

FAQ – Royal Canal Urban Greenway

1. What is the Royal Canal Urban Greenway?

The Royal Canal Urban Greenway will provide a shared pedestrian and cycle route adjacent to the Royal Canal over an approximate length of 8.1km. This will tie in with the completed Ashtown to Castleknock section of the Royal Canal Greenway to the east and the Kildare County Council greenway section at the County boundary to the west.

It will provide a high quality, safe, attractive and environmentally sympathetic walking and cycling corridor serving Castleknock, Blanchardstown, Clonsilla, Coolmine and the wider Dublin 15 area.

The greenway will encourage recreation while offering an attractive sustainable transport choice for school children and commuters, bringing significant environmental, economic and health benefits to the wider community.

When complete, the Royal Canal Greenway will connect the River Liffey in Dublin City Centre to the River Shannon in Co Longford and will ultimately form part of the Dublin to Galway Greenway.

2. What is the purpose of this public consultation?

The current public consultation is a Stage 2 Non-Statutory Public Consultation on the preferred route for the greenway. The consultation runs for six weeks from May 25th to July 7th, 2021.

The purpose of this public consultation is to provide the public with an opportunity to give their comments and feedback on the Preferred

Route for the Scheme. Consideration will be given to the feedback received and adjustments made where appropriate before the scheme is subject to a statutory planning application process.

Your feedback on the scheme is important to us and we would encourage you to take part in the process so that you can help us make the Royal Canal Greenway a flagship amenity in Fingal which will benefit the whole community.

3. Will the Royal Canal Urban Greenway improve safety for walkers and cyclists in Fingal?

The Royal Canal Urban Greenway will provide a safe transportation corridor for pedestrians and cyclists through the heart of Dublin 15 and provide a recreational facility for the over 100,000 residents of the Dublin 15 area.

4. Why was the Southern Route Option discounted along the Deep Sinking Section between Castleknock and Coolmine?

The Southern Route Option along the deep sinking was discounted for the following reasons:

- a. Construction options for the Southern Bank along the Deep Sinking Section would require a cantilevered structure with horizontal restraints anchored into the supporting embankment of the rail line or under the rail line itself at locations.
- b. This provides significant project risks including slope failure during construction, settlement under the rail track during

construction, settlement following completion of the works and potential severing of the restraints during future works.

- c. The removal of the majority of vegetation along the existing rail line embankment and retaining walls to allow for the construction of the cantilevered structure would pose a serious risk of slope failure.
- d. Access for construction is limited along the southern towpath, construction would be required from a barge. This would result in closure of the canal and towpath for a protracted period of time.
- e. Construction for a section of the route would be restricted to nightworks due to the proximity of the rail line. This would increase the potential for noise disruption to nearby residential areas.
- f. The southern option would require the removal of the majority of vegetation along the southern corridor which would have a significant environmental impact.
- g. The required cantilevered boardwalk would result in a significant visual impact on the Deep Sinking Area.
- h. The cantilevered boardwalk would result in a significant impact on the heritage of the Deep Sinking Area completely changing its character. It would also result in the shading of a significant portion of the canal at this location.

For further information please refer to the Route Assessment Options Report and the Technical Note.

5. Why is the Northern Route Option the preferred route for the Deep Sinking Section between Castleknock and Coolmine?

The Northern Route Option is the preferred route for the following reasons:

- a. Significantly increased constructability with improved access for construction. Works can be undertaken during normal working hours.
- b. It has no impact on existing or proposed Iarnród Éireann infrastructure.
- c. It has no impact on existing canal users with no closure required for construction.
- d. It has negligible visual impact on the Royal Canal and retains the character of the canal for boat users. The new bridge structures have been architecturally designed to complement the existing heritage value of the Royal Canal.
- e. Tree loss is minimised by routing the greenway along the upper bank, allowing a significant wooded area to remain. A certain amount of tree loss will be required; however, replacement planting will be provided.
- f. The northern route option has been located along the upper northern bank in order to protect the remaining green infrastructure along the edge of the waterway and on the northern bank which has been subject to considerable loss over the past decades.

- g. Overall the northern bank is significantly more sympathetic to the existing environment, heritage and sense of place of the Deep Sinking Section.

For further information please refer to the Route Assessment Options Report and the Technical Note.

6. How does the design of the Greenway propose to address the security concerns of residents?

The preferred route design includes measures such as fencing, defensive planting and the lowering of the greenway level adjacent to the back gardens of houses, to mitigate security concerns and to preserve privacy for residents. An Garda Síochána Crime Prevention Unit will be consulted during the detailed design stage.

For further information please refer to the Public Consultation website where all documentation relating to the project can be viewed.

7. Will CPO/land acquisition from private property owners be required to advance the scheme?

Land acquisition/CPO may be required between Hansfield Railway Bridge and Hansfield Road. The existing pedestrian route along the towpath will be widened towards the northern side of the embankment to provide a paved 4-metre-wide greenway.

The preferred greenway route will also be routed through the Porterstown Old School House lands. This site is the subject to a separate Strategic Housing Development planning approvals process and the greenway may be delivered as part of this proposed residential development.

It is not envisaged that there will be CPO/Land acquisition required for the section of route between Coolmine and Castleknock Station.

For further information on the potential locations of land acquisition please refer to the Preferred Route Drawings (drawings 1 - 25).

8. What measures will be taken to mitigate impact to ecology?

Along the western section of the greenway route from the Kildare Boundary to Callaghan Bridge the greenway will be set back at least 1m from the water's edge, to maintain a riparian strip so as not to disturb the grasslands along the edge of the canal which are of high conservation value.

East of Callaghan Bridge a cantilevered boardwalk structure is proposed along the towpath to protect the underlying ecological habitats along the canal.

Along the Deep Sinking Section between Coolmine and Castleknock the greenway is located at the top on the bank to minimise the impact on trees and habitats and to protect the remaining green infrastructure at this location. A certain amount of tree loss will be required; however, replacement planting will be provided along with measures such as bat boxes.

9. Will there be lighting, and CCTV installed on the route?

Lighting will be provided along the greenway from Hansfield to the Old Navan Road (Talbot Bridge). The lighting design will be designed in line

with best practice and will be sensitive to ecology such as bats, birds and other mammals.

Lighting will not be provided initially on the rural most western section of the greenway from the Kildare/Fingal County Boundary to the Hansfield Railway Bridge. However, to future proof the scheme, underground ducting/services will be installed along the entire scheme.

The scheme will also be future proofed for CCTV and the installation of CCTV is subject to further consultation initially with An Garda Síochána & Waterways Ireland.

10. Will "kissing-gates" be installed?

The project team are aware of some issues for wheelchair users and cargo bikes and Fingal County Council is currently examining a number of innovative access treatments in Ireland and across Europe. The form of access treatment to the greenway is subject to detailed design and further consultation with An Garda Síochána & Waterways Ireland.

11. Why was the 2012 Atkins report not implemented which recommended the South bank?

The Atkins Report, which was published in 2012, was a high-level feasibility and constraints study. It examined the overall engineering feasibility of upgrading the existing towpath along the Royal Canal from the 12th lock to the Kildare border.

The scope of this study was to establish the constraints and developed a working knowledge of the issues along the proposed route. The report highlights significant constructability constraints

along the deep sinking area, however, assessing whether these constraints could be overcome was outside the scope of this study.

Further assessment of these constraints along with further route options assessments were carried out during subsequent stages of the project and resulted in the preferred route along the northern bank being identified.

For further information see response to Questions 4 & 5 and please refer to the Route Assessment Options Report and the Technical Note.

12. What are the next steps in the planning process?

Following completion of this second phase of public consultation the project team will consider the submissions received and assess how to best address issues raised.

The updated preliminary design for the greenway route will then be subjected to screening for Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment. The outcome of this screening will determine the statutory planning process. This will take the form of either a Part 8 planning application or an application to An Bord Pleanála.