



Galway to Athlone  
National Cycleway Scheme

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION NO. 2

Route Corridor Options  
JANUARY 2021



## The Galway to Athlone Cycleway is for local communities. It will:

- Support local businesses and jobs - such as local shops, cafes, pubs, cycling businesses, B&Bs, camping sites, hotels and hostels.
- Provide safe, traffic-free cycling and walking routes for everyone to enjoy.
- Provide a valuable local amenity for communities to walk or cycle.
- Deliver a quality and memorable visitor experience with great scenery and points of interest.
- Complete a circa 270km car-free corridor between Galway and Dublin, linking the Atlantic coast to the East coast.

***We would like to hear your views on the Route Corridor Options.***

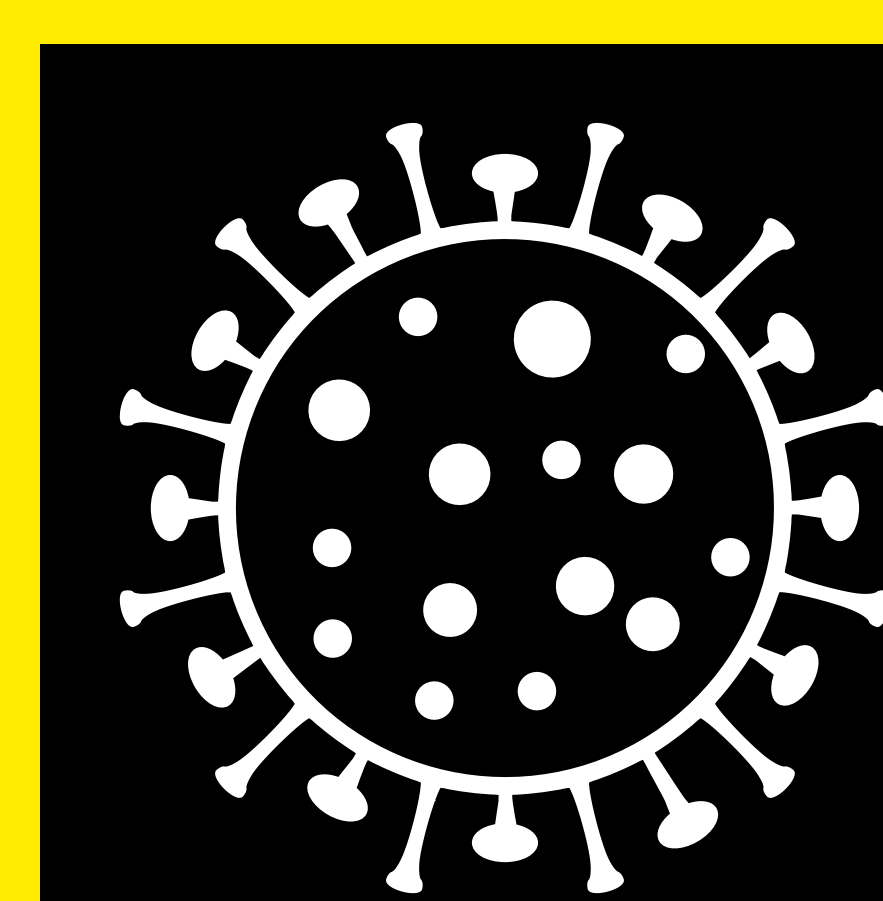






## Galway to Athlone National Cycleway Scheme

# Coronavirus COVID-19



Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
Public Health  
Advice

COVID - 19 has affected the early stages of the Project in a number of ways.

The Route Corridor Options Public Consultation No. 2 has been slightly delayed due to the prohibition on public gatherings.

### We are:

- Encouraging online consultation through the website [www.galwaytoathlonecycleway.com](http://www.galwaytoathlonecycleway.com)
- The consultation material can be viewed online in the virtual consultation room which is live on the project website from the 25th January 2021 and runs for 5 weeks.
- Interested parties will be able to meet with the project team by arrangement to discuss any issues of interest to them, either by phone or by video appointment.
- We can be contacted through the online virtual consultation on the website, where you may book an appointment to talk to the project team, or by calling the Cycleway Project Office in Ballinasloe at 091 509267.
- Project Liaison Officers will also be available to meet by appointment, in compliance with the applicable COVID-19 protocols.

*We will continue to seek to engage effectively while maintaining social distancing and strict hygiene for as long as is necessary*





# PROJECT VISION



## Part of Ireland's longest Cycleway

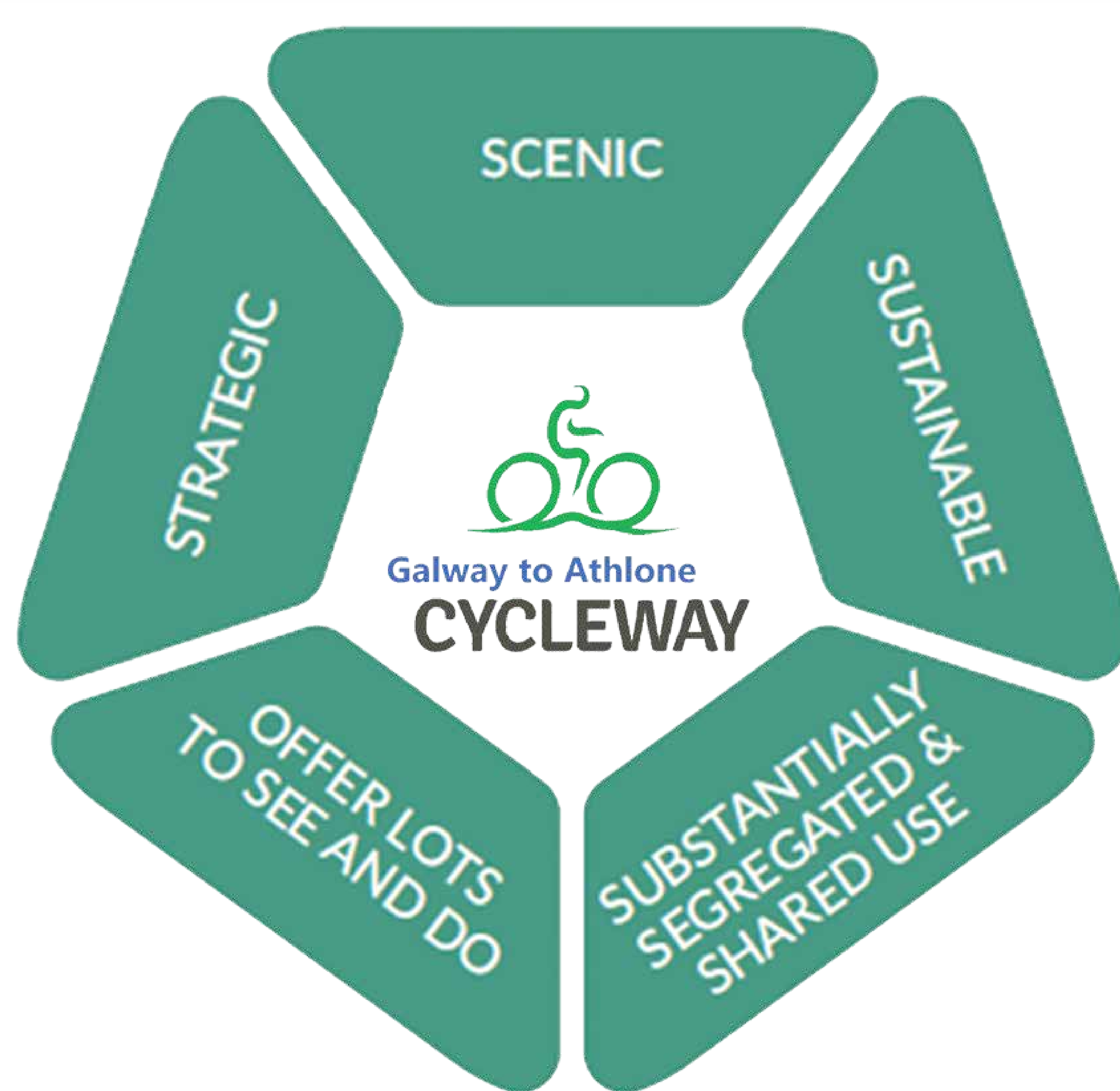
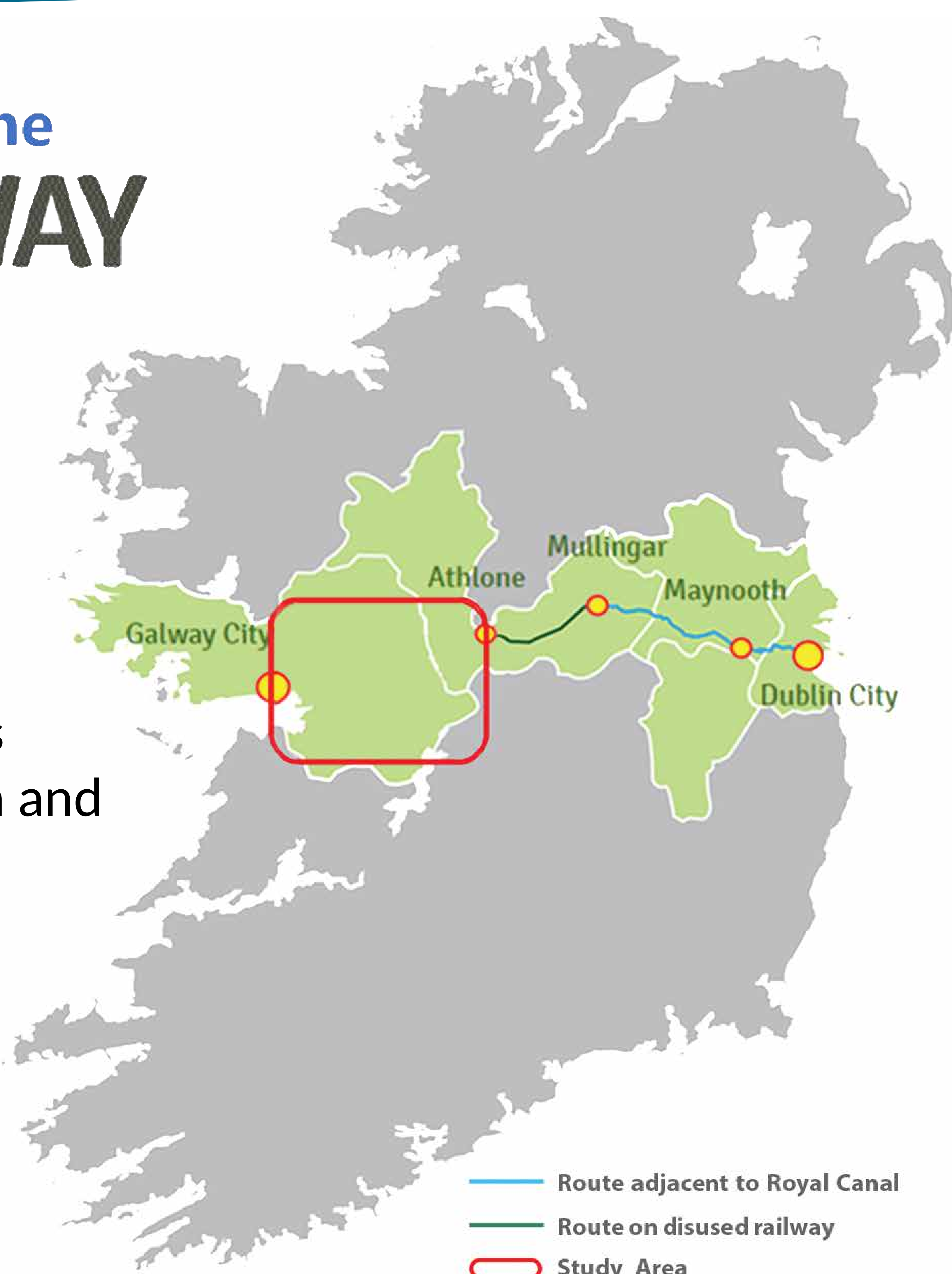
The Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport is developing National and Regional Greenways across Ireland to enhance tourism and contribute to rural development.

The new Galway to Athlone Cycleway is a large section of the even bigger circa 270km Galway to Dublin Cycleway - Ireland's longest Cycleway so far.

The Galway to Dublin Cycleway will be a world class amenity for pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users to enjoy - locals and tourists alike. It will even facilitate the first leg of the international EuroVelo network of long-distance cycling trails in Europe and will link Galway to Moscow!

## Galway to Dublin Cycleway is being developed in phases:

- Galway to Athlone Cycleway - Route Corridor Options now on display.
- 104km open between Athlone and Maynooth.
- 1.5km section between Whitegates and the Marina in Athlone expected to open in 2021.
- Construction of new cycleway bridge over the Shannon, due to start in 2021.
- Two major urban sections being developed between Maynooth and Dublin city and from Ballyloughane to Galway city.



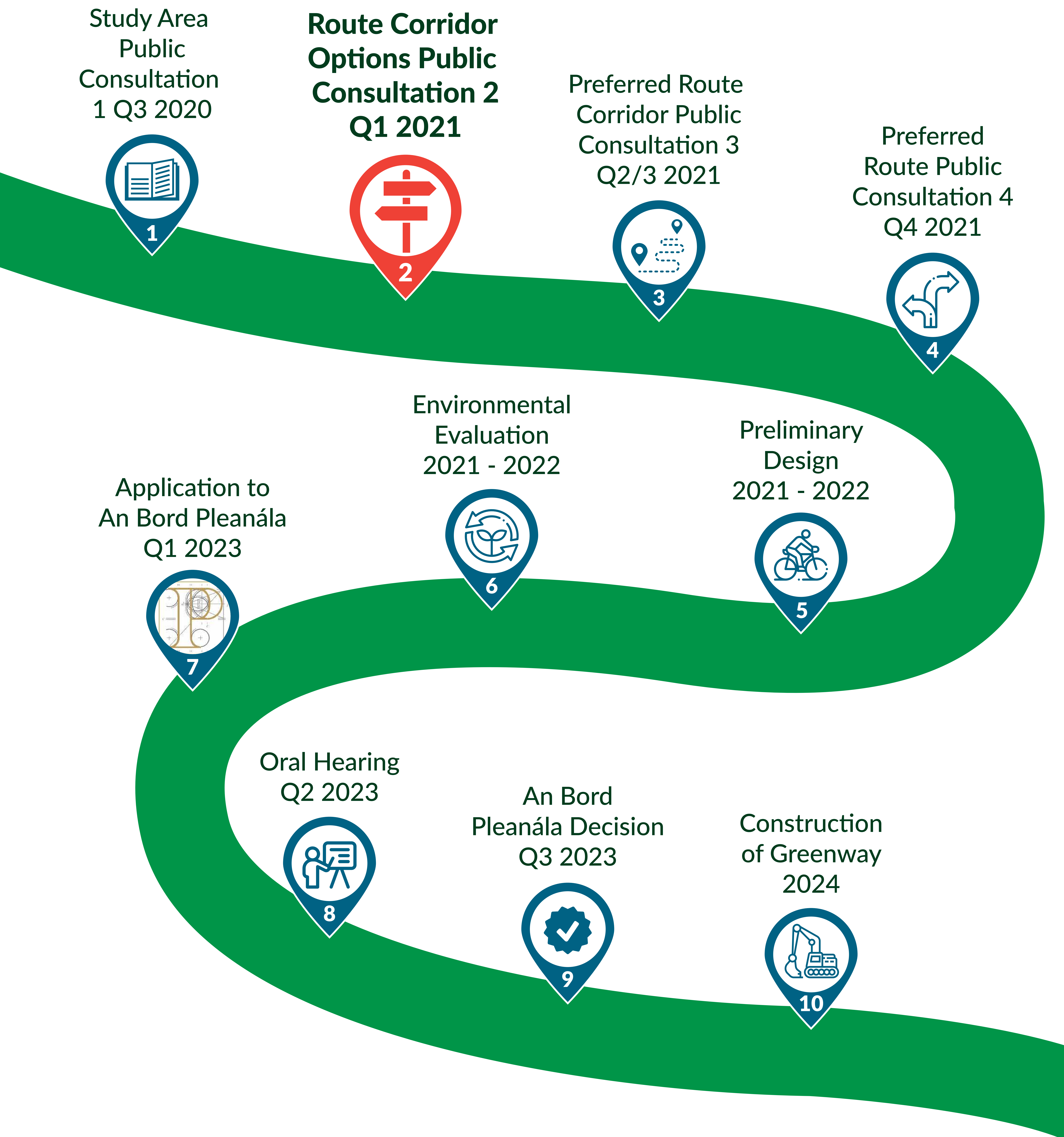


# STAGES OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION



WE ARE HERE

Study Area Public Consultation	➔	August 2020
Route Corridor Options Public Consultation	➔	Jan/Feb 2021
Preferred Route Corridor Public Consultation	➔	Mid 2021
Preferred Route Consultations with individual landowners	➔	from 2021





# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL IRELAND



## WHO WILL USE THE CYCLEWAY?

### TYPE OF CYCLEWAY USERS

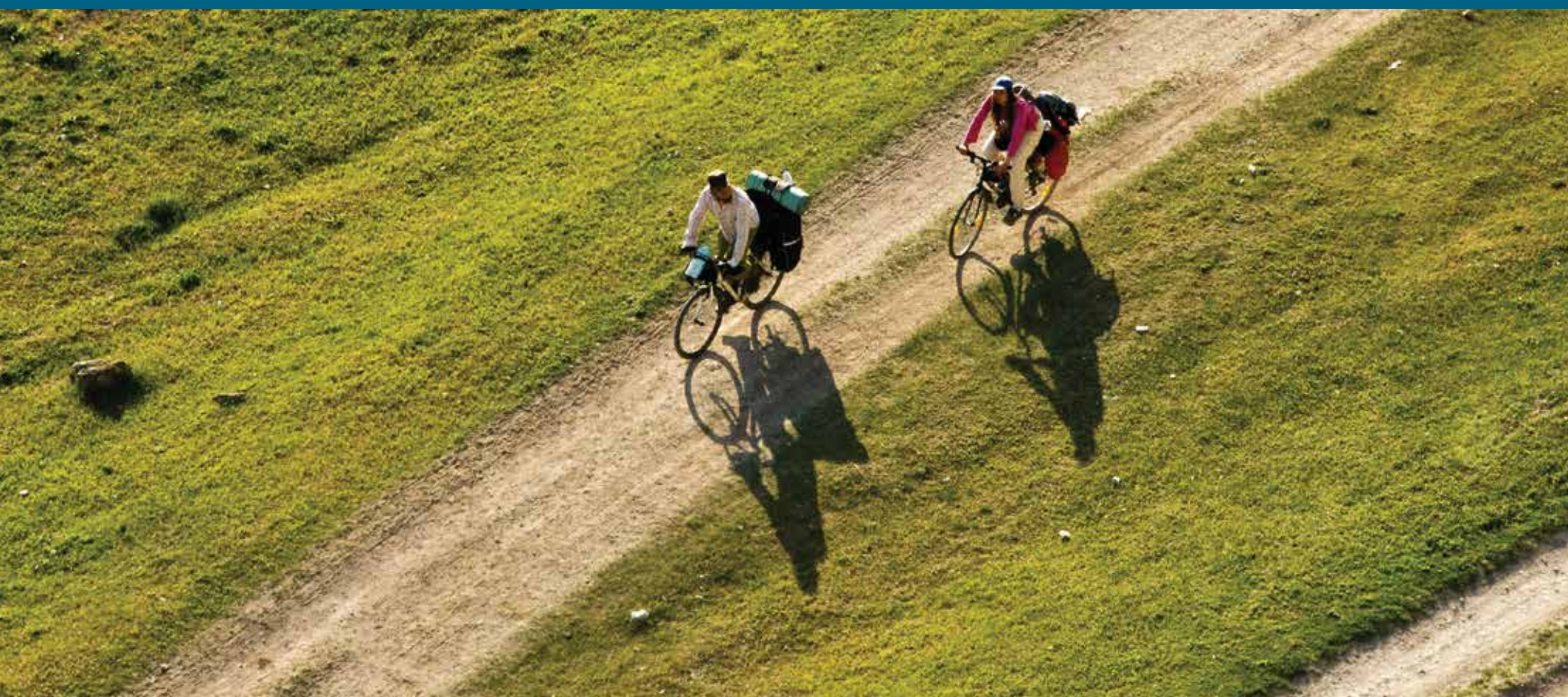
#### 1. Commuters

Local people living, studying and working adjacent to route



#### 2. Leisure Cyclists & Walkers

Individuals, families and groups cycling and walking for recreation, fun and fitness interest.



#### 3. Touring Cyclists

Visitors journeying from place to place from stages of up to 100km per day.

### National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland- Get Ireland Active

“Physical inactivity is a demonstrated clear risk to health and wellbeing in Ireland. Physical inactivity and sedentary behaviours are associated with numerous chronic diseases. With people no longer as physically active as they should be, there are many threats to our health and wellbeing from being inactive”

Despite our underdeveloped profile as a cycle destination, 242,000 overseas visitors to Ireland included a cycle trip in their holidays in 2014 and the estimated income from these visitors was over €231 million. (See Table 01)

A strong business case can be made for the development of cycling tourism with some significant markets to target if the right infrastructure can be delivered on the ground.

Market research into the potential for cycling in Ireland identified a core market potential of over 20 million visitors in a number of our key overseas markets.

Visitors	Numbers	Total Spend
Britain	44,000	€24.2 million
North America	22,000	€26.2 million
Northern Europe	154,000	€145.3 million
Other Areas	22,000	€36.2 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>242,000</b>	<b>€231.9 million</b>

Table 1.

## VISITORS

Market research has identified two segments for the Galway to Dublin Cycleway as a priority focus for Ireland in the main overseas markets. It looks at why people take holidays and what they want to feel during and after their visit. Importantly both segments are responsible tourists and leave a holiday destination as they found it. These segments are:

#### 1. Culturally Curious

They choose their holiday destinations carefully and are independent active sightseers looking to visit new places, and expand their experience by exploring landscapes, history and culture. They are unlikely to return for some time once they have visited a new place, and often travel in a couple or as individuals and rarely in a family group. The Culturally Curious visitor is interested in all that a place has to offer, and is attracted to authentic travel. They love to delve deeper into the history of a location, and crave unusual experiences and enjoy connecting with nature and wandering off the beaten track.

#### 2. Great Escapers

They are often couples, approximately 30 years old, some with babies or quite young children. They are specifically interested in rural holidays and travel very much as a couple or family. Great Escapers are on holiday for a break and to get physical with nature. They are more likely to take part in slightly more strenuous, but not extreme, exploration. They are interested in getting connected to nature especially the more remote and exciting places.

## BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITY AND REGION - HEALTH AND WELL BEING

The health of our population is also a major focus. Inactivity and sedentary behaviours are associated with numerous chronic diseases.

Greenways provide an excellent opportunity for Irish people to participate in healthy outdoor activity.



# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL IRELAND

## WHO CAN GET INVOLVED?



The Galway to Athlone Cycleway depends on the whole community to make it a reality and a memorable experience for those who will use it.

People who own land along the route, the farming community, local B&Bs, hotels, hostels and camping sites all have an important role in its success.

Local shops, pubs, supply stores and Post Offices all stand to benefit from the opportunities that come with increased visitor numbers.

Community groups and interests are vital to the creation of new ideas that can help tourism information centres and services.



## *Ideas with Opportunities...*



- Farmers
- Landowners
- Local Shops
- Local Hotels and B&Bs
- Heritage Centres
- Sports & Recreation Facilities
- Arts & Cultural Groups
- Transport Service Providers



# WORKING WITH YOU



## Landowner Engagement

A Code of Best Practice for National and Regional Greenway Projects is being prepared in consultation with several farming groups. The Code sets out the process for the delivery and management of greenways and provides information on the acquisition of privately owned lands for the greenway.

We aim to route the Cycleway through publicly owned lands, and avoid working farms, wherever practicable.

However, it will be necessary to build some of the Cycleway on land that is now privately owned.

During the route corridor option selection stage, an Independent Agronomist will be available to advise farmers on the project and process.

Once a route corridor is selected, each farmer within the corridor may engage their own agronomist to advise them during the design of the Cycleway. This agronomist will be paid for by the project promoters.

We will work with the farmer and their agronomist to pick the least disruptive route possible, likely to be along the farm boundary.

We will strive to purchase land through voluntary agreement, if at all possible.

There are a number of dedicated Project Liaison Officers (PLO's) from the Local Authorities and Consultants engaged on the project. The PLO's will be available to meet with Landowners, when public health restrictions safely allow for meetings either on their farm or in the Project Office. In the meantime, PLO's are available to talk on the phone or by online virtual meeting.

These PLO's will be the main point of contact for the landowner, and will ensure that the farmers interests and concerns are considered in all decisions.

The goodwill and cooperation of the farming community is important to make the Cycleway a success. Real and open engagement with the landowners and community will be central to everything we do.



# STUDY AREA PUBLIC CONSULTATION NO. 1



## Public Feedback and Response

Public Consultation No. 1 was held in August 2020. The consultation was very well attended with members of the project team present to discuss the project with the public. There was a strong interest in the project expressed at the events, with very good engagement and many useful discussions held.

The main purpose of this first public consultation was to present the Study Area and obtain feedback on it. Submissions received were mainly on the following:

- The need for the project;
- Possible routes that should be considered by the project team;
- Locations, attractions or facilities in the study area that could be attractive to cycleway users, or would benefit from a cycleway; and
- Constraints or barriers to the cycleway.

The project team emphasised that the project was starting again from a 'clean slate', with no routes proposed at that stage.

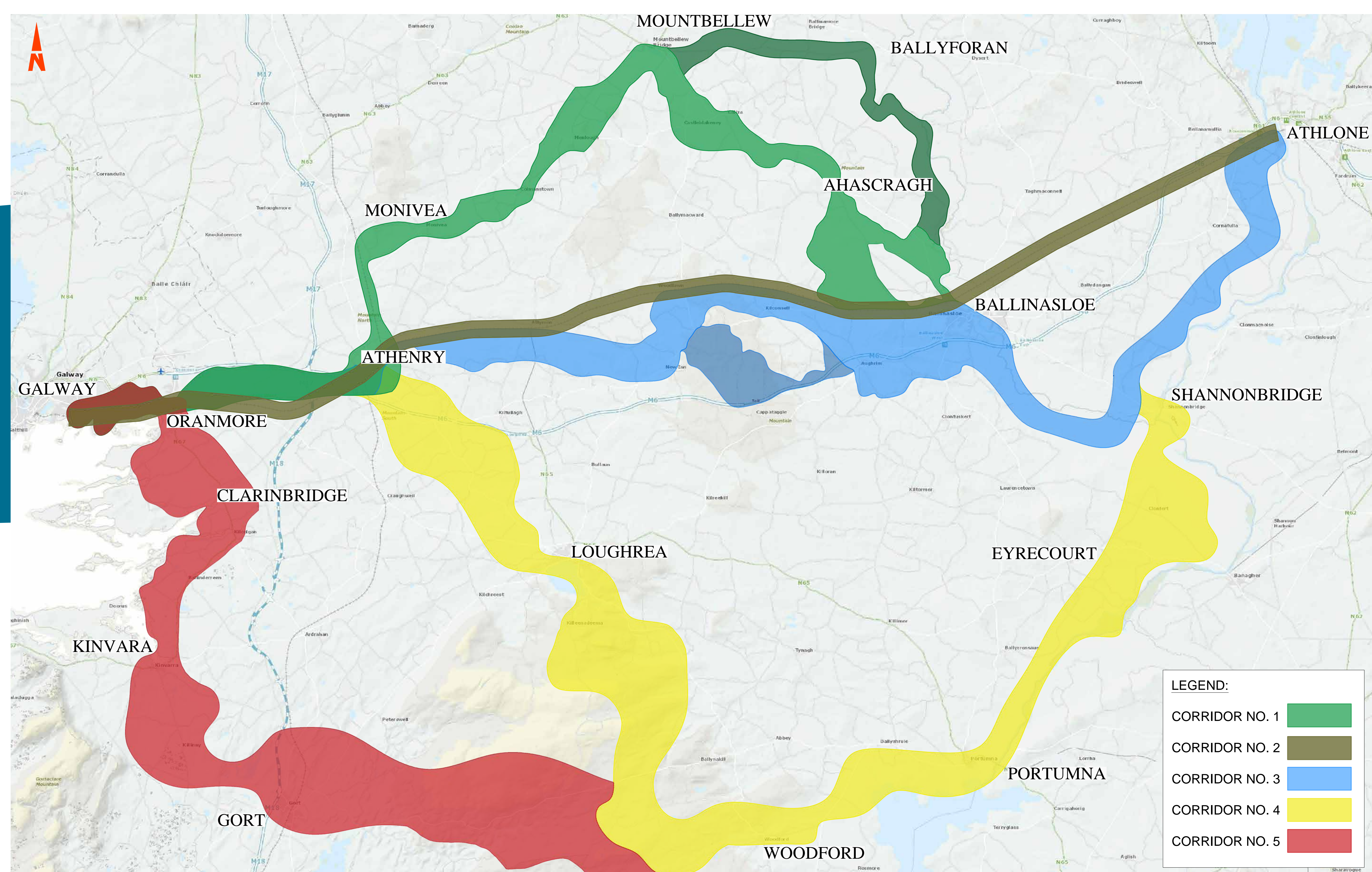
It was also emphasized that there would be strong consultation with landowners throughout the project development and that a key project aim would be to progress the project in collaboration with any affected landowners.

Following the consultations, a large number of responses were received and considered in developing the Route Corridor Options. A report summarising the first consultation is available to view on the project website.



# ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTIONS

An interactive map of Route Corridor Options is available to view in the Virtual Consultation Room at [www.galwaytoathlonecycleway.com](http://www.galwaytoathlonecycleway.com)



## Route Corridor Option Development

Route Corridor Options have been developed to connect likely tourism and leisure attractions, and use publicly owned land where possible. The options follow flood defense embankments, forestry tracks, bog roads and Bord na Móna railways. Where these are not present, and it may be necessary to use privately owned lands, we have identified 'Consultation Areas' where we would like to talk to the landowners and explore possible routes.

These routes would follow existing features and farm boundaries where possible avoiding severance.

## Talk to us

The consultation material can be viewed online in the virtual consultation room which is live on the project website from the 25th January 2021.

Interested parties will be able to meet with the project team by arrangement to discuss any issues of interest to them, either by phone or by video.

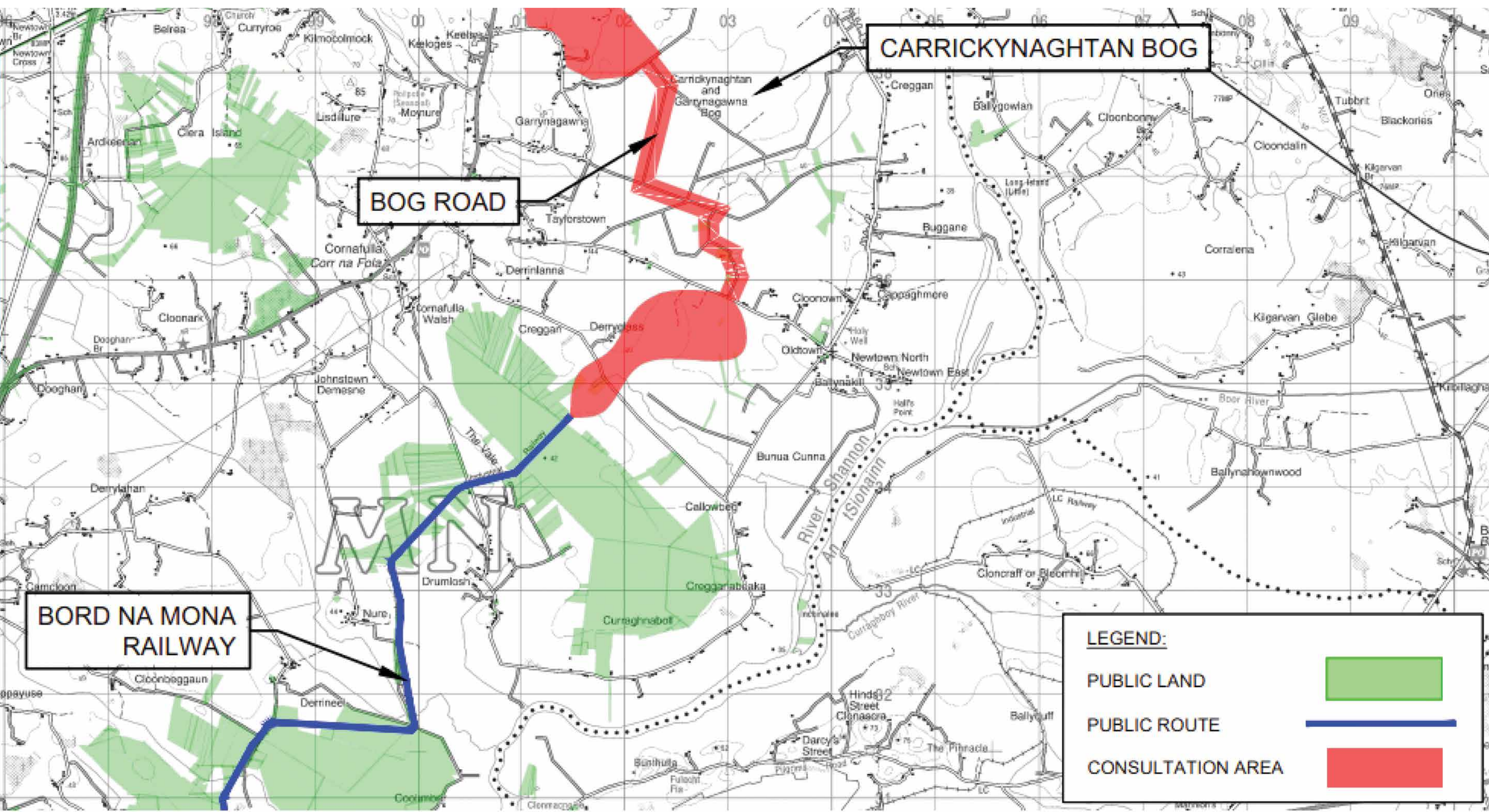
If your property is within these areas, we would encourage you to contact us to let us know your opinion on the cycleway.

We can be contacted through the website, where you may book an appointment to talk to the project team, or by calling the Cycleway Project Office in Ballinasloe at 091 509 267.



# ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTIONS

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## Route Corridor Option Categories

The proposed options are shown in four different categories that can include a Consultation Area, Public Route, Public Corridor and Rail Corridor. Areas of **Public Land** identified for the cycleway are shown in a green shade for reference on each option.

**Consultation Areas** are mostly private land used to link public corridors and routes. These are areas where the project team wishes to engage with landowners to explore route options.

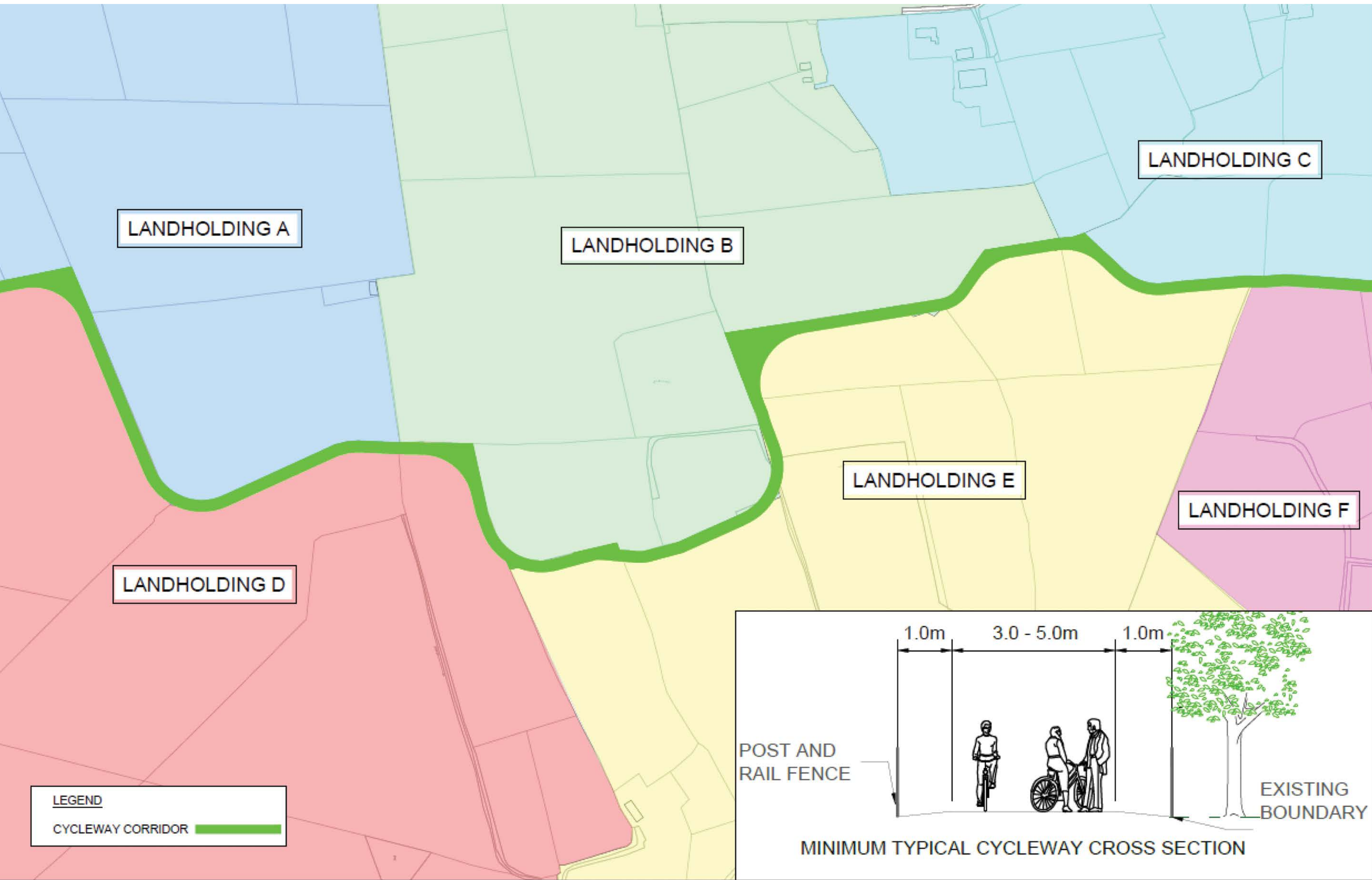
**Public Routes** use existing infrastructure such as railways, tracks and trails within state ownership, along with narrow public land plots to help create a continuous public land route.

**Public Corridors** are proposed in areas where there is an abundance of state-owned land to be further explored.

**Rail Corridors** are routes that parallel existing rail line boundaries.

## Minimising Land Severance

Where private land is needed for the cycleway, we will strive to purchase it through voluntary agreement and avoid any land severance, if at all possible, by following existing boundaries. A sample of how the cycleway might navigate through private land in agreement with affected landowners is shown below.





# GET INVOLVED

## HAVE YOUR SAY



### We would like to hear your views on the Route Corridor Options

The purpose of this consultation is to examine and receive feedback on the options developed, and to assist in the process of identifying a Preferred Route Corridor.

We welcome your feedback on any issues or information, which you think should be considered by the project team.

All information, including an interactive map of the Route Corridor Options and the consultation questionnaire, is available to view in the online Virtual Consultation Room which is live on the project website.

The cycleway project team is available to answer any questions and provide information to assist you with your submission. To arrange a call or online consultation with a member of the project team, please contact us by phone, email or via the online meeting booking facility. Online meetings will be facilitated from the 25th January.



You can make submissions or observations by:

Email:

[info@galwaytoathlonecycleway.com](mailto:info@galwaytoathlonecycleway.com)

Website:

[www.galwaytoathlonecycleway.com](http://www.galwaytoathlonecycleway.com)

Phone No: (091) 509 267

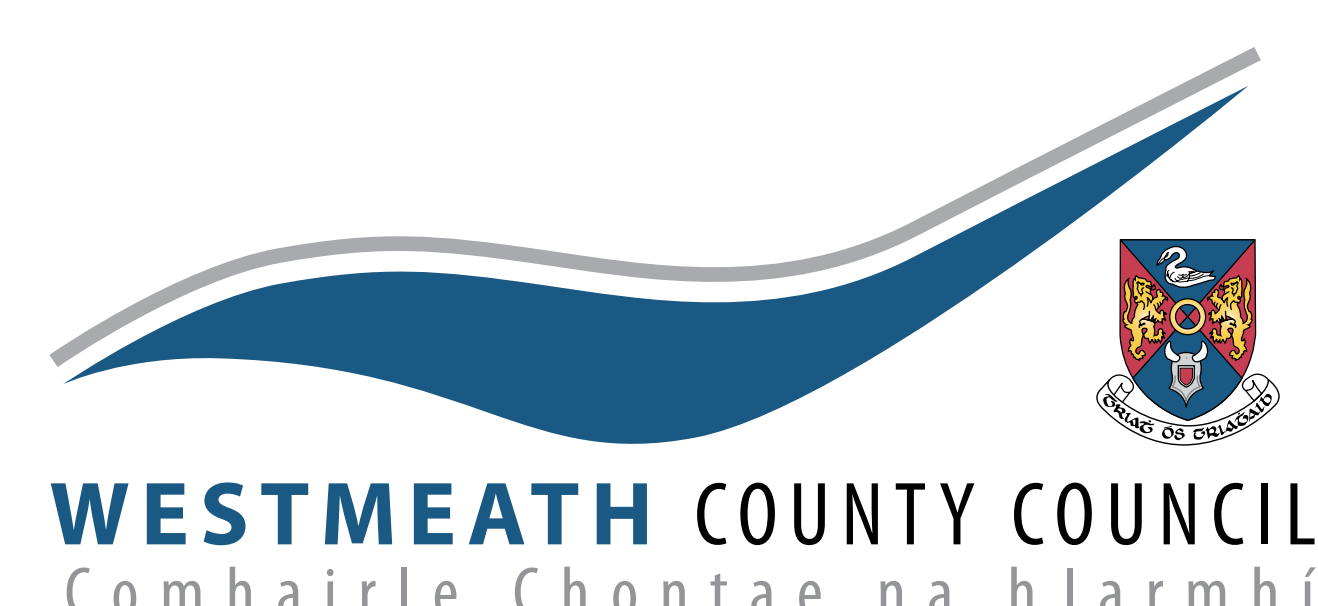
Please contact us to  
arrange a meeting



Project News and updates  
will be available on  
[galwaytoathlonecycleway.com](http://galwaytoathlonecycleway.com)



Galway to Athlone  
Cycleway Project Office,  
Society Street, Ballinasloe,  
Co. Galway, Ireland





# NEXT STEPS



**The next stage will involve a detailed assessment of all five Route Corridor Options under the following criteria and objectives:**



Economy



Safety



Physical Activity



Environment



Accessibility/  
Inclusion



Integration

- Establish a traffic-free connection from Galway to Dublin that is safe, attractive and comfortable;
- Create an engine to drive growth, supporting the national and local economies;
- Provide opportunities for new and existing businesses and communities;
- Minimise impacts to agricultural holdings, especially farm severance;
- Maximise the value of existing state owned lands and natural amenity;
- Develop a tourism experience that caters for a broad range of visitors;
- Be designed to international best practice and in accordance with adopted standards;
- Maximise the existing and proposed investment by Failte Ireland;
- Facilitate regular access to visitor attractions and services along the corridor;
- Facilitate connections with public transport hubs;
- In line with the Government's five 'S' criteria - Scenic, Sustainable, Strategic, Segregated and lots to See and do, in conjunction with environmental, engineering and financial considerations.

Feedback and submissions received during this consultation will be considered by the project team as part of the Option Selection Phase in determining a Preferred Route Corridor.

