyclists,
 - Designate Shared space – priority given to pedestrians
- Onward connections for cycling and walking.
 - Galway Transport Study – wider network

3.4 Maintenance

The proposed upkeep and maintenance of the lane was a common topic, with six responses on the topic. Residents seek information on who will be responsible for ensuring the lane is kept clean and safe. Maintenance of the walls and hedges backing into estates was also mentioned as an issue.

Three people suggested that CCTV/increased Garda patrols and surveillance would be necessary to ensure the lane is safe, and others mentioned that the installation of bins along the route would help prevent littering.

Response - GCC are to maintain the lane upon completion of the works.

3.5 Lane width

Some responses propose that Miller's Lane is too narrow to facilitate any increase in pedestrian and bike traffic which will result from the upgrade of the facility, and 5 submissions noted that conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists may be an issue in the confined space. Some respondents believe that the laneway should be left as it is for people to use if they wish, but that there is sufficient active travel provision on the main roads in the area.

It is also proposed that speed limits for bikes should be implemented, especially at blind corners and where Miller's Lane intersects main roads.

Response - the design is compliant with widths recommended in the NTA's National Cycle Manual. There will be road signs to indicate to cyclists and pedestrians warning of junctions ahead.

3.6 Environmental Impacts

There were 6 submissions that cited environmental impacts of the proposed scheme as a cause for concern.

- There were four queries about the drainage on the lane, with residents wishing to ensure that the new surfacing and cutback of greenery would not cause surface water to drain into their gardens.

- *Response - A positive drainage system has been proposed, with new gullies proposed in Miller's Lane to ensure that all runoff drains into the local authority drainage system.*
- Users of Miller's Lane have provided feedback on the recent works that were done to cut back the hedges and shrubs along the lane. It is thought that the removal of the vegetation was severe, and in some cases has disrupted the integrity of the walls it had grown up around.
 - *Response – GCC confirm that structural surveys will be completed on boundary walls, structural integrity will be assessed.*
- The location and type of proposed lighting was queried, along with the distance between each light and if they would be on both sides or one side of the lane. It is thought that the installation of white LED lights will disrupt animals such as bats, birds, and insects in the area. It is also thought that the installation of LEDs will increase light pollution into the backs of homes along Miller's Lane.
 - *Response - GCC confirm that it is proposed to have low level bollard lighting at 10m intervals along one side of the scheme only. Lighting is ecologically sensitive with lumen level being adjustable.*
- Some responses to the consultation highlight the effect the proposed upgrade of Miller's Lane will have on biodiversity in the area. There are foxes, bats and hedgehogs reported to be living in the fields and hedges surrounding Miller's Lane. Care should be taken not to cause damage to their habitats.
 - *Response - An ecological survey has been undertaken, the recommendations of which have been taken into consideration in the design.*

3.7 Ownership of Lands

The ownership of the section of Miller's Lane immediately abutting Garrai de Brun estate was queried during the public consultation.

Response - Upon review of the ownership of the lane, it was confirmed that there is a public right of way on Miller's Lane, and the works being undertaken do not affect the N6 ring road CPO currently ongoing.

3.8 Other

Galway Bohemians AFC request that a review is undertaken of the Miller's Lane/Kingston Lands Development Plan. The location earmarked for the Cruachan Park Link is the same as their proposed Clubhouse. They believe that the Clubhouse would work better nearer the carpark at the bottom of the lane. This was detailed in Planning permission from the mid 90's for a clubhouse in the park.

Response - The Recreation and Amenity Department are drafting a masterplan for the pitch and the Miller's Lane upgrade works will complement their design

One respondent to the survey queries whether a feasibility study was undertaken to assess the extent of traffic in the lane and its impact on residents. They also wanted to know if a foot/bike survey was carried out to determine the current usage of the lane.

Response - Miller's Lane is considered to be an existing pedestrian facility requiring maintenance and upgrade, which had a low usage due to its unmaintained condition. It should be noted that pedestrian counts will be undertaken after the works are complete.

4 Suggestions and Other Comments

Respondents to the public consultation provided comments on various aspects of the design circulated in the public consultation brochure, as well as some suggestions for improvements that could be implemented around the scheme. There are outlined below.

4.1 Traffic

- The planned signalised crossing on the Western Distributor Road should be wide enough for large groups of children to cross and should be a toucan crossing.

- A crossing should be provided for cyclists turning right from the Western Distributor Road onto Miller's Lane and onwards towards Kingston Road/Threadneedle Road/Salthill. This should not be provided with a toucan crossing, but rather a waiting area in front of the signal. They suggest using the Bus Connects design guidance for this.
 - *Response - there will be provision for cyclists crossing Western Distributor Road, and the design is in accordance with the Bus Connects design guidance for turning cyclists at Toucan crossings.*
- Bikes on Miller's Lane should be slowed down at entrances to main roads, especially at blind corners.
- Five submissions mentioned that traffic speeds on nearby roads are a cause for concern. They propose that speed controls should be implemented on Western Distributor Road and Kingston Road.
 - *Response - the reduction of Speed limits is an executive function and would require the passing of byelaws which is not under the remit of this project.*

4.2 Design

Some respondents provided feedback on specific aspects of the design.

- A few responses requested that no seating be provided on Miller's Lane as part of the upgrade, as they believe it will encourage night-time gatherings and anti-social behaviour.
 - *Response - requirements for seating for age, mobility and family-friendly requirements will be reviewed as required.*
- Three submissions mention that they are concerned about the bollards used in the design. It was suggested that stronger, wider bollards should be installed at the entrances to the lane than those shown in the design drawings. This would prevent motorised vehicles using the lane. Another respondent requests that kissing gates should not be installed, as they reduce accessibility for wheelchair users and those with buggies.
 - *Response – the proposed bollards are highly visible with a chrome finish and a reflective strip provided at the top. Existing kissing gates will be removed from the design, as they impede cyclists. Bollards are proposed to prevent vehicles from entering the lane, while allowing for buggies and the mobility impaired.*
- It is advised that any steps included in the design for Miller's Lane should also have a ramp access nearby to allow wheelchair accessibility.
 - *Response - no steps have been included in the design for the upgrade.*

4.3 Miscellaneous

- Galway Bohemians AFC suggest installing a bike shelter in the lower part of the Park. They also advise the erection of fencing and ball nets between the playing pitches and Miller's Lane.
 - *Response - request for bicycle parking will be reviewed.*
- It is noted that there was previously a wooden bench at the junction of Manor Drive and Kingston Road in the grass area, but that it has recently been removed. It is requested that this be reinstated as it provides a view of the sea and is close to some wildflower planting.
 - *Response - this is outside of the project scope and extent.*
- Residents request the restoration of walls at Cruachan Park and Ros Geal estates.
 - *Response - Structural surveys of all boundary walls will be completed prior to construction works and restoration work if required can be assessed at that point.*
- It is suggested that a name should be given to the road and roundabout from B&Q to Ragoon Road between the Gaelscoil and playing pitches. Possible name suggestions are related to the Ragoon stream which used to run along there, sruthan or scoil. There is also a misspelling on a sign for Miller's Lane, at the entrance onto the Lane from the Western Distributor Road on the Gort na Bro side. This could be updated as part of the scheme works.
 - *Response - naming of parks, roads, etc. goes to the Corporate Policy Group for consideration. Requests for same should be made directly.*

- It is suggested that if access is provided from Miller's Lane into adjacent estates, codes could be put on the gates to prevent anti-social behaviour.
 - *Response - coded gates are not being considered at this time.*
- Public bins should be installed along the route to prevent littering.
 - *Response - placement of bins is being considered by the design team in consultation with the Environment department.*
- Walls could be lowered, or mirrors installed at blind corners.
 - *Response – There are no proposals to raise or lower any adjoining residential walls. Mirrors will be considered during the construction stage.*
- It is suggested that access be provided onto Miller's Lane from Kingston Road/Threadneedle Road – currently turning into Manor Court from Kingston Road is very difficult. There should be a pedestrian crossing at Ragoon Road to turn right towards city centre/Westside
 - *Response - designs for a crossing at Ragoon Road will be developed separately.*
- It is suggested that it would be helpful to provide signage nearby pointing out Miller's Lane to increase its visibility and usage, and also signage leading to other nearby destinations such as Salthill Prom.
 - *Response - signage will be considered with respect to DMURS.*
- Residents of Cruachan Park and residents of Grangemore requested to be kept informed of any proposed works in the area.
 - *Response – GCC will engage with local groups and provide updates on the project as it progresses.*

5 General Opinions on the Scheme

There is overall support for the development of Miller's Lane, with 24 of the 40 responses to the public consultation expressing a positive attitude towards the scheme, even if they have some queries about specific aspects of the design. Eight responses were neutral on the development, and eight responses were not supportive of the scheme.

Local organisations such as Galway Bohemians AFC, Gaelscoil Mhic Amhlaigh, the Galway Cycling Campaign and Cosain have voiced their support of the project.

Some comments in support of the scheme include:

“Congratulations on the plan to upgrade Millar's Lane, the improvements will allow the lane to be more extensively used for leisure purposes in a traffic free environment. The addition of lighting will make it a safer place and deter unsociable activity.”

“Galway Bohemians AFC welcome the upgrade of Miller's Lane and applaud the Galway City Council for undertaking the initiative. Some of the youths in the academy use the lane to attend training as do their parents who use the lane to go on walks while they wait for their children in the younger age groups.”

“To date, we have been utilising the Lane for walks and it is proving to be very satisfactory, for this purpose.... We look forward to the completion of this very exciting and worthwhile project.”

6 Conclusion

Following the non-statutory Public Consultation for the Miller's Lane Upgrade, GCC have noted the feedback provided by the respondents to the consultation and will take it into consideration. Responses have been provided in this report to comments provided by respondents to the Public Consultation. There is broad support for the scheme, and the concerns expressed with regard to anti-social behaviour will be monitored. It is recommended that the scheme proceeds as per the drawings published by GCC in October 2021.

Appendix A Survey Questions

An online submission form was provided on the project website. This included nine questions, which are shown below along with their respective answer options. There was also the option to add additional comments at the end of the survey.

- 1) What is your primary interest in Miller's Lane? *Resident along the route, commuter, visitor, other*
- 2) Do you currently cycle in Galway City? *Commuter cyclist, cycle to school, leisure cyclist, cycle with children, do not cycle, would like to start cycling*
- 3) Do you travel by any of the following means in Galway City? *On foot, by Bike, bus, car, van/truck, other*
- 4) Having reviewed the details of the proposed scheme, please tell us what you like about the scheme. *Improved footpaths and pedestrian crossings, safer cycling environment, improved public spaces, the design and look of the scheme, environmental benefits, other.*
- 5) Having reviewed the details of the proposed scheme, please tell us what you do not like about the scheme. *Concerns about pedestrian facilities, concerns about cycling facilities, concerns about access to the city centre, other.*
- 6) Having reviewed the details of the proposed Millar's Lane Upgrade, will you or someone you know use the Millar's Lane for walking or cycling? *Yes, no, N/A*
- 7) Do you think the proposed Millar's Lane Upgrade will make the route safer for pedestrians? *Yes, no, N/A*
- 8) Do you think the proposed Millar's Lane Upgrade will make the route safer for cyclists? *Yes, no, N/A*
- 9) In general, are you supportive of the provision of walking and cycle facilities on Millar's Lane Upgrade? *Yes, no, N/A*
- 10) Other comments

