

Project

R132 Connectivity Project

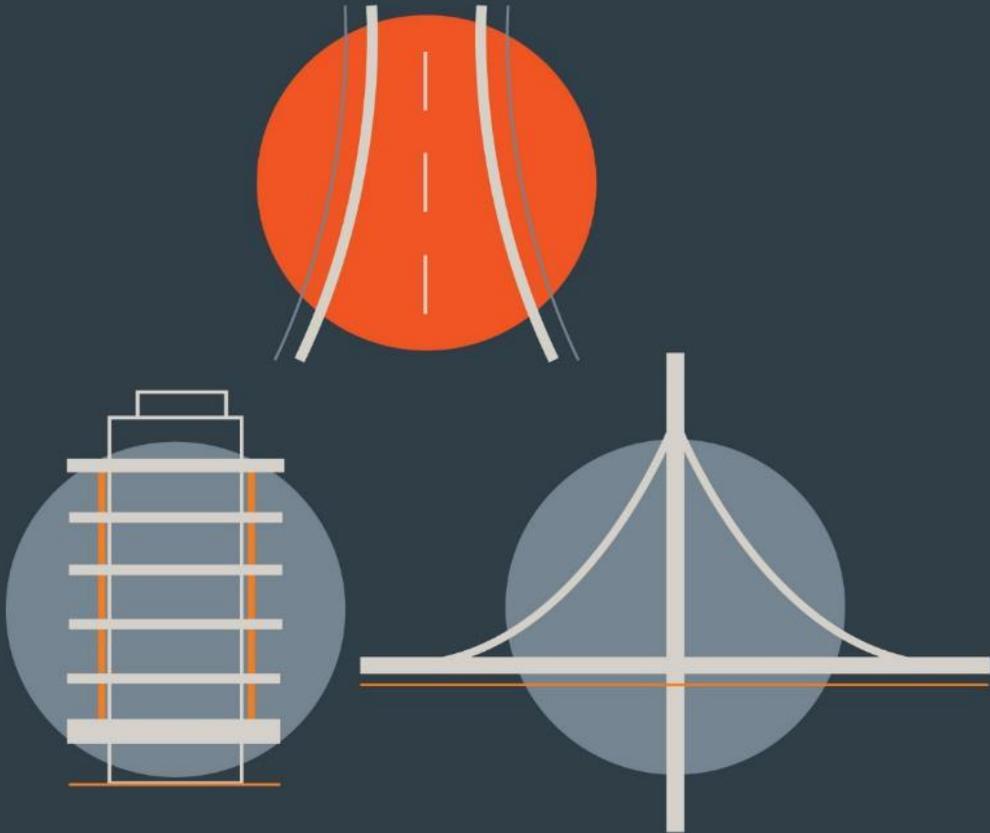
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This report has been prepared by DBFL Consulting Engineers (DBFL) on behalf of Fingal County Council (FCC) and outlines the improvements and upgrades proposed as part of the R132 Connectivity Project. Fingal County Council will be applying for planning permission to carry out upgrade works on the R132. These upgrade works are identified in **Figure 1.1** and include the following:

1. Upgrade works between the north of Pinnock Hill Roundabout and north of Estuary Roundabout, to facilitate installation of new protected cycle and pedestrian facilities, retention of one bus and one general traffic lane in each direction, removal of hard shoulders and/or general traffic lanes, and reduction in speed limit to 50km/h
2. Three new signal controlled crossing points provided along the R132 located as follows:
 1. North of Pinnockhill Roundabout
 2. Adjacent existing Chapel Lane/Ashley Avenue overbridge
 3. North of Estuary Roundabout
3. The following three existing roundabouts will be upgraded and changed to signalised intersections to facilitate pedestrian and cyclist facilities:
 1. Malahide Road Roundabout
 2. Seatown Roundabout
 3. Estuary Roundabout
4. Partial/full closure of Drynam Road connection to the R132/Malahide Road Roundabout

1.1.2 This scheme will enhance and improve connections between these key crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists. Furthermore, this scheme will ensure adequate links across the R132, to existing and proposed developments including future MetroLink Stations located adjacent the R132.

1.1.3 This report forms part of the information published alongside the drawings for this scheme, as part of the non-statutory public consultation process. At this stage, we (FCC) are informing you (the public) of how these upgrades will occur and the anticipated outcomes. This scheme will be subject to a planning consent process, known as a Section 177AE application to An Bord Pleanála, in early 2021.

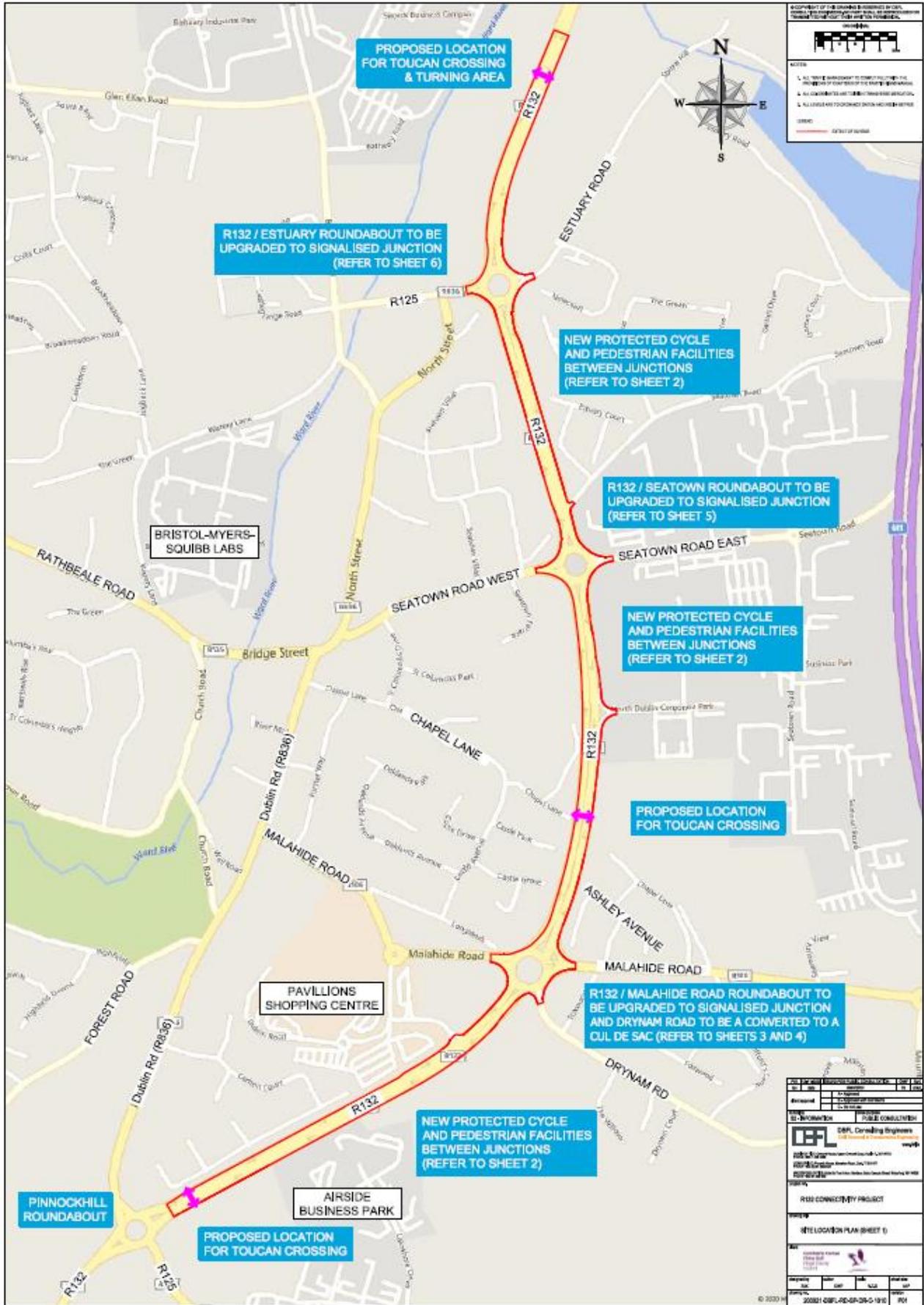


Figure 1.1: Site Location Plan

Non-Statutory Public Consultation:

- 1.1.4 Fingal County Council will be holding a non-statutory online public consultation for a period of 4 weeks from the 17th of November - 15th of December. The public are invited to make comments/submissions on the proposed development to Fingal County Council during that time. An advertisement will be placed in the local newspaper informing the public and inviting submissions.
- 1.1.5 A leaflet containing information regarding the proposed works will be circulated to 4,200 residential and commercial properties in the area surrounding the proposed works.
- 1.1.6 The purpose of this consultation process is to inform the public of the upgrade works proposed and to comment/make a submission on same. Fingal County Council will consider the submissions and make any necessary changes before lodging the formal planning application to An Bord Pleanála in early 2021.

Planning Policy Context

- 1.1.7 Several key local policy documents have set out the principles and vision for the future development of Swords. These include the *Fingal Development Plan (2017-2023)*, *Your Swords: An Emerging City: Strategic Vision 2035* along with the *Barrysparks & Crowscastle, Fosterstown and Estuary West Masterplans (2019)*. These documents identify a very clear vision to rebalance the provision for all road users on the R132, moving away from the current car dominated environment and instead provide for a multi-modal function with pedestrians and cyclists placed at the top of the movement hierarchy.
- 1.1.8 The proposed scheme is located within the highly populated urban area of Swords which is set for further growth and expansion in the future. Therefore, to ensure this growth could be achieved sustainably Fingal County Council commissioned the South Fingal Transport Study in 2017. This study determined key infrastructure requirements and outlined sustainable levels of land use development leading up to the delivery of MetroLink and beyond. The study made several key design recommendations with respect to the R132 in Swords including the replacement of the roundabouts with signalised junctions incorporating controlled Toucan crossings.

2.0 SCHEME OBJECTIVES

- 2.1.1 The objective of this scheme is, primarily, to improve the connectivity and safety of pedestrians and cyclists moving along and across the R132. Fingal County Council, in recent times, have published a number of masterplans and policies, which together with schemes such as MetroLink and BusConnects, propose changing the nature of the R132, from a higher speed distributor road focused on the movement of vehicles to one which functions as an urban street with defined crossing points, which are safe and convenient for all road users. This scheme aligns with these national and local plans and is the first step in improving access across and along the R132 for all.
- 2.1.2 The scheme objectives are derived from national, regional and local policy which prioritise the movement of pedestrians and cyclists and place active modes at the top of the movement hierarchy. At the heart of the scheme is the prioritisation of pedestrian and cyclist safety and connectivity.
- 2.1.3 The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) promotes the creation of walkable, cyclable and public transport orientated communities. Consequently, to encourage more sustainable travel patterns and safer streets, pedestrians and then cyclists must be placed at the top of the user hierarchy.

3.0 NEED FOR THE SCHEME

- 3.1.1 The strategic road network in the Swords area is predominantly orientated on a north-south axis, due to Swords' historical development along the R132 which was previously a National primary route connecting Dublin and Belfast. However, this route has now been superseded by the construction of the M1. Consequently, the function of the R132 has changed, instead becoming a local traffic distributor for the town's population to places of employment. There are a diverse range of residential and commercial land uses along the R132 with various business and retail parks located on the eastern side, such as Airside and Swords Business Park.
- 3.1.2 In general, the existing road network along this section of the R132 reflects its previous role as a National Primary route, designed for that function with wide carriageways in both directions separated by a wide landscaped median. Since its previous downgrade no significant interventions have been made to reflect the change in function. Consequently, this results in the environment along the R132 corridor and at each of the junctions being heavily car dominated with high speed limits of either 60km/h or 80km/h.
- 3.1.3 Existing walking and cycling infrastructure is severely lacking with provision for cyclists most notable by its almost complete absence, as illustrated in the images below. Where provision has been made for those travelling on foot, this is generally poor quality, inaccessible for people with mobility impairments and does not cater for desire lines nor support convenient, direct access to existing public transport facilities.



Figure 3.1: Lack of Pedestrian Infrastructure along key Desire Lines



Figure 3.2: Lack of Safe Pedestrian Crossing Points on Desire Lines



Figure 3.3: Cyclists Forced to Share Road with General Traffic Through Roundabouts



Figure 3.4: Lack of Safe Pedestrian Links to Bus Stops

3.1.4 With regards to public transport, there are limited bus lanes including the section of the R132 between Pinnockhill and Malahide Road, however there is no bus priority at any of the junctions and consequently buses experience delays at peak times. The overall environment for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users is therefore hostile, unwelcoming and unlikely to support any future aspirations for achieving a greater sustainable transport mode share.

4.0 DESIGN APPROACH

4.1.1 Each of the junctions have been assessed individually with various design options discussed and appraised in order to determine the optimal layout for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and other vehicular movement as well as their alignment with future public realm and urban integration proposals being developed for the area.

4.1.2 Upon commencing the project, an initial investigation and high level first sifting of potential suitable junction types was undertaken to determine which options should be brought forward for further detailed consideration. The junction types considered included:

1. Upgraded roundabout with segregated cycle lanes
2. Grade separated junction
3. Turbo roundabout (comprising the spiralling traffic flow with raised lane dividers marking entry, circulating and exit lanes)
4. Throughabout roundabout
5. Conventional signalised junction with marked bus and cycle lanes
6. Signalised junction with physical protection of cycle lanes
7. Signalised junction with protected and optimised signals for cyclists

4.1.3 Ultimately it was decided to bring forward the junction types 1, 5, 6 and 7 for further detailed consideration and assessment.

4.1.4 By converting the junctions to signalised intersections, significantly reduces the junction footprint compared to the existing roundabouts. The reduced footprint also improves pedestrian and cyclist crossings through a reduction in length of crossings. Consequently, the land released adjacent the junctions offer improved public realm opportunities and is a stepping stone to achieving the objectives of the overarching Swords Masterplans.

- 4.1.5 Some key baseline design criteria adopted and incorporated into all design solutions considered for the junctions included the following:
- Provision of controlled pedestrian crossings on all arms of each junction and minimise crossing lengths
 - Segregation of motorised and non-motorised traffic
 - Provide for bus priority enhancements where appropriate
 - Reduction in general traffic lanes on R132 from two down to one in both directions
 - Provide consistency in terms of design for all junctions along the scheme
- 4.1.6 In order to determine the optimal design for each junction, it was necessary to undertake an options appraisal. This appraisal was based on the Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) set out by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS), aligning with the Common Appraisal Framework (CAF) criteria used for the MCA covering Economy, Integration, Cycle Infrastructure, Safety and Environment. The options for each junction were then relatively compared against each other based on a five-point scale, ranging from having significant advantages to having significant disadvantages over other options.
- 4.1.7 Each of the proposed crossing points underwent a similar high-level MCA Assessment, with each crossing reviewed with respect to determining the optimal layout for pedestrians and cyclists as well as their alignment with future development and urban integration proposals for the wider area. A review of crossing types determined that continuous single stage Toucan crossings would provide a high Level of Service for both pedestrians and cyclists.
- 4.1.8 The following sections of the report outline the option development and selection process for each of the study junctions and crossing points and provide detail on the emerging preferred junction arrangements.

5.0 R132 CORRIDOR INTERVENTIONS

LINKS BETWEEN JUNCTIONS

- 5.1.1 The scheme also includes for upgrades to the sections of road in between each of the principle junctions in order to calm traffic and provide a more hospitable environment for pedestrians and cyclists. These changes, which include reducing the width of traffic lanes and the provision of continuous routes for buses, pedestrians and cyclists, will commence just north of the Pinnockhill Roundabout and extends to Estuary Junction.
- 5.1.2 As noted previously, the existing speed limits along the extents of the study area are 60km/h and 80km/h. To further support the change in character and function of the R132 and creating a more hospitable walking and cycling environment, it is proposed to reduce the speed limit to 50km/h along the extents of the scheme.
- 5.1.3 The typical proposed cross section proposed along these link sections, as shown in **Figure 5.1** below, will include one 3.0m wide general traffic lane and one 3.0m bus lane in both directions. A 1.85m wide footpath and 1.85m wide cycle lane will also be provided on both sides with the cycle lanes segregated from the bus lanes via pencil bollards and a kerb. The existing median shall be maintained under the proposals.

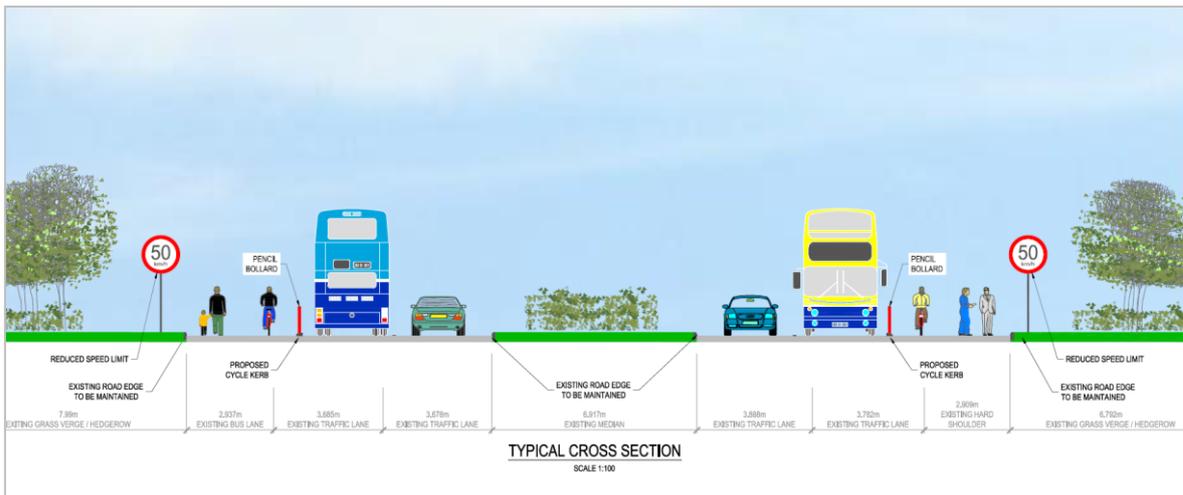


Figure 5.1: Typical Road Cross Section Detail Between Junctions

- 5.1.4 The proposed changes to the sections of road between the junctions are also illustrated in **Figure 5.2** below:



Figure 5.2: Existing and Proposed Road Layout Between Junctions

- 5.1.5 This interim transitional solution can be easily implemented in the short term, ahead of the future upgrade of the R132 as part of the development of lands along the Metrolink Corridor and is a stepping stone to achieving the urbanisation of the route in line with the objectives of the overarching Swords Masterplans.

CONTROLLED CROSSING POINTS

5.1.6 There are also three new potential signal-controlled crossing points proposed as part of the scheme, these include:

- ***Crossing 1:*** A Toucan crossing just north of the Pinnockhill Roundabout, enabled safe, convenient access to/from the existing bus stops in this vicinity
- ***Crossing 2:*** A Toucan crossing at ground level, in addition to the existing pedestrian overbridge connecting Chapel Lane to the west and Ashely Avenue to the east
- ***Crossing 3:*** A Toucan crossing located to the North of the Estuary Junction to serve existing bus stops

5.1.7 The provision of these controlled crossing points will enable existing pedestrian desire lines to be better met and enhance overall connectivity and accessibility of the pedestrian and cyclist network, as well as links to public transport.

6.0 ESTUARY ROUNDABOUT

Key Design Considerations

- 6.1.1 The existing R132/Estuary Road/R125 roundabout is a four-arm multi-lane roundabout with a large central landscaped island and is currently subject to a 60km/h speed limit. The existing boundary of the Fingallians GAA Club and pitches on the northwest and northeast corners of the junction are a constraint in terms of undertaking any changes to the existing high boundary wall. There is also an aspiration to release lands in so far as is possible by reducing the existing footprint of the junction by converting it to a signalised junction and reallocating the road space for widened footways and public realm.
- 6.1.2 The Estuary Roundabout is also a key node in terms of facilitating pedestrian and cyclist crossing movements between the established residential areas to the east and Swords local centre to the west. While all movements at the junction will need to cater for large vehicles and buses, predominant bus flow movements at this junction will be to/from the R132 (north) and R125 by routes serving Swords Village.

Emerging Preferred Option

- 6.1.3 The emerging preferred option for the Estuary junction proposes a signalised junction with cycle protected lanes, as shown in **Figure 6.1** below.
- 6.1.4 In terms of pedestrian facilities, footpaths are provided on both sides of each arm along with controlled pedestrian crossings over each junction arm. Cyclists are accommodated within off-road cycle tracks which ramp down on approach to the junction. Protected islands provided on the junction corners aim to protect cyclists from turning vehicles and increase safety. Bus Lanes are provided in both directions on the R132.
- 6.1.5 The cycle protected signalised junction at the Estuary Junction offers significant advantages in terms of facilitating safe, direct and legible facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. This is particularly due to the high Levels of Service and safety benefits afforded to pedestrians and cyclists due to non-motorised user movements being kept segregated, along with the additional physical protection for cyclists from vehicle turning movements through the introduction of the corner islands.

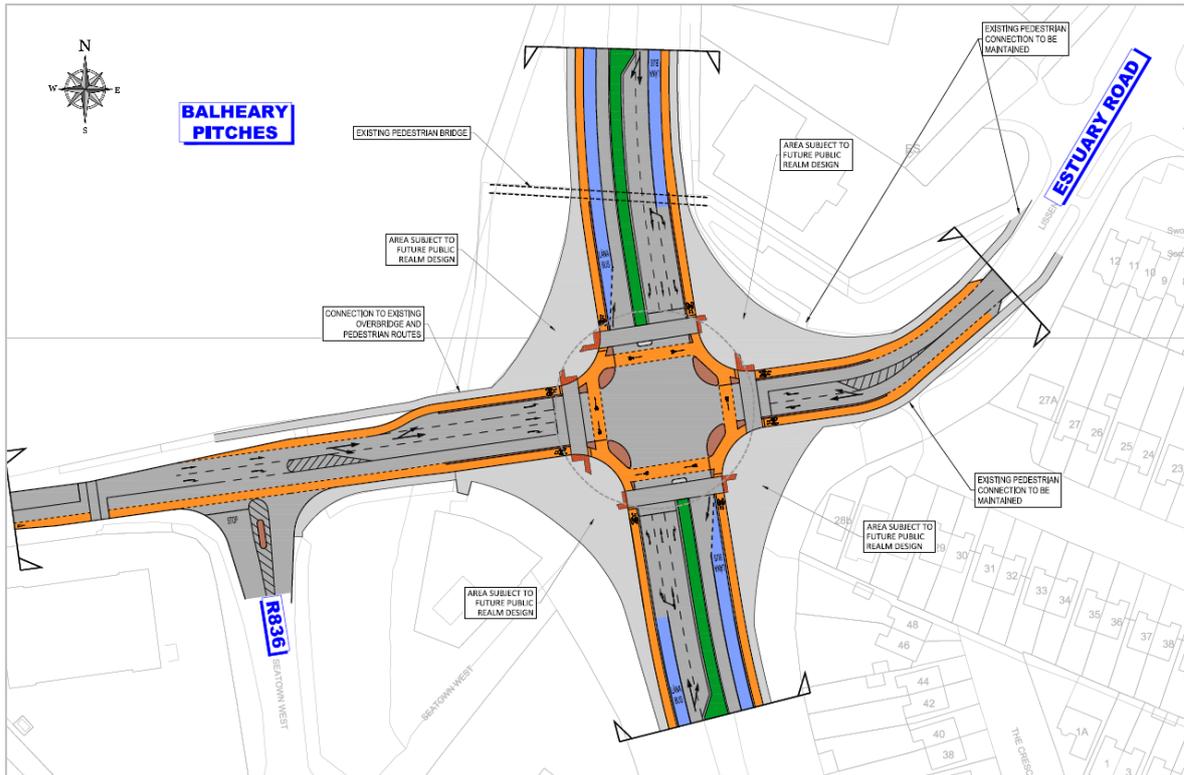


Figure 6.1: Estuary Junction Emerging Preferred Option

6.1.6 A summary of the key benefits of the emerging preferred option for the Estuary Junction are outlined below:

Estuary Junction – Emerging Preferred Option	
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At grade crossings are direct, better meet desire lines and improve pedestrian journey times compared to existing situation which only provides grade separated bridge crossing • Integrates with existing pedestrian linkages • Provides high levels of safety for pedestrians and cyclists as they are kept segregated from each other and from motorised traffic • Creation of a compact junction design frees up existing space for public realm enhancements allowing for improved use for large volumes of multi-modal users • Offers opportunities for improved urban design and visual impact • Signalised junction allows for better level of control for vehicles through the junction and better adaptability for these type of junctions • Reduced junction size and signals will promote lower vehicle speeds and improve road safety • Reduced junction size may have positive impacts on air quality/noise due to reduced speeds
Disbenefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Converting existing roundabout to a signalised junction and reduction in general traffic lanes will impact junction capacity for vehicular and traffic movements, although this offers better level of control of vehicles through the junction and better traffic management functionality.

6.1.7 The proposed changes to the Estuary Junction are also illustrated in **Figure 6.2** below:



Figure 6.2: Existing and Proposed Estuary Junction Layouts

7.0 SEATOWN ROAD ROUNDABOUT

Key Design Considerations

- 7.1.1 The existing R132/Seatown Road Roundabout is a four arm multi-lane roundabout with a large central landscaped island and is currently subject to an 80km/h speed limit. Future developments are proposed in the vicinity of the junction. Therefore, the design options must consider and facilitate safe, convenient, direct and attractive facilities for the anticipated volumes of multi-modal users accessing the area in all directions. Whilst this junction will not cater for as many bus movements/routes as the other study junctions, appropriate bus priority facilities still need to be considered.

Emerging Preferred Option

- 7.1.2 The emerging preferred option for the Seatown junction proposes a signalised junction with cycle protected lanes as shown in **Figure 7.1** below.
- 7.1.3 In terms of pedestrian facilities footpaths are provided on both sides of each arm along with controlled pedestrian crossings over each junction arm. Cyclists are accommodated with protected islands through the junction which aim to increase safety for cyclists, in particular, with regard to left turning vehicles. Bus Lanes are provided in both directions on the R132 arms and on the Seatown Road East and West approaches. However, the bus lanes stop short of the stop lines to facilitate left turn general traffic movements.
- 7.1.4 As per the Estuary Junction preferred option, the cycle protected signalised junction is also considered to offer significant advantages in terms of facilitating safe, direct and legible facilities for pedestrians and cyclists at the Seatown Road junction.
- 7.1.5 This design option also enables the creation of large public space areas on the corners of the junction facilitating public realm enhancements and connectivity to the future developments. Furthermore, having a consistent approach applied in terms of the junction type implemented along this section of the R132, assists in providing a clear, legible network for all road users and aids familiarity.

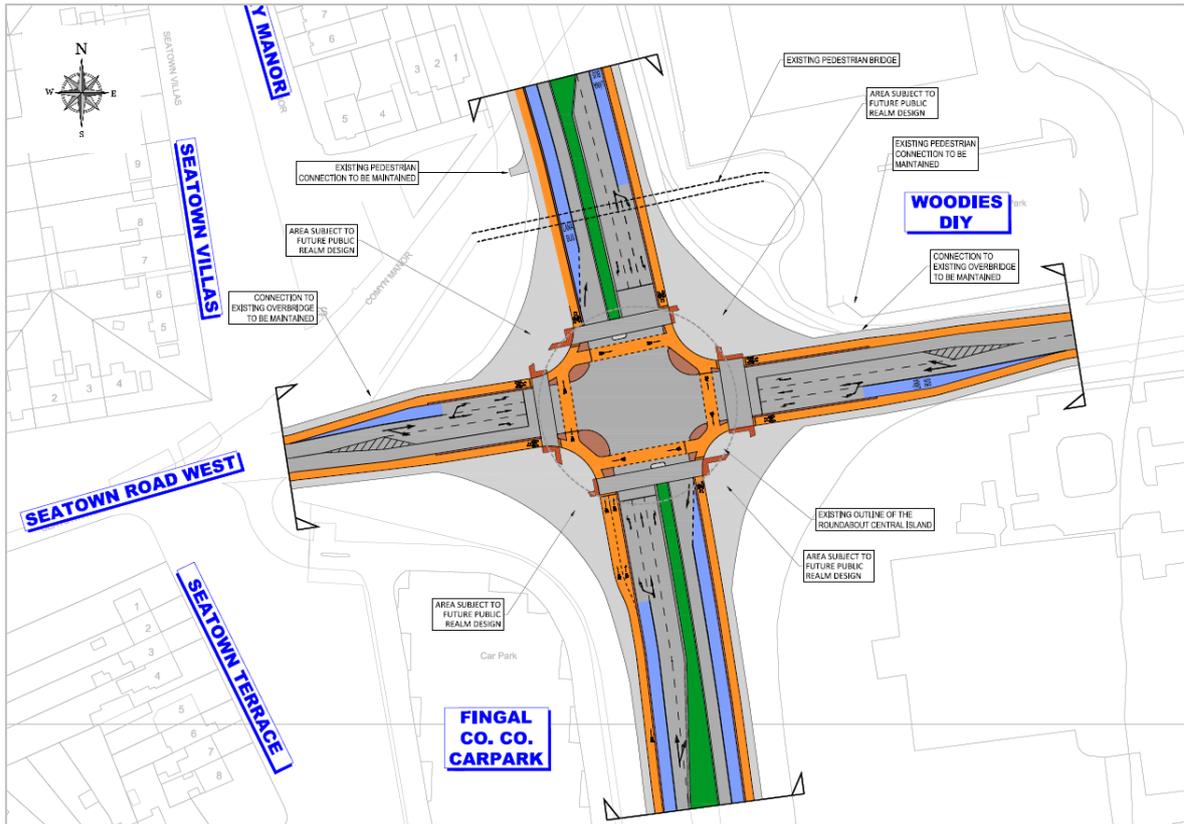


Figure 7.1: Seatown Junction Emerging Preferred Option

7.1.6 A summary of the key benefits of the emerging preferred option for the Seatown Junction are outlined below:

Seatown Road Junction – Emerging Preferred Option	
Benefits	
•	At grade crossings are direct, better meet desire lines and improve pedestrian journey times compared to existing situation which provides grade separated bridge crossings
•	Integrates with existing pedestrian linkages
•	Offers high levels of safety for pedestrians/cyclists as they are kept segregated from motorised traffic thereby reducing potential conflict points
•	Creation of a compact junction design frees up existing space for public realm enhancements allowing for improved use for large volumes of multi-modal users
•	Offers opportunities for improved urban design and visual impact
•	Signalised junction allows for better level of control for vehicles through the junction and better adaptability for these type of junctions
•	Reduced junction size and signals will promote lower vehicle speeds and improve road safety
•	Reduced junction size may have positive impacts on air quality and noise due to reduced speeds
Disbenefits	
•	Converting existing roundabout to a signalised junction and reduction in general traffic lanes will impact junction capacity for vehicular and traffic movements, although this offers better level of control of vehicles through the junction and better traffic management functionality.

7.1.7 The proposed changes to the Seatown Road Junction are also illustrated in **Figure 7.2** below:

EXISTING



PROPOSED



Figure 7.2: Existing and Proposed Seatown Junction Layouts

8.0 MALAHIDE ROAD ROUNDABOUT

Key Design Considerations

- 8.1.1 The existing R132/Malahide Road (R106)/Drynam Road Roundabout is a five arm signalised roundabout with a large central landscaped island and is currently subject to an 80km/h speed limit. The Malahide Road Roundabout currently experiences very high traffic flows during peak times which results in capacity issues with significant delays and queuing. Forecast future traffic flows through the junction will continue to be high and therefore the design options developed for the Malahide Road junction need to strike a balance between prioritising sustainable modes without causing significant adverse impacts on general traffic movements which compromise the overall operation and efficiency of the junction and surrounding network.
- 8.1.2 The junction will also be a key node in terms of channelling walking and cycling movements from the surrounding area towards the future developments. Therefore, the design must consider and facilitate safe, convenient, direct and attractive facilities for large volumes of multi-modal users accessing the area from all directions.
- 8.1.3 There is a requirement to facilitate enhanced east-west connectivity for buses between Malahide Road and Swords Road in accordance with the BusConnects Network Redesign.
- 8.1.4 Furthermore, a number of strategy and masterplan documents have also indicated the intention to remove the existing Drynam Road connection to the roundabout for general traffic. The Barrysparks and Crowscastle Masterplan highlights the closure of the Drynam Road access from the roundabout with alternative provisions made through the Barryspark and Crowscastle lands. Therefore, the redistribution of Drynam Road movements has also been considered as part of the junction redesign options.

Emerging Preferred Option

- 8.1.5 The emerging preferred option for the Malahide Road junction proposes a signalised junction with cycle protected lanes, as shown in **Figure 8.1** below.
- 8.1.6 In terms of pedestrian facilities, footpaths are provided on both sides of each arm along with controlled pedestrian crossings over each junction arm. Large shared

space areas can be provided on all corners, capable of accommodating large volumes of multi-modal trips which may arise to/from the future developments.

- 8.1.7 Cyclists are accommodated with protected islands through the junction which aim to increase safety for cyclists, in particular, with regard to left turning vehicles. Bus lanes are provided in both directions on all arms which stop short of the stop lines to facilitate left turn general traffic movements.

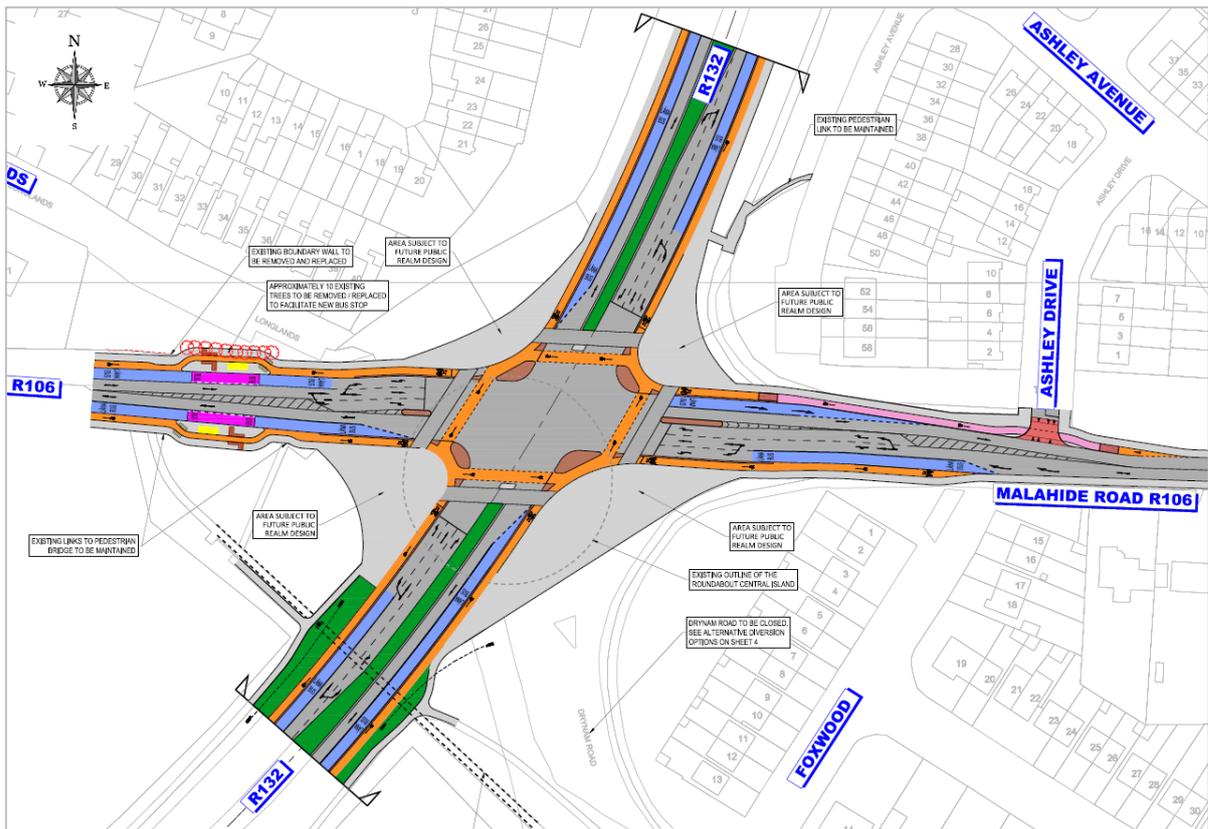


Figure 8.1: Malahide Road Junction Emerging Preferred Option

- 8.1.8 The Drynam Road connection to the junction is proposed to be closed with three alternative diversion options being considered, as shown in **Figure 8.2** and described as follows:

- **Option 1:** Creation of a cul-de-sac at the northern section of Drynam Road (*Preferred Option*)
- **Option 2:** Creation of a left turn exit only onto Malahide Road (*Potential Option*)
- **Option 3:** Creation of a left in / left out junction on the R132 through the Barrysparks lands (*Possible Future Option*)

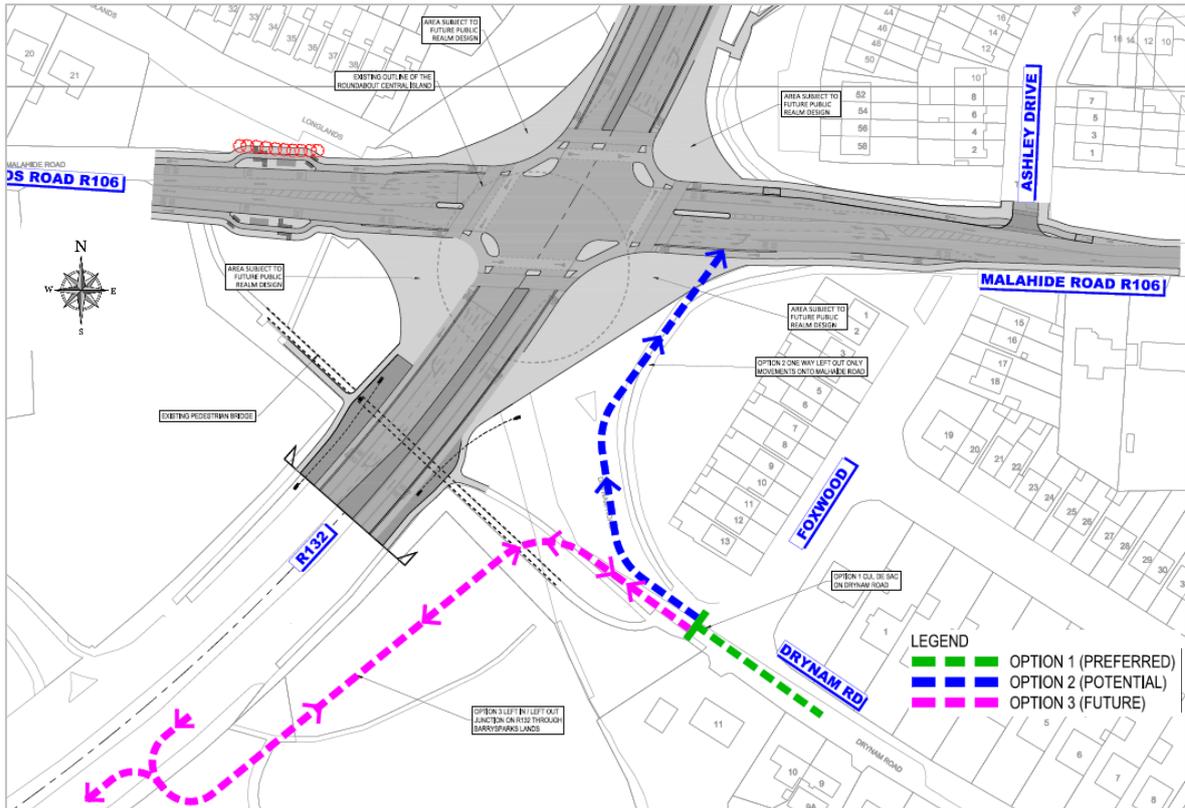


Figure 8.2: Malahide Road Junction - Drynam Road Options

- 8.1.9 Removing the Drynam Road direct link to the junction facilitates the creation of a safer more pedestrian/cyclist friendly environment in accordance with the overarching strategies and vision for the R132 corridor in this location.
- 8.1.10 As per the Estuary and Seatown Road Junctions, the preferred option for the Malahide Road Junction is a cycle protected signalised junction. Once again, this offers high levels of safety to pedestrians and cyclists whilst accommodating large volumes of multi-modal users. Applying a consistent approach in terms of the junction type implemented at the Malahide Road Junction as that at the Estuary and Seatown Road Junctions, provides a clear, consistent and legible network for all road users and aids end user familiarity.

Malahide Road Junction – Emerging Preferred Option

Benefits

- At grade crossings are direct, better meet desire lines and improve pedestrian journey times
- Provides high levels of safety for pedestrians and cyclists as they are kept segregated from each other and from motorised traffic thereby reducing potential conflict points
- Integrates with existing pedestrian routes/linkages
- Creation of a compact junction design frees up existing space for public realm enhancements allowing for improved use for large volumes of multi-modal users
- Offers opportunities for improved urban design and visual impact
- Signalised junction allows for better level of control for vehicles through the junction and better adaptability for these type of junctions

- Reduced junction size and signals will promote lower vehicle speeds and improve road safety
- Reduced junction size may have positive impacts on air quality and noise due to reduced speeds

Disbenefits

- Converting existing roundabout to a signalised junction and reduction in general traffic lanes will impact junction capacity for vehicular and traffic movements, although this offers better level of control of vehicles through the junction and better traffic management functionality.
- Preferred junction will result in the closure of Drynam Road at its western extent

8.1.11 The proposed changes to the Malahide Road Junction are also illustrated in **Figures 8.3 & 8.4** below:



Figure 8.3: Existing and Proposed Malahide Road Junction Layout



This image represents the geometric layout of the junction. The location and design of street furniture such as street lighting, signals and signs and the colour and type of cycle markings is indicative only and will be subject to detailed design and finalisation of the plans.

Figure 8.4: Existing and Proposed Malahide Road Junction Layout

9.0 HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR FEEDBACK

- 9.1.1 The preferred plans and reports for the proposed scheme will be available to view online at <https://consult.fingal.ie/en/browse> from **17th of November 2020 to 15th of December 2020** inclusive.
- 9.1.2 Submissions or observations on the proposed scheme may be made from **17th of November 2020 and must arrive no later than 5pm on 15th of December 2020.**
- 9.1.3 **Submissions/Observations may be made as follows:**
- Online at: <https://consult.fingal.ie/en/browse> or
 - In writing to:

Senior Executive Officer,
Planning and Strategic Infrastructure Department,
Fingal County Council,
County Hall,
Main Street,
Swords,
Co. Dublin, K67 X8Y2
- 9.1.4 If you have a query about making your submission or questions about the plans, you may contact us at:

Email: fingal.developmentplan@fingal.ie
- 9.1.5 A hard copy of the full set of drawings in A3 size can be made available for purchase for a fee of €30, upon prior request to fingal.developmentplan@fingal.ie.
- 9.1.6 Please make your submission or observation by one medium only i.e. online or in writing. Clearly mark your submission as for the **R132 CONNECTIVITY PROJECT.**
- 9.1.7 Any submissions shall state your name, address and where relevant, the body or organisation represented. Your name and body or organisation represented will appear on the list of submissions. Issues raised in submissions or observations on the proposed development will appear in any reports linked to the proposed development and will list the persons or bodies who made submissions or observations. Details including the names of those making submissions or observations may also be shared with relevant Council Departments and agents working on their behalf.

Next Steps

- 9.1.8 Following this non-statutory public consultation, Fingal County Council will be seeking to secure approval for the works from An Bord Pleanála under Section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). You will have an opportunity to make a submission on the application when it is lodged with An Bord Pleanála.