

Project Liaison Officers (PLOs)



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The project will only proceed to the next stage after farmers and landowners have been consulted with

Project Overview

The proposed Galway to Athlone Cycleway project will complete a 270km – 300km car-free corridor connecting Galway and Dublin. It will form an attractive amenity to be enjoyed by local communities and visitors all year round. The project is being delivered by the Galway, Roscommon, and Westmeath local authorities in partnership with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the Department of Transport.

There are now five broad route corridors under consideration.

These follow publicly owned lands as far as possible. Between areas of public land, there are a number of Consultation Areas where the project team wish to explore possible routes with landowners. We now wish to meet with these landowners to discuss the project and explore where a route can be progressed through voluntary acquisition of land. This would be likely to be along a farm boundary.

Following this process, a preferred corridor will be selected, where the project team can be confident that a route can be delivered with the consent and agreement of the large majority of the landowners.

Feedback from the recent focused period of public consultation and landowner consultation will inform the next stage of the project, together with the "Five S" Criteria, i.e. to be Scenic, Sustainable, Strategic, Segregated with lots to See and do, in conjunction with environmental, engineering, and financial considerations.



April 2021

PROPOSED NEW GALWAY
TO ATHLONE CYCLEWAY

APPROACH TO LANDOWNER ENGAGEMENT

Farmers and Landowners

When public health guidance allows, we will arrange to meet face-to-face with farmers and landowners in the Consultation Areas.

In the meantime, the Project Team is available to answer your questions and listen to your feedback. We can also arrange virtual meetings.

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Land Acquisition

This is a new project with a completely new approach. A key objective of this project is to route the proposed Cycleway through publicly owned lands and avoid directly impacting farms and other properties where possible. Where private lands are required, the project team will liaise with the landowner / farmer in advance to identify the least disruptive route possible, such as along the farm / land boundary.

All land for the Cycleway will be purchased rather than using permissive access; and the Project Team will strive to agree a purchase for any private lands by Voluntary Agreement on acceptable terms with the landowner.

A Code of Best Practice for National and Regional Greenways is being developed by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), and other stakeholders in consultation with the main farming representatives (IFA, ICSA and ICMSA). They are working together to agree the process for acquiring lands for this and other National and Regional Greenways. The Code of Best Practice will also set out the planning process and the arrangements for construction and maintenance.

Project Liaison Officers (PLOs)

Project Liaison Officers from Galway, Roscommon and Westmeath County Councils will liaise and engage with affected farmers and landowners, on any matters relating to the proposed Greenway.

In the coming months the PLOs will visit farmers and landowners in the Consultation Areas to explore possible route options and talk through any issues or concerns.

The PLOs will explore and agree an optimum route with individual farmers and landowners to minimise impacts on their property, whether it is a farm, or other type of property.

As the project progresses, the PLOs will continue to work with farmers and landowners throughout the planning and detailed design stage, and before and during construction. The PLO will be available to farmers and landowners at all reasonable times.

Landowner Engagement is a Top Priority

The Project Team for the proposed Galway to Athlone Cycleway is committed to engaging with farmers and landowners to inform the project. That is why the project will only proceed to the next stage, i.e. identification of a preferred corridor, after farmers and landowners have been widely consulted.

Once public health guidelines permit, the Project Liaison Officers from Galway, Roscommon and Westmeath County Councils will be on the ground to meet with farmers and landowners.

In particular, Project Liaison Officers will start to visit farmers and landowners in the Consultation Areas to explore possible route options, and to talk through any issues or concerns. The objective is to find out how a route may be developed with the consent of the landowner, which is likely to be around the boundary of a land holding. The Project Team understands that some farms are less able to accommodate a cycleway than others and wants to avoid disturbing people unnecessarily.

Independent Agronomist

As recommended by the farming organisations, the IFA, ICSA and ICMSA, an Independent Agronomist has recently been appointed by the Project Team to ensure that farmers and landowners' interests are captured and provide impartial advice on the proposals.

The Independent Agronomist, Philip Farrelly & Co Agricultural Consultants is available to farmers and landowners to discuss any agronomy issues or concerns that arise at this stage of the project (see www.pfarrelly.com / telephone 01 690 6555).

During the next stage of the project, when a Preferred Route Corridor is identified, farmers and landowners may also be advised by their own Property Advisor / Agronomist; with fees paid for by the Project.