

# Fingal Coastal Way

## Stage 1 Route Options Assessment Executive Summary

Fingal County Council

April 2021



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Scheme Context

The Fingal Coastal Way is a proposed coastal greenway extending along the Fingal Coast from Newbridge Demesne to the Meath Border. The scope of the project is to deliver a safe, attractive, environmentally sympathetic first class coastal pedestrian and cycle route between Newbridge Demesne in Donabate and the County Boundary North of Balbriggan. The Fingal Coastal Way is envisaged to be a flagship scheme for tourism in the county with the potential to promote and enhance the local tourist economy. The scheme would improve connectivity between the urban centres along the route and a number of schools and tourist attractions in the area, thereby providing an attractive option for cyclists that will help promote modal shift and sustainable travel choices. The route is envisaged to be predominantly a leisure and tourist amenity but will also serve as a local commuter route with the scheme extents including the key towns of Donabate, Rush, Skerries and Balbriggan while also incorporating other important areas such as Newbridge Demense, Rogerstown, Drumanagh, Loughshinny, Ardgillan and Bremore.

## 1.2. Purpose of the Feasibility and Options Assessment Process

The project will be brought forward through the following stages:

- Stage (i) Feasibility Study, Option Selection Process, and Concept Design.
- Stage (ii): Preliminary Design & Environmental Evaluation.
- Stage (iii): Statutory Processes.

At present, the project is at Option Selection Process and this report sits within Stage (i) of the project brief and outlines Stage 1 of the Route Option Assessment process with Stage 2 of the Route Options Assessment and identification of the Emerging Preferred Route to follow on in 2021 before the project progresses to Stage (ii) and ultimately Stage (iii), where a planning application will be submitted to An Bord Pleanala in 2023.

The purpose behind this report is to outline the process involved in identifying a long list of viable routes and carrying out a Stage 1 preliminary options assessment to determine suitable routes for the more detailed Stage 2 assessment process. In carrying out the preliminary options assessment, the following steps were undertaken:

- Confirm study area extents
- Identify key constraints within the study area (desktop study, site inspections, mapping of identified constraints, utility information, traffic surveys, review of flood maps)
- Develop a long list of potentially viable route options.
- Undertake a multi-criteria sifting process based on high-level criteria to identify a short list of feasible options that can deliver the project objectives.

# 2. Stakeholder Consultation

As part of the general consultation associated with the scheme, numerous consultation meetings and workshops have been undertaken with key stakeholder groups in order to discuss strategic and specific elements of the scheme feasibility. This consultation has assisted in guiding particular technical and strategic elements of the scheme.

In addition, a Public Engagement process was undertaken in November/December 2019 on the Opportunities and Constraints stage of the project which included evening events in Rush, Skerries and Balbriggan along with an online questionnaire and public submissions by email, post etc.

The key findings of the Opportunities and Constraint Public Engagement exercise indicate that there is overwhelming positive support for the Fingal Coastal Way. Concerns and issues raised were thoroughly reviewed with reference to their alignment with local and national policy and the scheme project objectives and this has formed a core consideration in the progression of the Option Development and Assessment process.

## 3. Identification of Need

The Fingal Coastal Way meets the objectives of a wide variety of local policies and is a long standing objective of the Fingal Development Plan. This includes numerous policies and objectives to plan and develop a route that integrates a coastal pedestrian and cycle route with sensitive natural and built heritage sites while achieving a balance between conservation of such sites and public uses such as leisure, recreation and tourism. Other local policies fulfilled by the Fingal Coastal Way are included in the following:

- Fingal Development Plan
- Fingal Tourism Strategy
- Fingal Local Economic and Community Plan
- Fingal Climate Change Action Plan
- Rogerstown Inner Estuary Masterplan
- Donabate Local Area Plan
- Castlelands Masterplan
- Our Balbriggan Plan

In general, the development of the Fingal Coastal Way meets the objectives of a large number of national and regional policies to improve sustainable travel, increase local amenities and provide social, health and economic benefits as contained within the following strategies:

- National Planning Framework
- National Development Plan
- Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways
- Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area
- Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan
- Smarter Travel
- Get Ireland Active
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
- Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan

The Fingal Coastal Way would have a positive benefit when considered under each of the five main headings used for assessment as part of the Common Appraisal Framework, i.e. Economy, Environment, Safety, Accessibility and Social Inclusion, Integration and Physical Activity.

The proposed study area is one of immense scenic beauty and amenity value rich with heritage and archaeological attractions. There is huge potential to deliver a scenic coastal greenway, designed to high quality user safety and comfort standards, that can deliver a tourism product with significant potential to attract overseas visitors. This would benefit the economy of the adjacent local communities, contribute significantly to health and wellbeing of all users as an amenity for physical activity and facilitate short to medium local commuter journeys thereby encouraging modal shift to active and sustainable transport alternatives.

## 4. Constraints

A detailed Constraints Study was carried out incorporating guidance set out in Transport Infrastructure Irelands (TII) Project Management Guidelines, (2019), which documented and mapped the nature and extent of known constraints within the defined Study Area for the scheme so that as much information as possible was available to inform the subsequent feasible option identification and selection process. The constraints are divided into three principal categories, namely: Natural Constraints, Artificial Constraints and External Parameters. These constraints form key considerations in the route options assessment process.

## 5. Stage 1 Preliminary Options Assessment

The Stage 1 Preliminary Options Assessment was undertaken on the initial route options.

The main assessment criteria utilised for the Stage 1 Preliminary Options Assessment are Engineering, Environment and Economy as referenced in TII's Project Appraisal Guidelines Unit 7.0 Multi Criteria Analysis.

Sub criteria were developed with reference to PAG Unit 7.0 and with particular attention given to the scheme Vision Statement and Project Objectives. It should be noted that sub criteria at this stage are developed to facilitate the efficient assessment of a large number of routes, against significant constraints and opportunities that could clearly influence the potential feasibility of a route option. Thus, the objective of the Stage 1 Preliminary

Options Assessment is to reduce the number of feasible route options to a general minimum of three and a maximum of five which will then be subjected to a more rigorous assessment at Stage 2.

The overall route was divided into 7 sub-sections, to allow for a large number of feasible routes to be examined in each, ranging from a minimum of 9 to a maximum of 17 routes. For each sub-section, all routes were mapped and compared to one another under each sub-criteria using the three point ranking scale shown below.

**Table 5-1 - Scoring Scale**

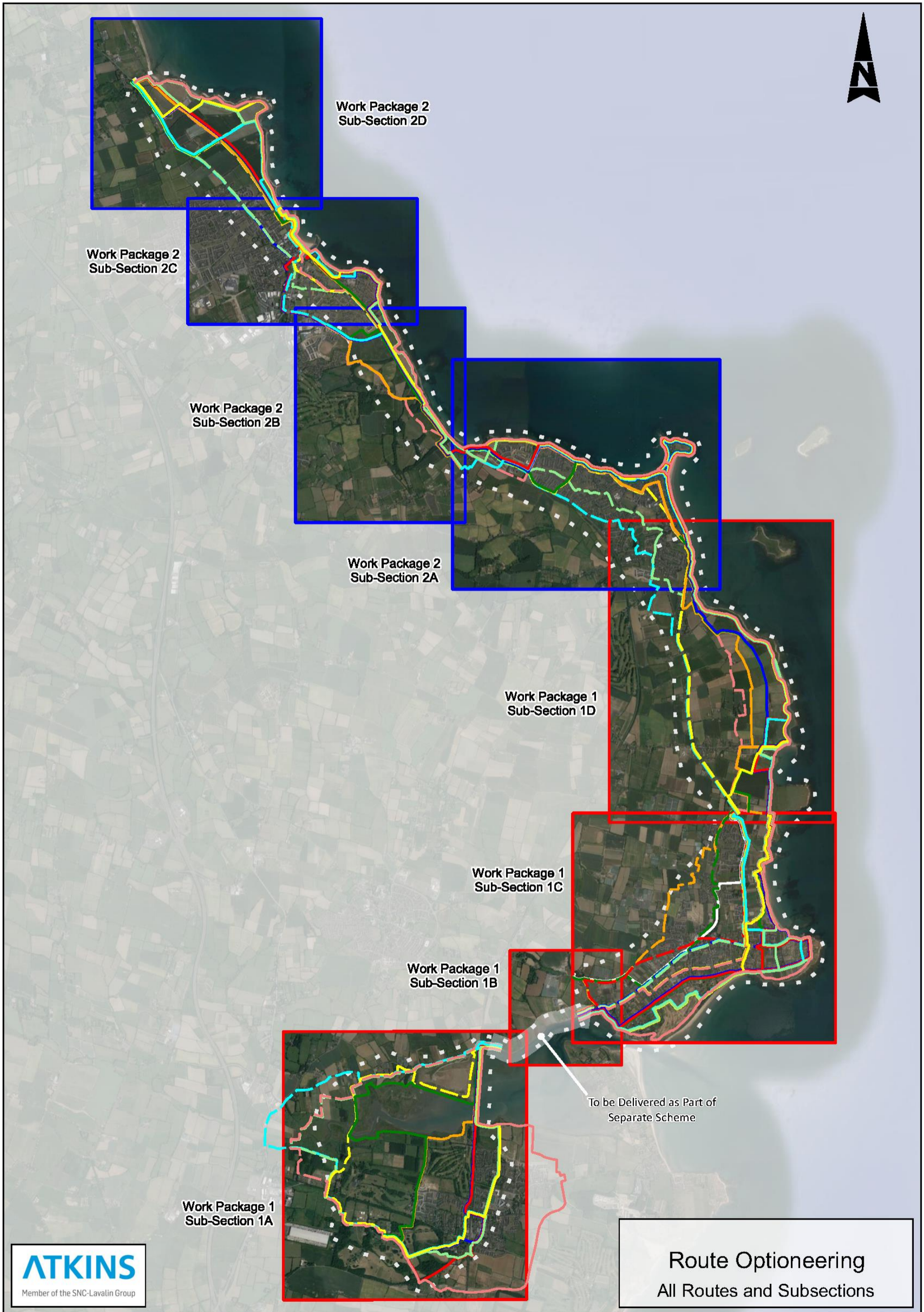
Colour Coding	Rank Description
	Some advantages over other options
	Comparable to all other options
	Some disadvantages over other options

The various route options considered for Stage 1 Route Option Assessment are shown in Figure 5-1 below and the outcome of the assessment is shown in the table below which summarises which routes are preferred in each sub-section.

**Table 5-2 - Stage 1 Assessment Summary**

		Route	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
		Sub-Sections	Work Package 1	1A	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1B	N/A			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1C	N			N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
1D	N			N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Work Package 2	2A		N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2B		Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2C		N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	2D		N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

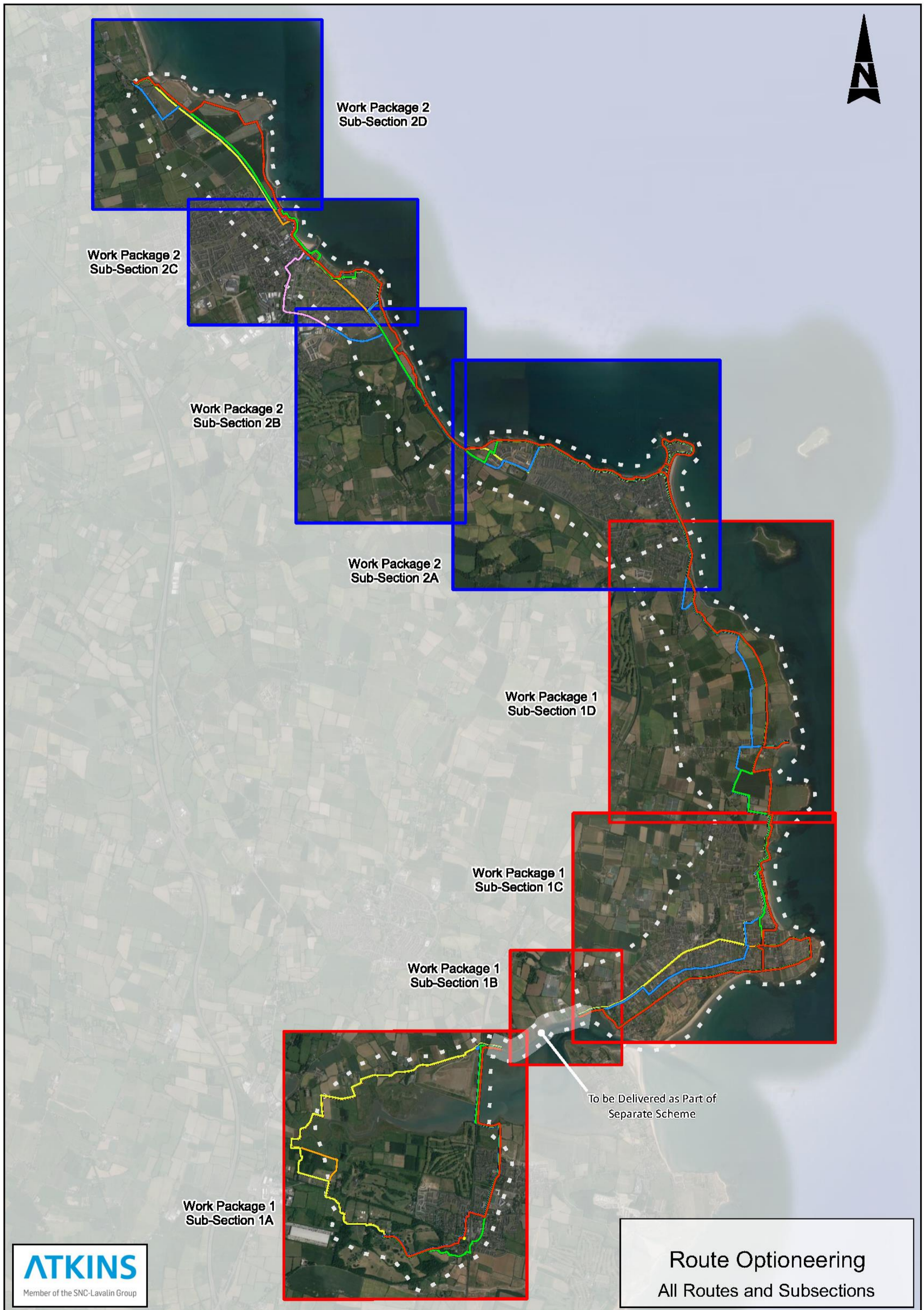
Figure 5-1 - Stage 1 Route Options Assessed



## 6. Conclusion

The routes identified as being preferred in the table above will be brought forward to the detailed Stage 2 multi-criteria assessment to determine a final Emerging Preferred Route for the Fingal Coastal Way. These are shown graphically in Figure 6-1 below where the coloured route options indicate the Stage 2 route options currently being considered and on which public feedback is now sought.

Figure 6-1 - Routes for Stage 2 Assessment



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