



KILBEGGAN TO MULLINGAR GREENWAY

Public Consultation No. 2: Route Corridor Options Report

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Public Consultation No.2: Route Corridor Options Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The second public consultation for the Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway was held between Tuesday 7th May 2024 to Friday 14th June. The purpose of the second public consultation was to present the two shortlisted route corridor options and invite feedback from the public and other stakeholders that would help inform the identification of the preferred route corridor option. The second public consultation was advertised widely in local media and all information was also made available on the project website¹. A virtual consultation room on the project website provided information, including maps for viewing and download, as well as an online feedback form to capture the views of the public. An in-person public consultation event was also held in the Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar on Thursday 9th May 2024 between 3pm and 8pm.

The public engaged well during the consultation period and 128 submissions were received during the consultation period. Between 70 and 80 people attended the in-person public consultation event at the Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar .

From April 2024, the project team made a significant effort to consult with as many landowners as possible, including homeowners, on the route corridor options. 179 meetings, phone calls and house visits were made by members of the project team from April 2024 and throughout the second public consultation period. Two Project Liaison Officers (PLOs) undertook the majority of the face-to-face meetings with landowners to discuss the project, the public consultation and the route corridor options. There was a large response from property owners in the general area with 79% of submissions indicating that they live or own property on or adjacent to one of the route corridor options.

The main sentiment expressed at the consultation event and throughout the consultation period was one of concern regarding impacts of the greenway and objection to the acquisition of privately owned land for the purpose of constructing the greenway. A total of 59% of respondents submitted objections or concerns relating to the development of the greenway, one of the route corridor options or a particular area or plot of land within one of the route corridor options.

Landowner concerns related to impacts of the greenway financially, loss of land and severance, loss of security, loss of privacy, impacts to their farming business, impact on the environment, negative impacts on health and wellbeing, and poor communication regarding the greenway project.

Benefits to developing the greenway was also highlighted during the consultation with submissions highlighting the positive impacts towards the local economy, health and wellbeing, and tourism.

A number of landowners attended the public consultation event and expressed their objections to having the greenway on their property. One petition was received with 25 signatures stating they would not be in a position to consider entering into a voluntary agreement for the purchase of land for the greenway.

During the consultation the following themes emerged through the feedback received:

- Landowner impacts and concerns;
- Operation, safety and maintenance;
- Environment;
- Communication and consultation;
- Development and construction;
- Community and rural development;
- Landscape and visual; and
- Health and wellbeing.

The feedback received will be considered by the project team in the assessment of the route corridor options to select the preferred route corridor option.

¹ Project website: <https://www.kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie/>

1 INTRODUCTION

The Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway will be a recreational trail, providing tourists, commuters and leisure users with a dedicated corridor linking the two towns. The project will be a purposeful recreational facility for use by cyclists, walkers and other designated users.

This section of greenway will complete a strategic link between the established greenway infrastructure (Old Rail Trail), which is part of the Galway to Dublin National Cycleway at Mullingar, and the existing greenway infrastructure at Kilbeggan, which links onto the Grand Canal Greenway in Tullamore.

The purpose of this Report is to provide a record of the public consultation for Phase 2 – Option Selection, Route Corridor Options.

1.1 Background

In Phase 1 (Concept and Feasibility), the first public consultation for the Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway Project was held in May 2023. Feedback from the first public consultation helped inform the identification of areas of interest and constraints. A summary of the first public consultation can be viewed in **Appendix A**.

Following an appraisal process, two feasible route corridor options were identified from a longlist of nine options. The route corridor options have been developed to connect likely tourism and leisure attractions and use publicly owned land where possible. The short-listed route corridor options are shown in **Figure 1.1**.

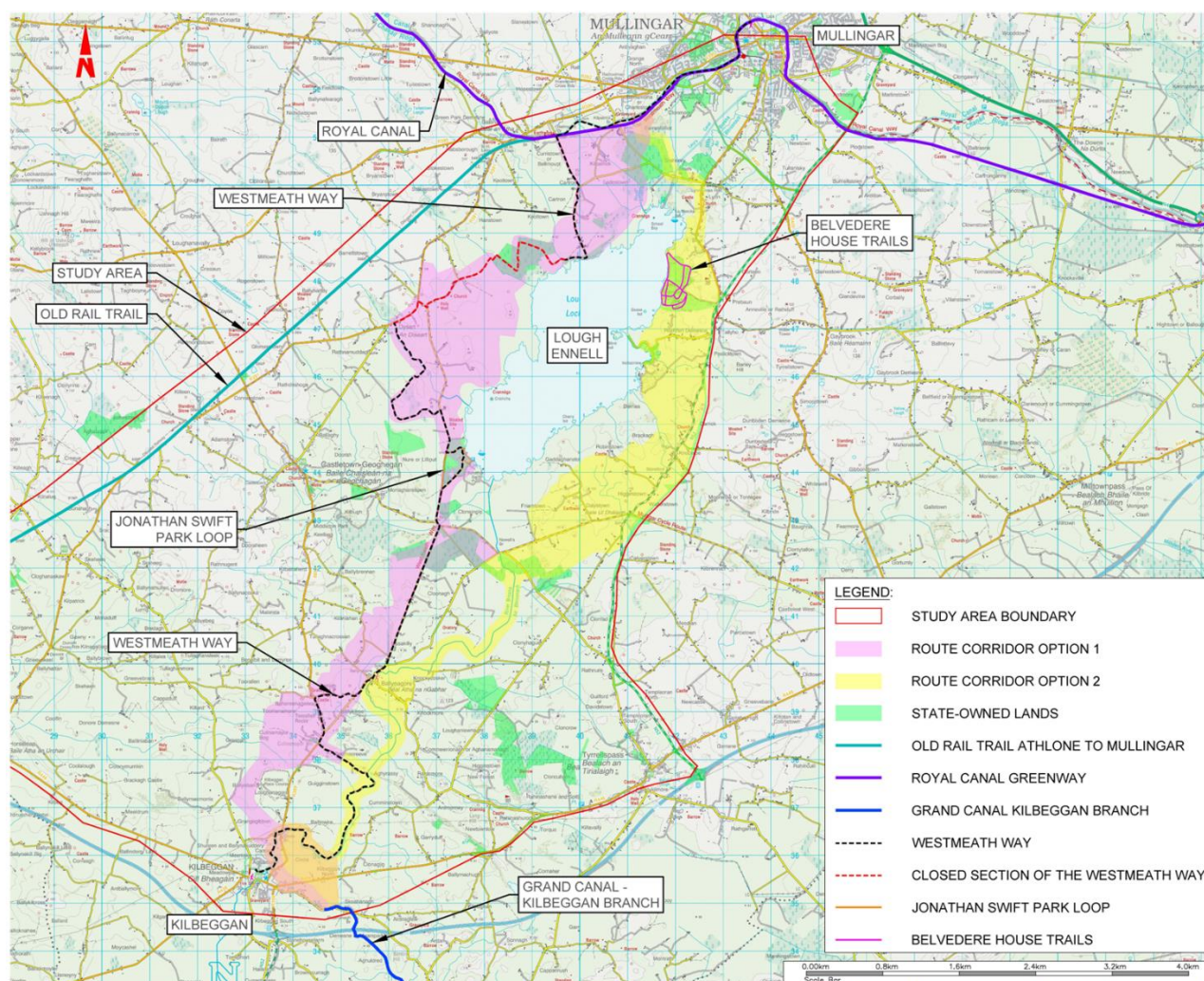


Figure 1.1 Route Corridor Options

2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION NO. 2 ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTIONS

In accordance with the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways (DoT, 2018) and the Code of Best Practice for National and Regional Greenways (DoT, 2021), the second period of public consultation concerns the route corridor options for the project.

The purpose of the second public consultation is to discuss with and inform the general public, and in particular those who might possibly be directly or indirectly affected, about the route corridor options. The second consultation provides an opportunity for landowners and the wider local community to make submissions on the route corridor options including highlighting positive and negative views, or special interests which can be taken into account in the identification of the preferred route corridor option for the greenway.

The second public consultation commenced on Tuesday 7th May 2024 at 9am and was scheduled to end at 4pm on Friday 31st May 2024. Following requests during the consultation period, the end date was extended to 4pm on Friday 14th June 2024.

The second public consultation was advertised widely in local media and all information was also made available on the project website². A virtual consultation room on the project website provided information, including maps for viewing and download, as well as an online feedback form to capture the views of the public. An in-person public consultation event was also held in the Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar on Thursday 9th May 2024 between 3pm and 8pm.

Landowner liaison commenced on 3rd April 2024 and continued throughout the public consultation period. The landowner liaison has been carried out through phone calls and face-to-face meetings with landowners.

2.1 Advertising

The public consultation was advertised on radio, on the internet, in the local press, the distribution of flyers, and at face-to-face meetings as outlined below:

- Advertisement in the Westmeath Examiner on 30th April 2024.
- Advertisement in the Westmeath Independent on 1st May 2024.
- Press release to local media, Westmeath County Council website and their social media channels.
- Project website: www.kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie.
- Advertisement on Midlands 103 Radio Station, nine times over three days in advance of the event.
- The distribution of A5 flyers to households (post boxes) and some local shops, businesses, and post offices within the route corridor options.
- Face-to-face meetings with landowners.

The flyer, press release and paper advert can be viewed in **Appendix B**.

It was highlighted in some of the submissions and at the public consultation event that not everyone within the route corridor options areas was aware of the Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway project or the public consultation. One of the main objectives of the public consultation is to raise awareness of the project and the above bullet points demonstrate the measures undertaken by the project team to contact as many individuals as possible and raise awareness of the project.

2.2 Website and Virtual Consultation Room

The project website, www.kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie, was updated with the public consultation materials and went live at 9am on Tuesday 7th May 2024. The information uploaded to the website included maps showing the route corridor options, project progress, previous consultations, downloads and

² Project website: <https://www.kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie/>

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section which was developed based on the main topics that have arisen.

A virtual public consultation room, [Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway \(kilbeggantomullingargreenwayvcr.ie\)](http://kilbeggantomullingargreenwayvcr.ie) was available and accessible through the project website. It contained all the information shown at the in-person event. Interested parties could also leave feedback and access an interactive map containing the route corridor options. Images of the virtual room are shown in **Figure 2.1**.

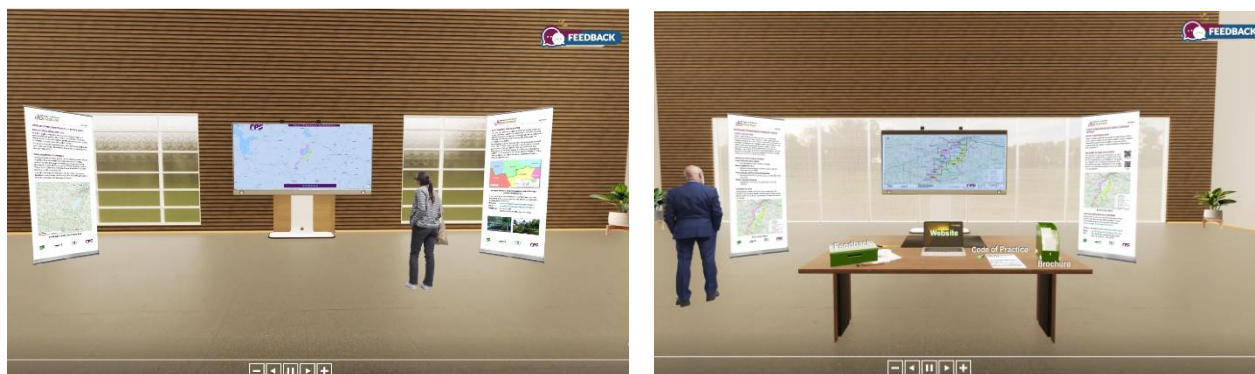


Figure 2.1 Screenshots of Public Consultation 2 Virtual Consultation Room

2.3 Public Consultation No. 2 Event

The public consultation event on the Route Corridor Options was held in the Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath (N91 HP8E) on Thursday 9th May 2024 from 3pm to 8pm. Maps of the route corridor options and information stands for the scheme were available to view. The public consultation brochure which included information on the project, a map of the route corridor options, a feedback form and information on how to make a submission was available for people to take home. Images of the event can be viewed in **Figure 2.2**.

There were eight members of the project team available to discuss the project including representatives from Westmeath County Council and RPS.

The public consultation event was well attended with between 70 and 80 people attending the event. The sentiments expressed are included in the themes outlined in **Section 3.2** of this report.

One written submission was handed in at the event and 33 verbal submissions were recorded by the team at the event, mostly from landowners within the route corridor options.

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Figure 2.2 Public Consultation Event, Bloomfield House Hotel 9th May 2024

3 SUBMISSIONS AND SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED

3.1 Submissions Received

3.1.1 Submission Methods

During the consultation period 186 submissions were received. These were submitted through the following methods: verbally at the public consultation event; by email using the online feedback form; by post; by phone call or a written submission handed to one of the team. One petition was received that had 25 signatures – each signatory is considered to be an individual submission for the purposes of this report. A breakdown of the number of submissions received through each method is shown in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1 Methods used to make a submission

Submission Method	Number Received
Online feedback form	67
Received by post	20
Received by email	38
Handed in at event or to PLO	2
Submission over the phone	1
Verbal submission taken during discussions at event	33
Petition received	25 signatures
Total	186

3.1.2 Feedback Form

On the feedback form a number of questions were asked. The results of these questions are outlined in **Table 3.2** below. It should be noted that respondents who made a submission through other methods may not have answered all the questions asked on the feedback form.

Table 3.2 Responses to Feedback Form Questions

Feedback Form Questions		
Q. Would you use the greenway?		
Yes	No	Did not indicate
52 (41%)	34 (26%)	42 (33%)
Q. Do you live or own property within or adjacent to one of the Route Corridor Options		
Yes	No	Did not indicate
101 (79%)	20 (16%)	7 (5%)
Q. Please tick here if you would like to be contacted regarding project news and updates.		
Box Ticked	Box Not Ticked	Did not indicate
56 (44%)	11 (8%)	61 (48%)

3.1.3 Petition Received

One petition received had 25 signatures from a group of landowners who would not be in a position to consider entering into a voluntary agreement for the purchase of land for the greenway. There was also a group of landowners at the public consultation event who were against the purchase of land for construction of a greenway.

3.2 Sentiments Expressed and Emerging Themes

The main sentiment expressed during the public consultation event and in the submissions throughout the consultation period was one of concern regarding impacts of the greenway and objection to the acquisition of privately owned land for the purpose of constructing the greenway. In total 59% of the submissions received had objections or concerns relating to the development of the greenway, one of the route corridor options or a particular area or plot of land within one of the route corridor options. In the submissions and at the in-person event the following themes emerged:

- Landowner impacts and concerns,
- Operation, safety and maintenance,
- Environment,
- Communication and consultation,
- Development and construction,
- Community and rural development,
- Landscape and visual, and
- Health and wellbeing.

3.2.1 Landowner Impacts and Concerns

Feedback from landowners highlighted that the land provides people's livelihood and that the project would have serious financial implications on a farming business including loss of income, devaluation of land and houses, increased costs in realigning farms, increased costs for legal fees and impacts to funding received. Submissions showed concern regarding how the project would impact their current or future plans for their farm or property. This included feedback regarding changes to farming practices and how future generations would be able to use the land if the greenway is constructed.

Landowners submitted feedback highlighting concerns regarding the impacts of using privately owned land for the greenway, these included loss of land, severance and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). Submissions had concerns regarding impact of severance on farming activities and requested that the project follow farm boundaries, when the greenway passes through farmland, to avoid fragmenting holdings as this would affect the farms viability and cause great inconvenience to the landowner. Some respondents were concerned that a reduction in land could impact the herd number as their farms are stocked to match farm size or could result in exceeding the maximum nitrates limit. Some landowners requested that certain plots of land not be used for the greenway but were open to discussions in other areas. One landowner outside the route corridor options proposed an alternative route through his property.

Landowners asked about compensation and there were references to whether or not the CPO process would be applied. Some submissions requested routing the greenway through publicly owned lands, along quiet roads or to realign roads where additional space is available in the verge. Some farmers noted that the compensation package offered through voluntary acquisition would not be attractive enough compared to the loss of earnings resulting from the loss of land.

The need for privacy and security were also highlighted by landowners and concerns were raised about routing the greenway at the backs of properties which could impact privacy. There were also fears that it could result in increased crime. Submissions highlighted concerns regarding the impact to livestock through trespass, dog attacks or spread of disease.

In the submissions, there were questions regarding access to water and concerns about losing access to water for agricultural use where the greenway is routed adjacent to water courses. Access to water for livestock, fishing and swimming were among the concerns raised.

Some respondents have concerns over a route through Nure Bog and that it might impact turf cutting, while other submissions supported the route and suggested that a route through the bog could offer a connection to the local school or create an alternative route connecting to the Old Rail Trail.

3.2.2 Operation, Safety and Maintenance

Submissions raised concerns about security after the greenway is constructed. Respondents had concerns regarding increased crime, trespass, loitering and anti-social behaviour. In the submissions it was questioned as to who will police, maintain and manage the greenway.

Submissions highlighted potential issues of safety for residents, livestock and greenway users. Some respondents expressed fears for their safety with increased activity close to their residence due to the greenway. They also raised concern for their children's safety and elderly people living alone. Safety of livestock was highlighted, with respondents also highlighting concerns regarding dogs, littering, noise and spread of disease. Safety concerns for greenway users in isolated areas were also raised. Some other operation and maintenance concerns raised were:

- Concerns that the greenway would cause increased traffic on local roads;
- Litter and illegal dumping in terms of how the greenway will operate and be maintained; and
- The type of fencing to be used on the greenway was questioned with some respondents suggesting fencing types that should be used.

3.2.3 Environment

Concerns regarding the impact to the environment was a common topic within the submissions. Respondents had concerns regarding impact to Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) at Lough Ennell and Split Hills Esker. Concerns were also raised regarding the potential impact to the River Brosna's flora, fauna, water quality and pollution. Many respondents commented on the rare plant and wildlife in the area and concerns regarding the loss or damage to these habitats due to the construction of the greenway, some respondents also highlighted the flora and fauna as an attraction to greenway users. Flooding was highlighted in some submissions and the increased risk of flooding due to runoff from the greenway.

3.2.4 Communication and Consultation

Feedback was received regarding a perceived lack of communication to landowners regarding the public consultation. Some respondents stated that they were unaware of the public consultation event until they heard about it locally from neighbours. Some also stated that they did not see the advertisements in the local papers, hear the radio advertisements or receive a flyer informing them of the public consultation and the public consultation event. Some respondents stated that they were also unaware of the first public consultation that was held in May 2023.

A number of submissions highlighted concerns over the accessibility of the consultation materials as not everyone could access the online material and some respondents stated the resolution of the online documents made it difficult to view the downloadable maps. Subsequent to receiving these comments, higher resolution drawings were uploaded to the virtual consultation room.

Some submissions also highlighted that the time allocated for return of submissions was too short and that it did not allow adequate time to submit an informed response. Following this feedback, the public consultation period was extended by two weeks from 31st May to 14th June 2024.

3.2.5 Development and Construction

Many respondents commented on possible routes, or part of possible routes that they would either like to see included as part of the greenway or that they objected to being used for the greenway.

Some respondents suggested combinations of both corridors. It was also highlighted that some roads had wide verges that could accommodate the greenway or the use of quiet roads as part of the greenway. It was also suggested that the land exposed due to the lowering of lake levels was state owned and could be utilised. Some respondents suggested that the greenway could be connected to the Old Rail Trail at Castletown or Dysart, which would be more cost effective and quicker to construct.

Feedback highlighted concerns regarding increased traffic during construction and the impact of construction on farming activities. Respondents had concerns regarding where emergency vehicles would access the greenway once constructed.

3.2.6 Community and Rural Development

Submissions regarding the positive impact of developing the greenway included connecting communities, opening up access to the area, benefiting locals and the local economy, connecting to local attractions, creating tourism and local business, connecting to schools and the possibility to create spurs to other villages and attractions.

Respondents suggested that existing trails are under-utilised and could be upgraded, such as the Westmeath Way and Kilbeggan Feeder Route. Respondents also suggested that the existing greenways in Mullingar and Kilbeggan are only used close to towns and that not as many people are using greenways as did during the Covid-19 Coronavirus lockdowns. Submissions highlighted questions regarding the number of users on existing greenways and suggested that surveys should be conducted to assess the need for the project. Respondents proposed that funds used to develop greenways would be better utilised in other projects in the community.

3.2.7 Landscape and Visual

Local ecological, historical, and aesthetic values were highlighted in the submissions. Submissions cited that Route Corridor Option 1 offered advantages to tourism and the public by connecting to Lilliput and Ladestown, that it was more scenic, had lots of flora, fauna and history. Other advantages highlighted were incorporation of the Westmeath Way, using wide verges along the Dysart road and connecting to the Old Rail Trail.

Submissions highlighted that Route Corridor Option 2 would route the greenway closer to Mullingar Town and could connect to existing amenities such as Bloomfield House Hotel, Belvedere House, Gardens and Park, Tudenham, Mullingar Golf Club, the Sauna Society, the Lis Café and Lough Ennell Caravan Park.

Feedback was submitted on the advantages of routing the greenway adjacent to the River Brosna and Lough Ennell including scenery, flora, fauna and creating future water activities such as kayaking or board walks.

Submissions also highlighted concerns with regards to damage to ringforts, loss of heritage, impact on scenery for property owners and damage to the landscape for constructing the greenway.

At the public consultation event, one verbal submission was made with respect to the history of the Kingdom of Meath and the County of East Meath.

3.2.8 Health and Wellbeing

Feedback from landowners was received regarding the negative impact the greenway would have on their mental health and wellbeing due to stress and worry of losing land, impact to their livelihoods, impact on quality of life, loss of heritage and way of life, loss of family traditions, loss of access to existing amenities and live in fear due to loss of privacy and security.

Respondents also commented on the positive impacts the greenway would have on their health and wellbeing by creating a safe accessible greenway that could be used for locals and visitors, to enjoy local wildlife and scenery, create safe routes to school and church, improved access to amenities, increased activity levels, appreciation for the outdoors and increased fitness.

4 LANDOWNER LIAISON

4.1 Project Liaison Officers Meeting with Landowners

Project Liaison Officers, working on behalf of the project team, have been engaging with landowners since the start of April 2024, prior to the second public consultation period. The PLOs have continued to meet with landowners and homeowners throughout the public consultation period and were present at the public consultation event. The PLOs have to date made more than 180 calls, house visits and meetings with landowners along the route corridor options.

4.2 Independent Agronomist

Westmeath County Council has appointed an Independent Agronomist, Philip Farrelly & Co Agricultural Consultants (website: www.pfarrelly.com; Telephone: 01 690 6555) who are available to landowners to assess the impact of the proposed greenway on their landholdings. The independent agronomist details have been shared with landowners at the public consultation event and will continue to be shared with affected landowners.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Public Consultation No. 2 Route Corridor Options for the Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway was held between Tuesday 7th May and Friday 14th June 2024. The purpose of the consultation was to present the route corridor options and invite feedback that would help the project team in identifying an emerging preferred route corridor option.

The project team will take the feedback received into consideration when assessing each of the route corridor options to identify the emerging preferred route corridor option.

There will then be a public consultation where the emerging preferred route corridor option will be displayed. This will be Public Consultation No. 3. Following this public consultation, a preferred route corridor will be selected and brought forward to Phase 3 Design and Environmental Evaluation.

Appendix A

Public Consultation No 1 Summary

Appendix A Public Consultation No. 1 Summary

1.1 Public Consultation No. 1 Study Area and Constraints

In accordance with the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways (DoT, 2018), the first Public Consultation on the Study Area and constraints for the project was held in May 2023.

An in-person Public Consultation event was held in the Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar on 18th May 2023 between 15:00 and 20:00. The event was extensively advertised on radio, on the internet, in the local press and via flyers.

There were 26 no. attendees at the event. A diverse range of views were expressed that were generally positive, with the exception of a couple of attendees who expressed concerns relating to potential security risks associated with a greenway development e.g. safety of users, safety and security of adjacent residents, specific funding for the Guards to patrol the greenways etc.

A considerable amount of local knowledge was gathered during the event, particularly in relation to local history e.g. the Viking sites on Lough Ennell and also in relation to historical engineering works in the area e.g. the OPW scheme in the 1950s to control the water levels in Lough Ennell. The historical information can help to assess sites and areas that would give prospective greenway users things to see and do. The OPW scheme lowered the water level in Lough Ennell by approximately 2.5m effectively creating substantial areas of new ground.

A total of two written submissions were received at the meeting. Both are in support of the proposed greenway and both advocate for a route to the west of Lough Ennell.

The consultation period ran for three weeks from the conclusion of the in-person event on 18th May 2023 until 8th June 2023. The Project Website was established at the start of the consultation period and information on the project was available to interested parties. A number of brochures were also available from the Westmeath National Roads Office (WNRO) and several brochures were posted out to interested parties in response to requests received during the consultation period.

A further two written submissions were received during the consultation period. One submission was in support of a greenway on the provision that the route went to the west of Lough Ennell (the respondent's address is to the west of the Lough). One submission relates to the change in water level in Lough Ennell and a local campaign to potentially return the lake levels to their original level and suggested that this possibility should be borne in mind as part of the route development process.

A total of 20 email submissions were received during the consultation period. Of these, three were also received in hardcopy format after the formal consultation period closed. Of the 20 submissions received 14 were positive, one was a request for further information and five were negative. Of the 14 positive responses, 13 advocated routes to the west of Lough Ennell and one did not express a preference.

A total of four written responses were received after 8th June 2023 which was the closing date of the public consultation period. One response was in favour and advocated for a route to the west of Lough Ennell. Three responses expressed concerns relating to the possible use of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), security concerns, impact on farm viability due to severance and possible negative impacts on Belvedere. They advocate a shorter route from Kilbeggan to link to the Old Rail Trail as efficiently as possible. These submissions were also received via e-mail within the consultation period.

Statutory stakeholders were identified early in the project and were contacted and informed of the project as part of the consultation process and their opinions requested in relation to it. These stakeholders will continue to be informed of the project as it progresses.

Feedback from the first public consultation was considered as part of the development of the Route Corridor Options displayed in the second public consultation. The study area shown at public consultation no.1 is displayed in Figure 1 below.

Appendix A Public Consultation No. 1 Summary

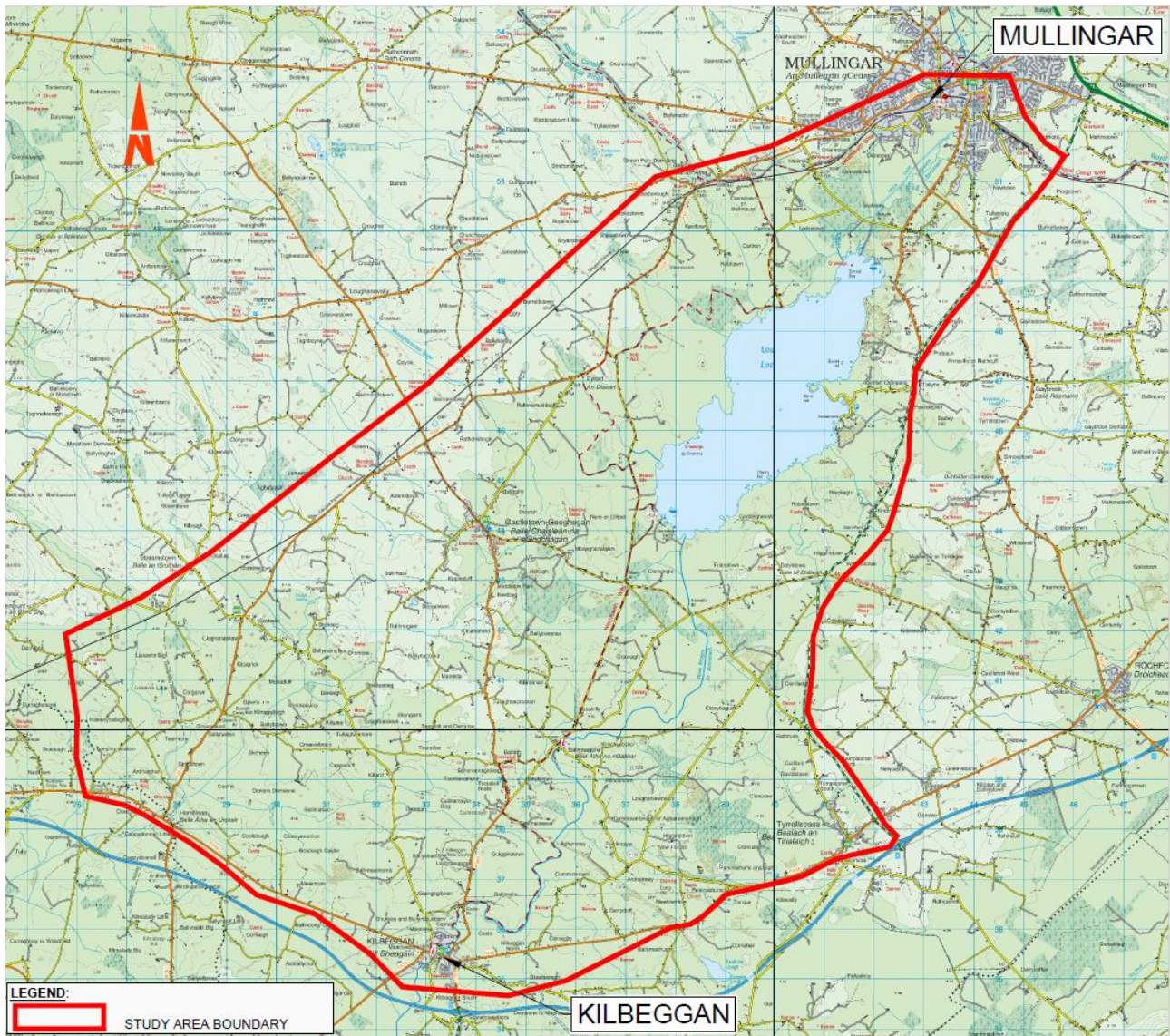


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..1 Study Area

Appendix B

Advert and Flyer

GLASBHEALACH CHILL BHEAGÁIN GO DTÍ AN MUILEANN GCEARR IMEACTH COMHAIRLIÚCHÁIN PHOIBLÍ UIMH.2 ROGHANNA CONAIRE BEALAIGH

Fáiltíonn Comhairle Chontae na Mí (CCNaM), i gcomhar le Bonneagar Iompair Éireann (BIÉ), roimh gcomhairliúcháin poiblí seo trí láithreán gréasáin an tionscadail www.kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie áit ar féidir leat aiseolas a sholáthar freisin.

**Óstán Teach Bloomfield, An Muileann gCearr, Co. na hIarmhí, N91 HP8E,
Déardaoin 9ú Bealtaine 2024 idir 3in agus 8in.**

Is féidir teacht ar eolas faoin tionscadal agus faoin gcomhairliúcháin poiblí seo trí láithreán gréasáin an tionscadail www.kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie áit ar féidir leat aiseolas a sholáthar freisin.

Is féidir aighneachtaí scríofa a dhéanamh freisin trí r-phost, tríd an bpost nó ar an bhfoirm aiseolais ar líne:

R-phost: info@kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie

Post: RPS, Páirc Ghnó & Teicneolaíochta an IDA, An Baile Bán, Gaillimh, H91 H9CK



**NASC LÁITHREÁIN
GHRÉASÁIN**



**FOIRM AISEOLAIS
AR LÍNE**

KILBEGGAN TO MULLINGAR GREENWAY

PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT NO.2 ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTIONS

Westmeath County Council (WCC), in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), invites residents of the local area, members of the public and interested parties to participate in a public consultation on the Route Corridor Options for the Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway. The event will be held at the following location:

**Bloomfield House Hotel,
Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, N91 HP8E
Thursday 9th May 2024 between 3pm and 8pm.**

Information on the project and this public consultation can be accessed through the project website www.kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie where you can also provide feedback.

Written submissions can also be made via email, post or the online feedback form:

Email: info@kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie

Post: RPS, IDA Business & Technology Park, Mervue, Galway, H91 H9CK



WEBSITE LINK



**ONLINE FEEDBACK
FORM**

KILBEGGAN TO MULLINGAR GREENWAY

Public Consultation Event No.2

Route Corridor Options

Westmeath County Council (WCC), in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), invites residents of the local area, members of the public and interested parties to participate in a public consultation on the Route Corridor Options for the Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway. The event will be held at the following location:

**Bloomfield House Hotel,
Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, N91 HP8E,
Thursday 9th May 2024 between 3pm and 8pm.**

Information on the project and this public consultation can be accessed through the project website.

www.kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie,
where you can also provide feedback.



WEBSITE LINK

Written submissions can also be made via email, post or the online feedback form:

Email: info@kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie

Post: RPS, IDA Business & Technology Park,
Mervue, Galway, H91 H9CK



ONLINE FEEDBACK
FORM





KILBEGGAN TO MULLINGAR GREENWAY

Public Consultation No. 3: Emerging Preferred Route Corridor Report

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Public Consultation No.3: Emerging Preferred Route Corridor Report

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GMcE

5 September 2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The third public consultation for the Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway was held between Tuesday 16th June 2025 and Friday 25th July 2025. The purpose of the third public consultation is to discuss with and update all stakeholders, landowners, members of the public and interested parties on the project progress to date and the Emerging Preferred Route Corridor (EPRC) within which the Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway is likely to be developed. The third consultation provides an opportunity for landowners and the wider local community to make submissions on the EPRC including highlighting positive and negative views, or special interests which can be taken into account in developing a route within the corridor.

The third public consultation was advertised widely in local media, and all information was also made available on the project website. A virtual consultation room on the project website provided information, including maps for viewing and download, as well as an online feedback form to capture the views of the public. Over 400 consultation letters and project brochures were posted out to landowners within the EPRC as identified through the 2023 Tailte Eireann ownership database. An in-person public consultation event was also held in the Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar on Thursday 19th June 2025 between 3pm and 8pm.

The public engaged well during the consultation with a total of 193 submissions received during the consultation period. The in person public consultation event at the Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar was well attended with between 140 and 160 people attending the event. On the day 73 written and verbal submissions recorded by the team, mostly from landowners within the EPRC.

Project Liaison Officers, working on behalf of the project team, have been engaging with landowners since the start of April 2024, prior to the second public consultation period. The PLOs have to date made more than 432 calls, house visits and meetings with landowners regarding the project.

The main sentiments expressed during the public consultation event and in the submissions throughout the consultation period was objection to the selected EPRC, concern regarding impacts of the greenway and objection to the acquisition of privately owned land for the purpose of constructing the greenway.

Landowner concerns related to impacts of the greenway financially, loss of land and severance, loss of security, loss of privacy, impacts to their farming business, impact on the environment, negative impacts on health and wellbeing, and poor communication regarding the greenway project.

Some respondents were not happy with the selected EPRC and wanted evidence to why the corridor on the east side of Lough Ennell was chosen over the west side and that the entire Westmeath Way was not upgraded to accommodate the greenway. Following requests during the consultation an Options Selection Summary was provided to respondents who requested more information on the option selection process.

In the submissions during the consultation period and at the in-person event the following themes emerged:

- Landowner impacts and concerns,
- Option selection process
- Communication and consultation,
- Environment and landscape,
- Operation, safety and maintenance
- Health and wellbeing.
- Development and construction,

The feedback received will be considered by the project team in the development of a route within the EPRC.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway will be a recreational trail, providing tourists, commuters and leisure users with a dedicated corridor linking the two towns. The project will be a purposeful recreational facility for use by cyclists, walkers and other designated users.

This section of greenway will complete a strategic link between the established greenway infrastructure (Old Rail Trail), which is part of the Galway to Dublin National Cycleway at Mullingar, as well as the Royal Canal in Mullingar, and the existing greenway infrastructure at Kilbeggan, which links onto the Grand Canal Greenway in Tullamore.

The purpose of this Report is to provide a record of Public Consultation No.3 Emerging Preferred Route Corridor undertaken in Phase 2 Options Selection.

1.1 Background

In Phase 1 (Concept and Feasibility), the first public consultation for the Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway Project was held in May 2023. Feedback from the first public consultation helped inform the identification of areas of interest and constraints.

In Phase 2 (Options Selection), the second public consultation was held which displayed the two Route Corridor Options (RCOs) for the project. The purpose of Public Consultation No. 2 was to inform the public about the two RCOs and invite feedback that would assist the project team in appraising the two RCOs and identifying an Emerging Preferred Route Corridor (EPRC) for the Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway.

For the purposes of appraisal, each RCO was sub-divided into four sub-sections, namely:

- For RCO1 = RCO1a, RCO1b, RCO1c and RCO1d; and
- For RCO2 = RCO2a, RCO2b, RCO2c and RCO2d.

Each a, b, c and d sub-section are parallel with each other.

Following the completion of the appraisal of the RCOs in line with TII guidance, an Emerging Preferred Route Corridor (EPRC) was identified. This EPRC was an amalgamation of the best performing sub-sections of each RCO. The EPRC is:

- RCO2a
- RCO2b
- RCO1c
- RCO2d

In addition, a link between the EPRC and Lilliput Adventure Centre was included. The EPRC including the link to Lilliput Adventure Centre is shown in **Figure 1.1**.

Public Consultation No.3: Emerging Preferred Route Corridor Report

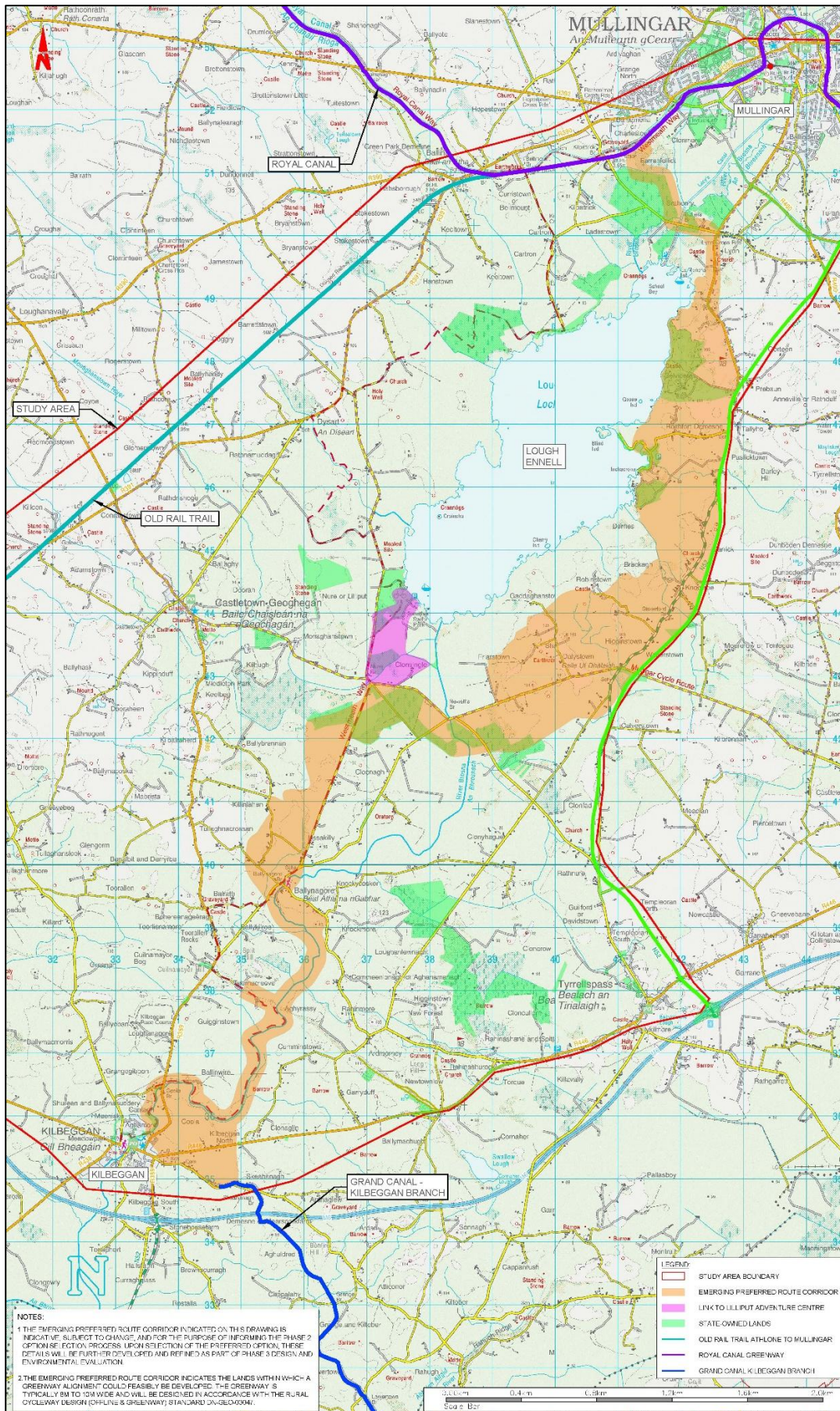


Figure 1.1 Emerging Preferred Route Corridor

2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION NO. 3 EMERGING PREFERRED ROUTE CORRIDOR

In accordance with the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways (DoT, 2018) and the Code of Best Practice for National and Regional Greenways (DoT, 2021), the third period of public consultation concerns the emerging preferred route corridor for the project.

The purpose of the third public consultation is to discuss with and update all stakeholders, landowners, members of the public and interested parties on the project progress to date and the EPRC within which the Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway is likely to be developed. The third consultation provides an opportunity for landowners and the wider local community to make submissions on the EPRC including highlighting positive and negative views, or special interests which can be taken into account in developing a route within the corridor.

The third public consultation period commenced on Tuesday 16th June 2025 and finished on Friday 25th July 2025.

The third public consultation was advertised widely in local media, a consultation letter and brochure were sent out to landowners within the EPRC, and information was also made available on the project website¹.

A virtual consultation room on the project website provided information, including maps for viewing and download, as well as an online feedback form to capture the views of the public. An in-person public consultation event was also held in the Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar on Thursday 19th June 2025 between 3pm and 8pm.

In Phase 2, landowner liaison within the Route Corridor Options (RCO) commenced on 3rd April 2024 and has continued throughout the Phase 2 period. The landowner liaison has been carried out through phone calls and face-to-face meetings with landowners.

2.1 Advertising

The public consultation was advertised on radio, on the internet, in the local press, letters sent out to landowners within the emerging preferred route corridor, and at face-to-face meetings as outlined below:

- Advertisement in the Westmeath Examiner on Tuesday 10th June and Tuesday 17th June 2025.
- Advertisement in the Westmeath Independent on Wednesday 11th June and Wednesday 18th June 2025.
- Advertisement on Westmeath County Council Social media.
- Project website: www.kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie.
- Advertisement on Midlands 103 Radio Station, three times on Monday 16th, Tuesday 17th and Wednesday 18th June 2025.
- Over 400 consultation letters and project brochures were posted out to landowners within the EPRC.
- Face-to-face meetings and phone calls with landowners.

The press release and paper advert can be viewed in **Appendix A**.

It was highlighted in some of the submissions and at the public consultation event that not everyone within the EPRC were aware of the third public consultation or received a consultation letter. One of the main objectives of the public consultation is to raise awareness of the project and the above bullet points demonstrate the measures undertaken by the project team to contact as many individuals as possible and raise awareness of the project.

¹ Project website: <https://www.kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie/>

2.2 Website and Virtual Consultation Room

The project website, www.kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie, was updated with the public consultation materials and went live at 12pm on Monday 16th June 2025. The information uploaded to the website included maps showing the route corridor options and emerging preferred route corridor, project progress, previous consultations, downloads and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section which was developed based on the main topics that have arisen.

A virtual public consultation room, [Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway \(kilbeggantomullingargreenwayvcr.ie\)](http://kilbeggantomullingargreenwayvcr.ie) was available and accessible through the project website. It contained all the information shown at the in-person event. Interested parties could also leave feedback and access an interactive map containing the EPRC. Images of the virtual room are shown in **Figure 2.1**.

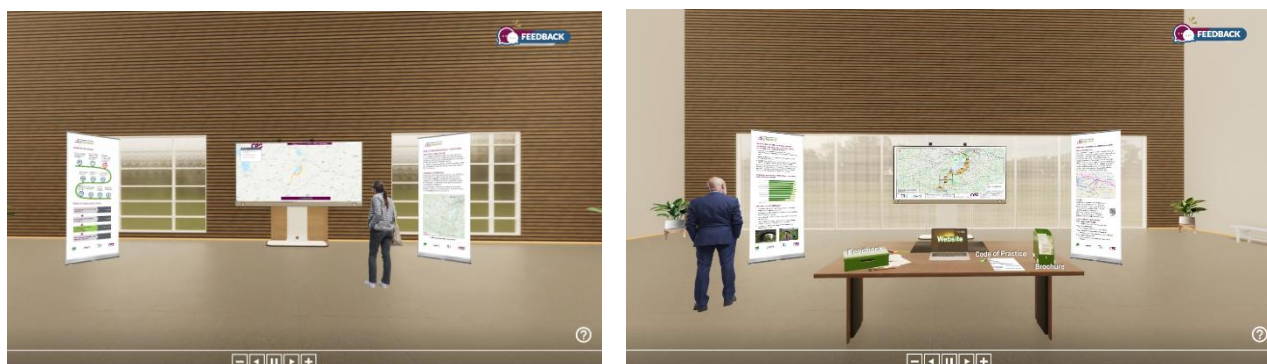


Figure 2.1 Screenshots of Public Consultation 3 Virtual Consultation Room

2.3 Public Consultation No. 3 Event

The public consultation event on the EPRC was held in the Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath (N91 HP8E) on Thursday 19th June 2025 from 3pm to 8pm. Maps of the EPRC and information stands for the scheme were available to view. The public consultation brochure which included information on the project, a map of the EPRC, a feedback form and information on how to make a submission was available for people to take home. Images of the event can be viewed in **Figure 2.2**.

There were seven members of the project team available to discuss the project including representatives from Westmeath County Council, RPS and the independent agronomist.

The public consultation event was well attended with between 140 and 160 people attending the event. The sentiments expressed are included in the themes outlined in **Section 3.2** of this report.

There were 73 written and verbal submissions recorded by the team at the event, mostly from landowners within the EPRC.

Public Consultation No.3: Emerging Preferred Route Corridor Report



Figure 2.2 Public Consultation Event, Bloomfield House Hotel 19th June 2025

3 SUBMISSIONS AND SENTEMENTS EXPRESSED

3.1 Submissions Received

3.1.1 Submission Methods

During the consultation period 193 submissions were received. These were submitted through the following methods: verbally or written at the public consultation event, by email, using the online feedback form or by post. A breakdown of the number of submissions received through each method is shown in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1 Methods used to make a submission

Submission Method	Number Received
Online feedback form	64
Received by post	24
Received by email	32
Verbal / Written Submission at Consultation Event	73
Total	193

3.1.2 Feedback Form

On the feedback form a number of questions were asked. The results of these questions are outlined in **Table 3.2** below. It should be noted that respondents who made a submission through other methods may not have answered all the questions asked on the feedback form.

Table 3.2 Responses to Feedback Form Questions

Feedback Form Questions		
Q. Would you use the greenway?		
Yes	No	Did not indicate
31 (16%)	58 (30%)	104 (54%)
Q. Do you live or own property within or adjacent to one of the Route Corridor Options		
Yes	No	Did not indicate
165 (86%)	26 (13%)	2 (1%)
Q. Please tick here if you would like to be contacted regarding project news and updates.		
Yes	No	
98 (51%)	95 (49%)	

3.2 Sentiments Expressed and Emerging Themes

The main sentiments expressed during the public consultation event and in the submissions throughout the consultation period was largely negative to the selected EPRC, with concerns raised regarding the impacts of the greenway and objection to the acquisition of privately owned land. Some positive feedback was also received in relation to the selected EPRC, connecting areas of interest and natural beauty, and providing greenway infrastructure.

In the submissions and at the in-person event the following themes emerged:

- Landowner impacts and concerns,
- Option selection process,
- Communication and consultation,
- Environment and landscape,
- Operation, safety and maintenance,

Public Consultation No.3: Emerging Preferred Route Corridor Report

- Health and wellbeing,
- Development and construction, and
- Community and rural development

3.2.1 Landowner Impacts and Concerns

Feedback from landowners highlighted concerns regarding the loss of land for construction of the greenway and the impacts this could have on operation of farming business. Landowners showed concern about the increased costs from exceeding nitrates limits as a result of reduced landholding and that this could result in realignment of farming practice resulting in further increased costs. Landowners who are full time farmers expressed concerns over financial pressures from increased expenditure and reduced earnings. Landowners also had concerns regarding the potential reduction in farm payments due to the loss of land.

Submissions showed concern regarding how the project would impact their current or future plans for the development of their farming business. This included feedback regarding changes to farming practices, potential impact on business in the area and how future generations would be able to use the land if the greenway is constructed.

Landowners submitted feedback highlighting concerns regarding the impacts of using privately owned land for the greenway, these included queries around the loss of land and access routes, severance and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). Landowners had concerns regarding impact of severance on farming activities and requested that the project follow farm boundaries, when the greenway passes through farmland, to avoid fragmenting holdings as this would affect the farms viability and cause great inconvenience to the landowner. Some landowners gave suggestions on route alignments within the EPRC and some landowners gave suggestions for routes outside the EPRC.

The need for privacy and security were also highlighted by landowners and concerns were raised about routing the greenway at the backs of properties which could impact privacy. There were also fears that it could result in increased opportunities for crime.

Submissions highlighted concerns regarding the impact to livestock through trespass, dog attacks or spread of disease such as (TB) from displacement of badgers.

In the submissions, concerns were raised about losing access to water for agricultural use where the greenway is routed adjacent to water courses. Access to water for livestock, fishing and swimming were among the concerns raised.

3.2.2 Option Selection Process

In the submissions and at the consultation event, people raised their concerns regarding the selected EPRC and felt that alternative corridors would be a more viable option. In particular, these concerns were raised regarding the corridors on the east and west side of Lough Ennell as many landowners felt the corridor on the west side of Lough Ennell should have been selected. Respondents suggested that the corridor should have followed the route of the Westmeath Way.

Some respondents were happy with the selected EPRC and thought that the existing amenities and facilities on the east side of Lough Ennell would be beneficial for promotion of the greenway and for the greenway user.

During the consultation period and at the consultation event requests were made to the project team to provide more information regarding the option selection process and to provide the Options Report. Following these requests an Options Selection Summary was provided to respondents who requested more information on the option selection process.

At the public consultation event and in the submissions, feedback was given on the information displays provided, in particular regarding aerial mapping which did not have some dwellings which were constructed in recent years and aerial imagery from the OSI which was not recent. The mapping being used by the project team is the most up to date mapping available from the OSI database. New aerial imagery was captured by a survey team at the end of April 2025. This will be the mapping used during Phase 3 for the design and environmental evaluation of the project. This was relayed by the project team during the public consultation event.

3.2.3 Communication and Consultation

Feedback was received regarding a perceived lack of communication to landowners regarding the public consultation. Some respondents stated that they were unaware of the public consultation event until they heard about it locally from neighbours and that they were unaware of previous consultation events. Some respondents stated that they did not receive the letter in the post that was issued to landowners within the consultation area, others advised the information was not up-to-date. Landowner information was based on the 2023 Tailte Eireann ownership database. At the commencement of Phase 3 (Design and Environmental Evaluation) an updated land ownership data will be obtained from Tailte Eireann.

A number of submissions highlighted concerns over the accessibility of the consultation materials as not everyone could access the online material. Maps of the EPRC or specific areas within the EPRC were issued to those that specifically requested them.

3.2.4 Environment and Landscape

Concerns regarding the impact to the environment was a common topic within the submissions. Respondents had concerns regarding impacts to the Lough Ennell Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the Lough Ennell Special Protection Area (SPA), and the Split Hills and Long Hill Esker SAC. Concerns were also raised regarding the impact to natural beauty along the River Brosna and the potential impacts to the River Brosna's flora, fauna, water quality and pollution as well as disruptions and fish. Disruption to natural wildlife, various habitats, biodiversity, rivers, streams, drains and grasslands was of concern to many respondents due to the increased traffic, noise, and disruption that would result from the construction and operation of the greenway. Flooding was highlighted in some submissions and the increased risk of flooding due to runoff from the greenway. There were many questions regarding environmental surveys and the perceived lack of environmental and planning assessments completed to date. Responses highlighted potential disadvantages of the EPRC in the potential of distribution or damage to protected archaeological heritage sites.

Submissions highlighted the positive benefits of the EPRC including advantages to tourism due to it being more scenic along the River Brosna and shores of Lough Ennell, having lots of flora and fauna, existing amenities on the east of Lough Ennell and the area contains a number of archaeological features.

3.2.5 Operation, Safety and Maintenance

Submissions raised concerns about security after the greenway is constructed. Respondents had concerns regarding increased opportunities for crime, trespass, loitering and anti-social behaviour. In the submissions it was questioned as to who will police, maintain and manage the greenway. Other concerns included the subject of public lighting and whether it will be implemented along the greenway to enhance public safety.

Submissions highlighted potential issues of safety for residents, livestock and greenway users. Some respondents expressed fears for their safety with increased activity close to their residence due to the greenway. Safety of livestock was highlighted as well as the issue of livestock rotation and field movement being compromised. Respondents also highlighted concerns regarding dogs off-lead, littering, and noise. Safety concerns for greenway users in isolated areas were also raised. Some other operation and maintenance concerns raised were:

- Concerns that the greenway would cause increased traffic on local roads.
- Litter and illegal dumping in terms of how the greenway will operate and be maintained.
- Vermin control along the greenway.

3.2.6 Health and Wellbeing

Feedback from landowners was received regarding the negative impact the greenway would have on their mental health and wellbeing due to stress and worry of losing land, impact to their livelihoods, impact on quality of life, loss of access to existing amenities and live in fear due to loss of privacy and security. The combination of increased traffic of strangers, as well as it not being safe for kids playing outside and the idea of not feeling safe in their own home causing increase stress was highlighted in the submissions.

Public Consultation No.3: Emerging Preferred Route Corridor Report

Respondents also commented on the positive impacts the greenway would have on their health and wellbeing by creating a safe accessible greenway that could be used for locals and visitors, improved access to amenities, increased activity levels and increase in revenue and job opportunities for local area.

3.2.7 Development and Construction

Respondents commented on areas outside of the EPRC, or a particular area within the EPRC that they would either like to see included as part of the greenway or that they objected to being used for the greenway. Submissions recommended use of public land rather than private land for the greenway. Many were concerned about the proximity of the greenway in relation to some protected structures in the area.

It was also highlighted that some roads had wide verges that could accommodate the greenway or the use of local roads as part of the greenway. Some respondents suggested that the greenway could be connected to the Old Rail Trail at Castletown Geoghegan or Dysart. Some respondents questioned why the Westmeath Way was not developed for the greenway and that it would be more cost effective and quicker to construct. There was also a suggestion to make the L1136 a one-way road and use one side of the road for the greenway.

It was suggested that the greenway should connect the local community to the local school and the proposed GAA facility in Dalystown, as well as other small villages nearby. Some respondents recommended connecting the greenway closer into Mullingar town.

Feedback highlighted concerns regarding increased traffic during construction and the impact of construction on farming activities. Respondents had concerns regarding where emergency vehicles would access the greenway once constructed.

3.2.8 Community and Rural Development

Submissions regarding the positive impact of developing the greenway included a boost to tourism and economic activity in the area, a connection to local attractions along the corridor, as well as connecting communities and overall, benefiting locals.

Concerns regarding the number of greenways already developed in Westmeath and that funds could be better spent upgrading existing trails such as the Westmeath Way or used on other projects in the community.

4 LANDOWNER LIAISON

4.1 Project Liaison Officers Meeting with Landowners

Project Liaison Officers, working on behalf of the project team, have been engaging with landowners since the start of April 2024, prior to the second public consultation period. The PLOs have continued to meet with landowners and homeowners throughout Phase 2 and were present at the public consultation event. The PLOs have to date made more than 432 calls, house visits and meetings with landowners regarding the project.

4.2 Independent Agronomist

Westmeath County Council has appointed an Independent Agronomist, Philip Farrelly & Co Agricultural Consultants (website: www.pfarrelly.com; Telephone: 01 690 6555) who are available to landowners to assess the impact of the proposed greenway on their landholdings. Contact details for the independent agronomist are available on the project website, and have been shared with landowners at the public consultation event, and on project literature.

A representative from the independent agronomist was in attendance in the event room for the duration of Public Consultation No.3, and held meetings with those landowners who wished to discuss the project.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Public Consultation No. 3 Emerging Preferred Route Corridor for the Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway was held between Monday 16th June and Friday 25th July 2025. The purpose of the consultation was to update all stakeholders, landowners, members of the public and interested parties on the project progress to date and the EPRC within which the Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway is likely to be developed.

The project team will take the feedback received into consideration during Phase 3 Design and Environmental Evaluation and when developing a route within the EPRC.

The next public consultation will be Public Consultation No. 4 Preferred Route Consultations with Individual Landowners, where the project team will consult with landowners within the EPRC to develop a route for the greenway between Kilbeggan and Mullingar.

Appendix A Advertisements

KILBEGGAN TO MULLINGAR GREENWAY

Public Consultation Event No.3 Emerging Preferred Route Corridor

Westmeath County Council (WCC), in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), invites residents of the local area, members of the public and interested parties to participate in a public consultation on the Emerging Preferred Route Corridor for the Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway. As part of this public consultation WCC will be hosting an in person public consultation event. The event will be held at the following location:

**Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar,
Co. Westmeath (N91 HP8E),
Thursday 19th June 2025, from 3pm to 8pm.**

Information on the project and this public consultation will be available from 16th June on the project website where you can also provide feedback.

www.kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie



WEBSITE LINK

Written submissions can also be made via email, post or using the online feedback form.

Email: info@kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie

Post: RPS, IDA Business & Technology Park,
Mervue, Galway, H91 H9CK



**ONLINE FEEDBACK
FORM**





KILBEGGAN TO MULLINGAR GREENWAY PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT NO.3 EMERGING PREFERRED ROUTE CORRIDOR

Westmeath County Council invites the residents of the local area, members of the public and interested parties to participate in the public consultation on the Emerging Preferred Route Corridor (EPRC) for the Kilbeggan to Mullingar Greenway Project.

The consultation period opens on **Monday 16th June 2025**.

The closing date for submissions is **Friday 25th July 2025**.

An in-person public consultation event displaying the EPRC will take place at the following location:

**Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath (N91 HP8E),
Thursday 19th June 2025, from 3pm to 8pm.**

Information on the project and this public consultation will be available from 16th June on the project website where you can also provide feedback. Written submissions can also be made via email, post or using the online feedback form.

Web: www.kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie

Email: info@kilbeggantomullingargreenway.ie

Post: RPS, IDA Business & Technology Park,
Mervue, Galway, H91 H9CK.



WEBSITE LINK



**ONLINE
FEEDBACK FORM**