

**South Circular Road to Bishops Quay Cycle  
Scheme**

**Planning Report**

**211201-PUNCH-XX-XX-RP-C-003**

**September 2022**

## Document Control

Document Number: 211101-PUNCH-XX-XX-RP-C-003

| Status | Revision | Description    | Date              | Prepared   | Checked    | Approved   |
|--------|----------|----------------|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| A0     | P01      | Planning Issue | 21 September 2022 | J. Fennell | J. Tiernan | J. Tiernan |
|        |          |                |                   |            |            |            |
|        |          |                |                   |            |            |            |

**Table of Contents**

Document Control..... i

Table of Contents ..... ii

1 Introduction..... 1

    1.1 Background..... 1

    1.2 Engineering Drawings ..... 2

    1.3 Scheme Objectives..... 2

    1.4 Proposed Works..... 3

2 Planning and Policy Context..... 4

    2.1 National Planning Policy..... 4

    2.2 Regional Planning Policy ..... 8

    2.3 Local Planning Policy ..... 10

        2.3.2 Limerick Metropolitan Cycle Network Plan ..... 11

    2.4 Summary..... 11

3 Impact Of The Scheme ..... 12

    3.1 AA Screening ..... 12

    3.2 EIA Screening ..... 12

    3.3 Bat Survey ..... 12

    3.4 Archaeological, Conservation and Heritage Constraints ..... 12

    3.5 Public Utility Constraints..... 14

    3.6 Surface Water Drainage & SuDS..... 15

    3.7 Landscaping ..... 15

    3.8 Flooding ..... 15

4 Transport Context ..... 16

    4.1 Local Road Network..... 16

    4.2 Existing Traffic Conditions ..... 16

    4.3 Parking..... 17

    4.4 Road Safety Issues..... 18

    4.5 Public Transport Network ..... 18

        4.5.1 Existing Bus Stops ..... 18

        4.5.2 Existing Railway Network ..... 18

    4.6 Existing Pedestrian Facilities ..... 18

    4.7 Existing Cycle Network & Facilities..... 19

        4.7.1 Existing Network ..... 19

        4.7.2 Existing Facilities..... 19

5 Conclusion ..... 22

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This report was prepared to accompany a Part 8 planning application by Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) for a proposed cycle route from Ballykeeffe Roundabout on Ballinacurra Road to Bishops Quay via South Circular Road (SCR), Henry Street and Mill Lane.

The proposed route of the scheme will cover a distance of approximately 2.6km connecting the suburbs of Raheen/Dooradoyle within Limerick's city centre as outlined in Figure 1-1 below. The project is proposed to tie in with existing and proposed cycling and walking routes as identified within the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (Revised Draft).

There are numerous trip attractors along the city route including Mary Immaculate College, St. Clements College, Scoil Mháthair Dé, and both Laurel Secondary school and Laurel Hill Coláiste are schools/colleges located on South Circular Road.

The proposed works will involve alterations to the existing road network which altering the road width, new cycle track construction, improved footpath provision, new pedestrian crossings, traffic calming measures, shared surfaces, new road markings and all ancillary works necessary for completion of the scheme. Upon completion of the project, there will be improved facilities for both pedestrians and cyclists with an aim to reduce the reliability on private car use in the area.

The project extents are as outlined in Figure 1-1 below. Please refer to the engineering drawings contained within the planning pack for the full extents of the works.

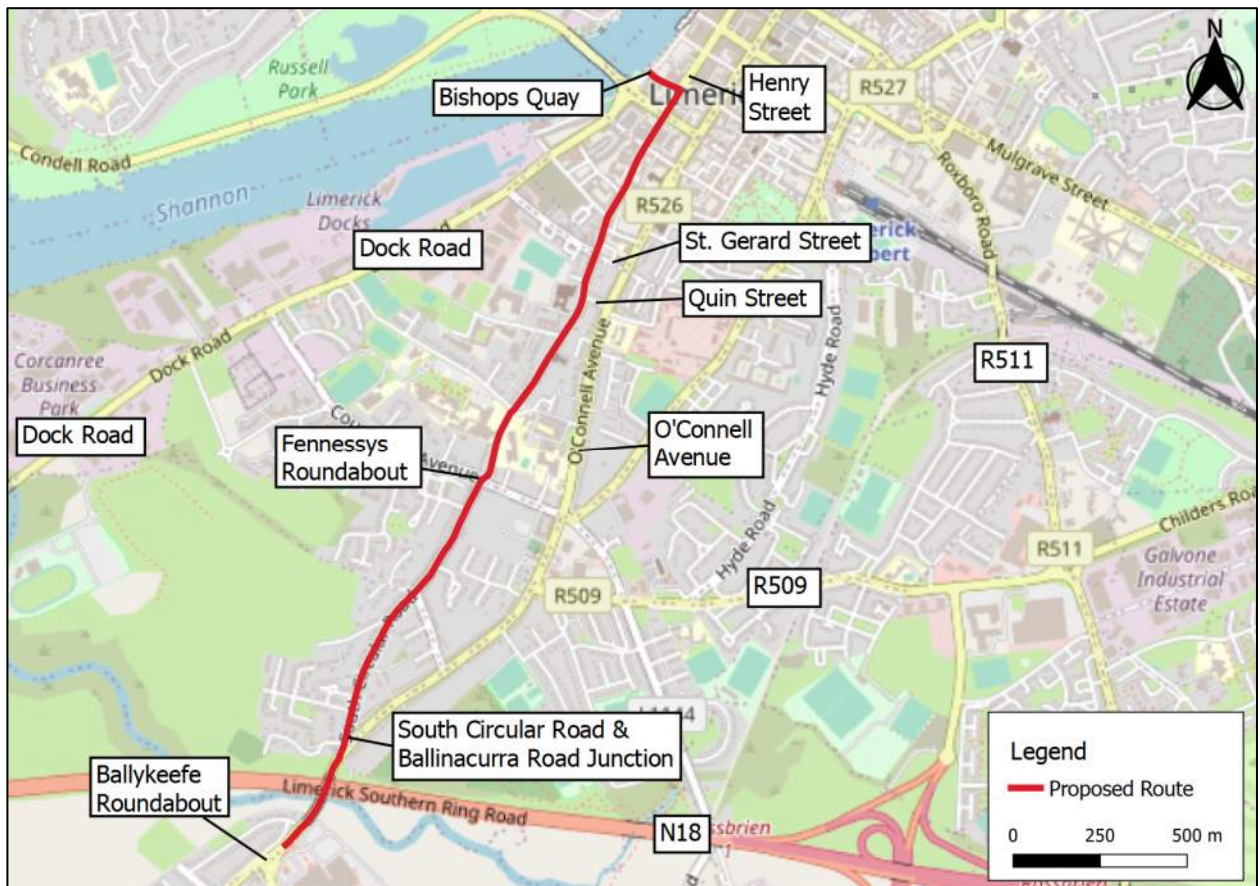


Figure 1-1: Project Extents (Ref: <https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright> )

## **1.2 Engineering Drawings**

Details of the proposed works are outlined in a series of engineering drawings prepared by PUNCH Consulting Engineers which are included in this application:

- 211101-PUNCH-02-XX-DR-C-0400 A0 C01 - KEY PLAN
- 211101-PUNCH-02-XX-DR-C-0401 A0 C01 - 1:500 ROADS LAYOUT - SHEET 1 OF 5
- 211101-PUNCH-02-XX-DR-C-0402 A0 C01 - 1:500 ROADS LAYOUT - SHEET 2 OF 5
- 211101-PUNCH-02-XX-DR-C-0403 A0 C01 - 1:500 ROADS LAYOUT - SHEET 3 OF 5
- 211101-PUNCH-02-XX-DR-C-0404 A0 C01 - 1:500 ROADS LAYOUT - SHEET 4 OF 5
- 211101-PUNCH-02-XX-DR-C-0405 A0 C01 - 1:500 ROADS LAYOUT - SHEET 5 OF 5
- 211101-PUNCH-02-XX-DR-C-0551 A0 C01 - TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS AND DETAILS

## **1.3 Scheme Objectives**

This scheme aims to deliver the following objectives as set out by LCCC:

- I. To improve safety, comfort and security for cyclists and pedestrians;
- II. To provide safe cycle facilities;
- III. To improve the crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists;
- IV. To comply with the revised draft Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS);
- V. To provide junction solutions in line with the Principles of Sustainable Safety, that meets with the five needs of cyclists and the target Quality of Services outlined in the National Cycle Manual (NCM);
- VI. To design a facility that complies with the National Cycle Manual, June 2011 (Including any subsequent updates), published by the National Transport Authority and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and any other relevant guidelines.

## 1.4 Proposed Works

The proposed development consists of the following:

- Construction of dedicated two-way cycle track facilities on western side of the proposed route over an approximate length of 1750m between the tie in north of Ballykeeffe Roundabout to SCR/Ballinacurra Road and between Fennessy's Junction to Bishops Quay. The cycle facilities are to be segregated cycle tracks
- Alterations to the existing carriageway on SCR between Ballinacurra Road to Fennessy's Junction. The cycle facilities are to be a shared carriageway for 850m with additional traffic calming and filtered permeability measures to be implemented over 350m
- Re-construction of pedestrian footpaths on both sides of road throughout the scheme length as necessary to provide suitable footpaths widths for vulnerable road users
- Alterations to carriageway widths and minor junction improvements over the length of the scheme in accordance with DMURS
- Significant upgrades to the following junctions:
  - SCR/Ballinacurra Road
  - SCR/Lifford Gardens/Boreen and Tobair
  - Fennessy's Roundabout altered to a signal-controlled junction
  - SCR/Summerville Avenue
  - SCR/Quin Street
  - Henry Street/Lower Mallow Street signal-controlled junction
- Installation of traffic calming measures on SCR to include raised table tops at junctions and signage for a changed speed limit of 30km/hour between Ballinacurra Road and Fennessy's junction;
- Re-distribution of parking along the length of the scheme and construction of 10 space car parking area;
- Installation of LED public lighting and modifications to surface water sewers, foul sewers, watermains, gas mains and further utility services where required;
- New road markings and coloured surfacing to cycle facilities where required;
- One existing tree to be removed

## 2 Planning and Policy Context

The main purpose of the proposed cycle scheme is to provide a suitable road arrangement that will accommodate existing and future pedestrian, cycle and vehicular traffic along the South Circular Road (SCRd) and Henry Street. It will also provide a suitable link from the city towards Dooradoyle and beyond. The below sections outline the requirements from various guidance documents and standards which portray the need for the proposed cycle route.

### 2.1 National Planning Policy

#### 2.1.1 National Planning Policy

##### 2.1.1.1 Climate Action Plan (2021)

The Climate Action Plan 2021 details the plan to reduce greenhouse emissions by 2030 with the goal of reaching net-zero emissions by 2050. The plan outlines the proposals for achieving these goals and also envisages a positive effect on both the economy and society in Ireland.

The transport network in Ireland will play a key role in reaching the goals set out in the plan. Investments in walking, cycling and public transport will promote a modal shift reducing the level of private car use in the country.

##### 2.1.1.2 Project Ireland 2040

Project Ireland 2040 is an initiative set up by the Irish Government to make Ireland better for everyone. The policy recognises that economic and social progress go hand in hand and so prioritises people's wellbeing. The overall objective of the policy is to provide comprehensive social, economic and cultural infrastructure.

##### 2.1.1.3 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF), part of Project Ireland 2040, is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping future growth and development was published in March 2018. The NPF sets out ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) which the framework aims to deliver.

A strategic investment priority under the National Development Plan 2018-2027 is public investment in environmentally sustainable public transport systems in major urban areas, as a primary enabler for National Strategic Outcomes under the NPF relating to compact growth.

#### **National Strategic Outcome 4 - Sustainable Mobility**

In accordance with National Strategic Outcome 4, this scheme will provide a coherent, interconnected and safe cycle network. The cycle network will cater for all ages and abilities and will allow for a range of cycling activities to occur, including commuting, leisure and tourism. The proposal will improve the liveability and quality of life for the local population and will build on existing infrastructure already in place

##### 2.1.1.4 National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland

The Department of Transport has published the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI). The document is a high-level strategic framework to support the consideration and prioritisation of future investment in land transport. NIFTI was developed to ensure investment is aligned with the National Planning Framework and the delivery of the ten National Strategic Outcomes.

##### 2.1.1.5 National Sustainable Mobility Policy

In April 2022, the Department of Transport published the "National Sustainable Mobility Policy" (NSMP) and the supporting "NSMP Action Plan 2022-2025". These documents align with the existing Project Ireland 2040 Framework. The purpose of the policy is described as follows:

*“To set out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland’s overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions by the end of this decade”*

The strategies principal targets are outlined below:

*“To deliver at least 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys and a 10% reduction in kilometres driven by fossil fuelled cars by 2030 in line with metrics for transport set out in the Climate Action Plan 2021”.*

The “NSMP Action Plan 2022-2025” outlines 10 no. goals which comprise of a total of 91 no. core actions. Furthermore, the owner, support organisation, timeline and output of each action item is defined. The 10 no. goals are as follows:

#### **Safe and Green Mobility**

- 1- Improve mobility safety
- 2- Decarbonise public transport
- 3- Expand availability of sustainable mobility in metropolitan areas
- 4- Expand availability of sustainable mobility in rural areas
- 5- Encourage people to choose sustainable mobility over the private car

#### **People Focused Mobility**

- 6- Take a whole of journey approach to mobility, promoting inclusive access for all
- 7- Design infrastructure according to universal design principles and hierarchy of road user’s model
- 8- Promote sustainable mobility through research and citizen engagement

#### **Better Integrated Mobility**

- 9- Better integrate land use and transport planning at all levels
- 10- Promote smart and integrated mobility through innovative technologies and development of appropriate regulation

The main action items to be considered / that impact the proposed development are as follows:

- **No. 4:** Continue to protect and renew road infrastructure for all road users including sustainable mobility users.
- **No.17:** Develop pedestrian enhancement plans for the five metropolitan areas.
- **No.19:** Deliver additional cycling infrastructure projects in the five cites. (Complements CAP action 233, RSS action 5)
- **No.78:** Deliver metropolitan area transport strategies in the cites. (Complements CAP actions 254 and 256)

Action Item no.78 above aims to deliver metropolitan area transport strategies to the five cities and prepare local transport plans for the regional growth centres and key towns. The Limerick & Shannon and Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy is described in the Regional Planning Policy Section 3.3 of this report.

Table 2-1 below shows 2016 Census data on population means of travel in Limerick City & County, therefore a lot more work to get people cycling was and is still needed to meet the policy objectives. Motor car usage for both driver and passenger-shared accounts for much of the means of travel to work, school or college (64.5%). Walking, cycling and public transport make up much of the remainder (22.7%), (Census 2016, Profile 6 - Commuting in Ireland, Table E6011).



Table 2-1: 2016 Census - Population Means of Travel - Limerick City and County

| Means of Travel             | Number of Persons | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| On foot                     | 17,139            | 14.1%      |
| Bicycle                     | 1,835             | 1.5%       |
| Bus, minibus or coach       | 8,504             | 7.0%       |
| Train, DART or LUAS         | 177               | 0.1%       |
| Motorcycle or scooter       | 235               | 0.2%       |
| Motor car: Driver           | 52,289            | 43.0%      |
| Motor car: Passenger        | 26,146            | 21.5%      |
| Van                         | 5,095             | 4.2%       |
| Other, incl. lorry          | 526               | 0.4%       |
| Work mainly at or from home | 3,914             | 3.2%       |
| Not stated                  | 5,865             | 4.8%       |

Based on the above cycling figure of 1.5% and the lack of existing continuous cycle facilities in the area, the proposed cycling facilities on this route have the potential for a significant modal shift in the existing modes of transport to favour cycling. Modal shift in city and suburbs is also known to be higher compared with county locations given the potential for shorter trips.

## 2.1.2 National Design Guidance

### 2.1.2.1 National Cycle Manual 2011

The National Cycle Manual (NCM) takes into account the Principles of Sustainable Safety in order to provide a safe traffic environment for all road users, including cyclists. The manual recommends the below five requirements necessary to meet the needs of the cyclist:

#### 1. Road Safety

All networks must seek to optimise road safety for all road users, including cyclists. Cycle infrastructure is to include proven safe measures as any perception of a lack of safety could be a deterrent to cycling.

#### 2. Coherence

Cycling networks should link all main origin and destination zones / centres for cyclists and should carry the majority of cycle traffic. As a result, cycling routes should be logical and continuous.

#### 3. Directness

Cycling infrastructure should be as direct as possible, minimising any delays or detours. A well-designed urban cycle network should confer an advantage in terms of average distance or journey time when compared with other transport networks.

#### 4. Attractiveness

The cycling environment along a route should be pleasant and interesting.


**5. Comfort**

Cycling infrastructure should be designed, built and maintained for ease of use and for comfort. This is particularly important for beginners, tourists and recreational cyclists. Cycling comfort can be achieved through providing effective width for cycling links; well-drained high-quality surfacing; improving shelter; minimising stopping, delays, detours etc.

The four elements that determine the width of a cycle track are:

- A. The space to the left of the cyclist
- B. The space required to support the cycling regime
- C. The space to the right of the cyclist
- D. Additional Features

By integrating the above four elements into the design of cycle infrastructure, an optimum cycle facility is obtained. The table below outlines the space required for the above elements which aids in calculating the required width of the cycle track.
















| A Inside Edge  | B Cycling Regime  | C Outside Edge   | D Additional Features  |
|--|---|--|--|
|  <b>0.25m</b> |  <b>0.75m</b>  |  <b>0.50m</b><br>30kph, 3.0m wide lane                          | Uphill <b>0.25m</b><br>Sharp bends <b>0.25m</b>                                |
|  <b>0.25m</b>   |  <b>1.25m</b><br>Single File + Overtaking, Partially using next lane   |  <b>0.75m</b><br>50kph, 3.0m wide lane                          | Cyclist stacking, Stopping and starting <b>0.50m</b>                           |
|  <b>0.65m</b>  |  <b>1.75m</b><br>Basic Two-Way  |  <b>0.50m</b><br>Raised kerb, dropped Kerb or physical barrier | Around primary schools, Interchanges, or for larger tourist bikes <b>0.25m</b> |
|  <b>0.50m</b> |  <b>2.00m</b><br>Single File + Overtaking, Partially using next lane |  <b>0.25m</b><br>Kerb to vegetation etc. (ie. cycleway)       | Taxi ranks, loading, line of parked cars <b>1.00m</b> (min 0.8m)               |
|  |  <b>2.50m</b><br>2 Abreast + overtaking (tracks and cycleways)       |  | Turning pocket cyclists <b>0.50m</b>   |

Figure 2-1: Cycle Track Width Calculator - National Cycle Manual 2011

### 2.1.2.2 Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

The Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets (DMURS) was prepared for the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. DMURS provides guidance on designing urban roads and streets. It presents the principles, approaches and standards for urban areas where speed limits are below 60km/hr.

The manual places a significant emphasis on car dominance in Ireland and the implications this has had regarding the pedestrian and cycle environment. The document encourages more sustainable travel patterns and safer streets by proposing a hierarchy for user priorities. As per Section 2.2.2 and Figure 2-21 extract over, this hierarchy places pedestrians at the top, indicating that walking is the most sustainable form of transport and that by prioritising pedestrians first, the number of short car journeys can be reduced and public transport made more accessible. Second in the hierarchy are cyclists with public transport third in the hierarchy and private motor vehicles at the bottom. By placing private vehicles at the bottom of the hierarchy, the document indicates that there should be a balance on street networks and cars should no longer take priority over the needs of other users.

## 2.2 Regional Planning Policy

### 2.2.1.1 Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (Revised Draft)

The Revised Draft Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040 (LSMATS) has been developed by the National Transport Authority in collaboration with Limerick City and County Council, Clare County Council and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). The National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF) envisages that the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area (LSMA) will become the growth engine of the Mid-West Region with projected growth of at least 50% during the period up to 2040. This projected population and associated economic growth will result in a significant increase in the demand for travel. There is a legacy of car dependency in the LSMA. This has contributed to a wide range of economic, environmental and social issues including longer commutes, declining urban centres, poor public health, reduced air quality and noise pollution.

To mitigate this, land use and transport planning will be far more closely aligned. This will discourage the use of the private car, particularly for short trips, in order to fundamentally change how people move around the LSMA. This requires a more efficient use of valuable street and road space and a prioritisation of walking, cycling and public transport.

The vision for Revised Draft LSMATS is to deliver a high-quality, accessible, integrated and more sustainable transport network that supports the role of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area as the major growth engine of the Mid-West Region, an internationally competitive European city region and main international entry to the Atlantic Corridor.

Cycling is a low cost, sustainable and growing mode of transport. Limerick City has a lot of untapped potential to become a haven for cyclists with its flat topography, compact design and the fact that a journey from the City Centre to the urban edge can be undertaken in less than 30-mins.

High-quality infrastructure and supporting measures are required to cultivate a cycling culture in the LSMA, and to give all individuals the choice to cycle, including:

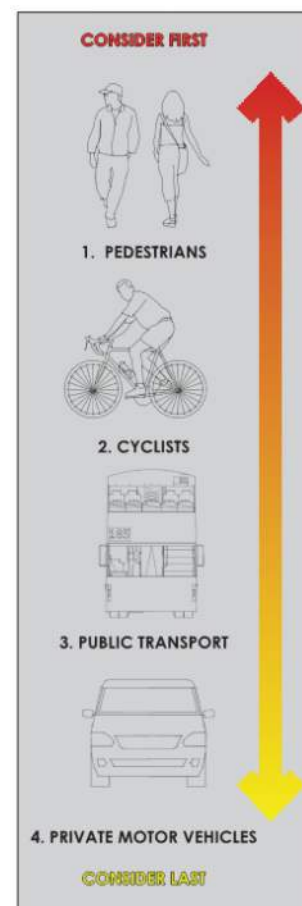


Figure 2-2 : DMURS User Hierarchy Extract - Figure 2-21

- I. Identification of Primary, Secondary, Inter-Urban, Feeder and Greenway Routes, and Quiet Ways to develop a comprehensive cycle network across the LSMA;
- II. Facilities designed to NCM standards;
- III. Full or light segregation from other modes to ensure safety and comfort for all road users;
- IV. Local traffic calming, lower speed limits and junction treatments, particularly at complex junctions in an urban context; and
- V. Supporting measures including the public Bike Share Scheme, end-of-trip facilities, and behavioural change initiatives.

Figure 2-3 is an extract from LSMATS showing the proposed route from the Ballykeefe Roundabout, along the South Circular Road, Henry Street and Mill Lane, identified as a primary cycle route for the city. This route is also referenced in section 9.1.4 Primary Cycle Network of the LSMATS, highlighting its strategic importance in the context of the City and cycle network.

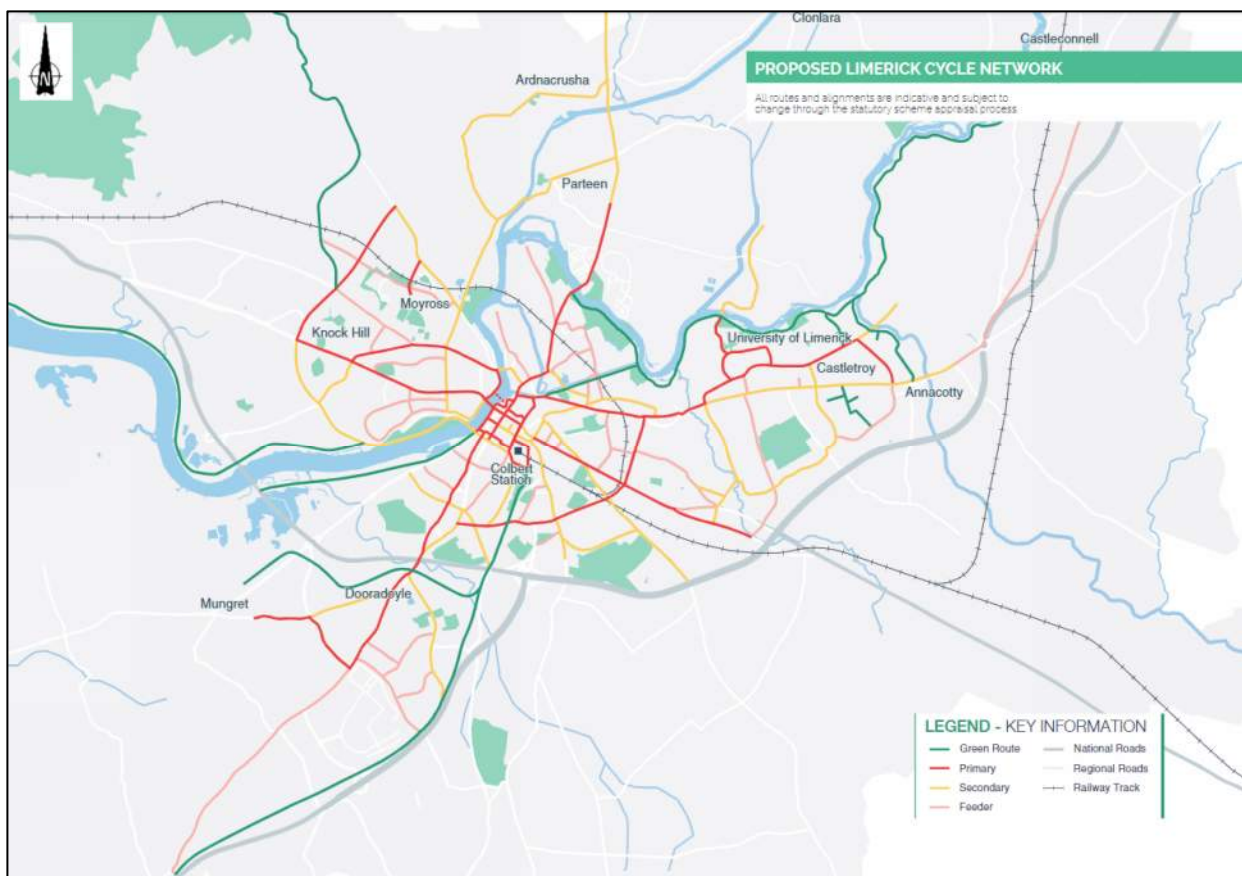


Figure 2-3: Proposed Limerick Cycle Networks as per LSMATS

### 2.2.1.2 Limerick 2030 Vision: An Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick

The “Limerick 2030 an Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick” was launched in 2013, as a once in a generation plan developed to guide the economic, social and physical renaissance of Limerick City Centre and the wider County/Mid-West Region.

The plan sets out a very clear framework that integrates economic development with spatial planning, all underpinned by dedicated bespoke marketing. It has the support of all the major public and private stakeholders in Limerick.

Two of the key objectives relating to the spatial plan include:

- I. To create a high quality and safe urban environment attractive to investors, employers, residents and tourists which generates a sense of pride in the City;
- II. To create quality strategic gateways to the City Centre, thereby making it a welcoming experience for visitors.

## 2.3 Local Planning Policy

### 2.3.1 Limerick Development Plan (2022-2028)

The following policies and objectives within the Limerick Development Plan (2022-2028) are considered relevant to the proposal:

- Policy CS P6 LSMATS
- Objective HO O3 Protection of Existing Residential Amenity
- Policy EH P1 Protection of Natural Heritage and Biodiversity
- Objective EH O8 Roosting Habitats
- Objective EH O10 Trees and Hedgerows
- Objective EH O12 Blue and Green Infrastructure
- Objective EH O50 Work to Protected Structures
- Objective EH O53 Architectural Conservation Areas
- Policy TR P3 Integration of Land Use and Transport Policies
- Policy TR P4 Promotion of Sustainable Patterns of Transport Use
- Policy TR P5 Sustainable Mobility and Regional Accessibility
- Policy TR P6 Delivery of Transport Infrastructure in line with National Policy
- Objective TR O2 Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets
- Objective TR O5 Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy
- Objective TR O6 Delivering Modal Split
- Objective TR O7 Behavioural Change Measures
- Objective TR O8 Walking and Cycling Infrastructure
- Objective TR O9 Limerick Cycle Network
- Objective TR O42 Roads and Streets
- Policy CAF P5 Managing Flood Risk
- Objective CAF O20 Flood Risk Assessments

The proposal has had regard to and is considered consistent with the policies and objectives listed above. A more detailed assessment of relevant policies is set out in Sections 3 and 4 of this report.

### 2.3.2 Limerick Metropolitan Cycle Network Plan

The Limerick Metropolitan Cycle Network Plan (LMCNP) was developed in 2016 as a means of building on the National Cycle Manual, with a vision to develop a consistent, clear and continuous network of urban and suburban cycle networks throughout the Limerick Metropolitan Area to ensure cycling becomes a realistic choice as a mode of transport. This includes individual route plans for the city centre and suburban areas including the Raheen Cycle Network which includes the SCR to Bishops Quay Cycle Scheme as a Primary Route. Figure 2-4 below shows an excerpt from the LMCNP for the proposed Raheen Cycle Network.

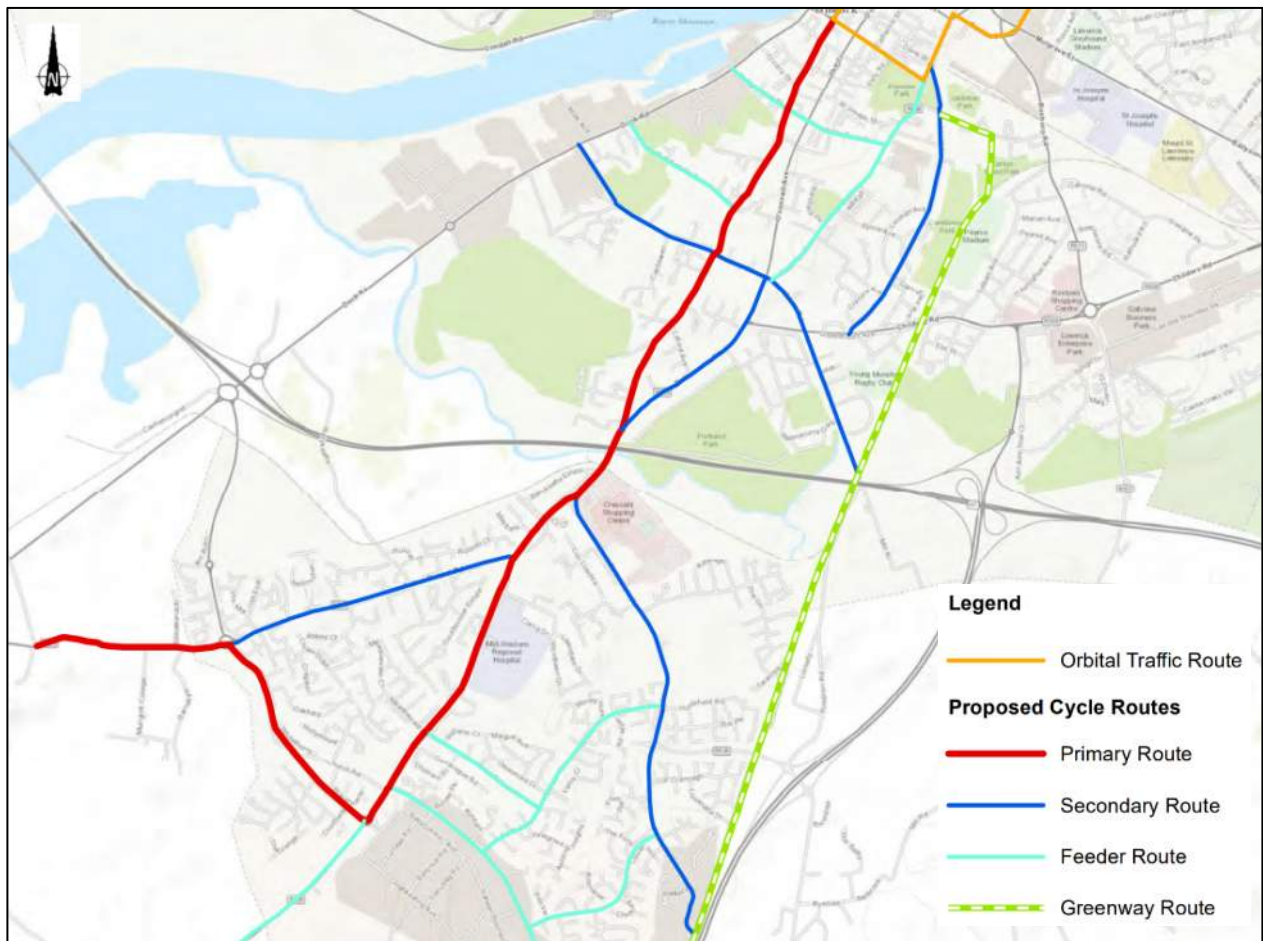


Figure 2-4: Excerpt from LMCNP Proposed Raheen Cycle Network

## 2.4 Summary

The proposed scheme has strong national, regional, and local planning policy supporting its development. This includes the National Planning Framework, Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy, and the Limerick City Development Plan and the Limerick Metropolitan Cycle Network Plan. The scheme also provides good connectivity for residential areas, employment zones, public transport and educational facilities.

### 3 Impact Of The Scheme

#### 3.1 AA Screening

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Stage I Screening Report has been completed in respect of the development works. The findings of the AA screening report are as follows:

*“It is of the opinion of the author that an AA of the proposed development is not required as significant effects upon all designated sites identified within 15km can be ruled out.”*

Further detail is set out in the AA Screening Report by Whitehill Environmental which accompanies this Part 8 Planning Application.

#### 3.2 EIA Screening

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report has been completed in respect of the development works and the evaluation undertaken has identified that the development works do not meet the thresholds for which preparation of an EIAR is a mandatory requirement. The findings of the EIA screening report are as follows:

*“The overall conclusion for this screening appraisal is that, having considered the appropriate criteria, Environmental Impact Assessment for the project is not required”*

Further detail is set out in the Minogue & Associates EIA Screening Report which accompanies this Part 8 Planning Application.

#### 3.3 Bat Survey

A bat roost potential evaluation survey was completed in July 2022 by Minogue & Associates. The survey was completed to identify the potential for trees and vegetation to be removed to allow construction of the Scheme to function as tree roost habitats for bats. The bat roost potential was assessed in accordance with the guidelines in Chapter 6 of the Bat Conservation Trust’s Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists (2016). The survey noted that the tree proposed to be removed does not have the potential to support bats. A copy of the Survey Report is included in this Part 8 Planning Application.

The proposal includes a number of bat boxes along the route in suitable locations to support the local bat population. This is considered consistent with Objective EH 08 - Roosting Habits of the Limerick Development Plan (2022-2028).

#### 3.4 Archaeological, Conservation and Heritage Constraints

There are no known archaeological sites or monuments within the proposed route. The proposed route does however pass through two Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs):

- ACA1 - South City Centre and Newtown Perry
- ACA2 - South Circular Road, New Street and University of Limerick Mary Immaculate College Campus

The route also passes by numerous Protected Structures.

An Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment, prepared by Dr Judith Hill, Architectural Historian and Heritage Consultant, supports this application. The report concludes that overall, the proposal would have a positive impact on ACA1 and ACA2 but highlights the potential for some negative impacts centring mainly on parking. The report also recommends the consideration of lighting, services, and the employment of materials and design that are complementary to the ACAs.

In response to the issue raised regarding parking, an infill car parking area is proposed on the corner of the SCRd and Laurel Hill Avenue. The aim of this feature is to provide residents with an alternative place to park due to the reconfiguration of existing on street parking bays.

Given the sensitive nature of the ACAs and protected structures, the proposal has had regard to and is considered to be consistent with the following objectives in relation to heritage and conservation within the Limerick Development Plan (2022-2028):

- Objective EH 050 Work to Protected Structures
- Objective EH 053 Architectural Conservation Areas

The following provides a response to each part of the policies listed above as per the Development Plan.

#### Objective EH 050 Work to Protected Structures

a) One aspect of the proposed works, namely the infill car parking area, would be adjacent to but not within the curtilage of a Protected Structure (RPS No. 2050). The proposed car park is considered complementary and sympathetic to the protected structure. Additional landscaping is proposed to provide screening and no amendments to the existing boundary walls are proposed. The remaining works would pass a number of other protected structures along the proposed route. However, given that the works would largely be confined to the existing footprint of the road and outside of the curtilages of any protected structures, the works are not considered to be materially harmful to the character or setting or any protected structures along the route.

b) The proposal has had regard to the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities. In particular, Chapter 13 - Curtilage and Attendant Grounds, has been reviewed in full given the proximity of the protected structure and its curtilage to the proposed infill car park.

c) The works proposed are not within but adjacent to the curtilage of a protected structure. However, should there be a requirement to have the proposed works supervised by a qualified professional, then the attachment of a suitable condition to a grant of permission is deemed to be reasonable given the site context.

d) No modification, alteration or extension of the protected structure is proposed. The proposed development would be located within an existing grassed area located over 20 metres from the front of the building, and separated by a boundary wall. The proposed infill car park is considered to be sensitively sited in the context of the protected structure and appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, height, layout and materials. The proposal would consist of works at ground level and whilst they would involve the removal of soft landscaping, this would be offset by the inclusion of additional tree planting and screening.

e) No changes are proposed to the form or structural integrity of the protected structure. No views of the protected structure would be materially affected by the proposal. Views from the surrounding streets of the protected structure would still be maintained at existing levels.

f) No part of the interior of the building associated with the protected structure is proposed to be altered.

g) No changes or additional features are proposed to the actual building. No changes are proposed to the boundary walls which would remain unaltered and in place.

h) The proposed car park is considered compatible with the character and special interest of the adjacent Protected Structure. The front garden area of the protected structure has a boundary wall that separates it from the neighbouring property, No.3, and the grassed area that is proposed to be replaced by the car park. This aspect of the development, whilst in close proximity to the curtilage, would not affect any of the existing features associated with the protected structure.

i) Regard has been had to the character and setting of the protected structure in terms of the building and curtilage, including the existing boundary walls, none of which are proposed to be altered in any way from the existing situation.

j) The existing boundary wall will remain in place and is not proposed to be altered. Access to the proposed car park would be via an existing entrance off Laurel Hill Avenue.

k) The infill car parking area would remove the grassed area between the SCRd and the existing driveway. However, this area of land is not associated with nor is it within the curtilage of the protected structure.



#### Objective EH O53 Architectural Conservation Areas

a) The proposal has had regard to the character and special interest of ACA1 and ACA2. The Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment has concluded that overall, the proposed scheme would have a positive impact on ACA1 and ACA2, largely down to the removal of traffic. The report has recommended that alternative parking arrangements should be explored to offset the loss of existing on-street parking, currently available in parking bays in certain sections of the ACAs. This has been addressed by the reconfiguration of car parking along the route and the inclusion of an infill car parking area in an area on the corner of the SCRd and Laurel Hill Avenue. The car parking area would provide 10 spaces for the use of residents to offset the loss of the on-street parking bays. The report also identifies the opportunity to plant additional trees, which has been addressed through an extensive landscaping scheme.

b) The proposal has had regard to the Character briefs for ACA1 and ACA2. The character brief for ACA1 refers to the importance of the built heritage, which is recognised by the inclusion of over 220 buildings/structures in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. The brief sets out the diverse building styles, materials, types of structures, and street furniture found within the ACA. The character brief for ACA2 outlines the influence of the religious orders on this part of the City, the variety and range of residences, the number of protected structures, tree coverage and features including stonewalls and wrought iron gate railings.

With the exception of the infill car park, importantly, the proposal would be largely confined to the existing footprint of the road. The character briefs identify features that are all outside of the footprint of the road carriageway

c) No changes are proposed to any buildings within the ACAs. The main changes proposed are to the existing footprint of the road and the infill car parking area, off Laurel Hill Avenue. The proposed design is considered to be complementary and sympathetic to the context of the ACAs. With the exception of the infill car park, the proposal largely consists of alterations to the existing footprint of the roads, travelling through the ACAs. The scheme as designed is considered to be appropriate in terms of its design, scale, and materials.

d) The design as proposed is considered to be of a high quality and would reflect the more modern appearance of the road carriageway, whilst being sympathetic to the older buildings within the relevant ACAs.

e) The proposal would not remove or alter any existing boundary walls. Some existing soft landscaping would be removed to facilitate the infill car park aspect of the development, located between the SCRd and the driveway. However, this area has been effectively separated from the main dwelling due to the presence of the driveway and planted area. Additional planting is proposed to provide screening and improve the visual appearance of the area in the context of the ACA. Additional planting and landscaping is also proposed throughout the scheme where possible.

f) The proposed infill carpark is not located within the Georgian section of the City. Part of the overall scheme would pass through the Georgian section of the City. However, this would be largely confined to the existing road footprint and is therefore not considered to be materially harmful to the character or setting of the ACA or Georgian section of the City.

### **3.5 Public Utility Constraints**

A preliminary desktop study was undertaken to identify the nature and approximate location of existing public utilities along the length of the scheme.

Based on the utility's drawings from the service providers there are a number of services on South Circular Road and Henry Street which are to be taken into consideration during the proposed works. The ESB have both underground and overhead line along the full length of the proposed cycle scheme. There are also a number of locations where the overhead line cross over the road.

Gas Networks Ireland also have a low pressure distribution shown on the proposed route with some areas supplied via medium pressure pipes. The drawings also show a high pressure transmission pipe at the southern end of the proposed cycle way from Ballykeeffe Roundabout to Ballinacurra Cross.

Similar to Gas Networks Ireland, Virgin Media have underground services from Ballykeeffe Roundabout to Ballinacurra Cross. Unlike the ESB and Gas Networks Ireland, Virgin Media do not have a continuous line

along the length of the proposed scheme. There are a number of locations where the line crosses under the proposed route or runs parallel for lengths varying from between 23m to 135m.

As mentioned above and following a review of the available information on Irish Water assets, Irish Water have both a watermain and sewer along the full length of South Circular Road and Henry Street.

As the proposed works involve alterations to the existing road network, cognisance of the above services will be required to limit disruptions. Access to these services may also require alterations due to the changes in road levels.

It is important to maintain these services in the long term and to minimise disruption as much as possible during construction as services will not be diverted because they are required to serve the properties in the area. Some services may need to be rationalised, ducted, upgraded and/or re-laid, depending on the condition and location of the services. It is envisaged that the public utilities along the route will not overly impact the design of the scheme. A dedicated utilities survey will be undertaken at detailed design stage to confirm the type, depth and exact location of all services along the route.

### **3.6 Surface Water Drainage & SuDS**

Storm water flows can have a significant detrimental impact on the available capacity of combined sewer networks and at treatment plants. Inadequate treatment of surface waters can result in pollution of the receiving watercourses. There are many approaches to management of surface water that take account of water quantity (flooding), water quality (pollution), biodiversity (wildlife and plants) and amenity and these are collectively referred to as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). The use of SuDS to address surface water and its diversion from combined sewers is encouraged, in particular in infill/brownfield sites and higher density areas as appropriate.

The existing surface water within the scheme extents will be discharged to the existing storm water network system. LCCC will explore the introduction of SuDS measures during the detailed design stage of the project through the introduction, where feasible, of nature-based SuDS solutions such as tree pits, rain gardens among others. There will be no increase in discharge volumes associated with the scheme.

### **3.7 Landscaping**

As previously discussed one tree is proposed to be removed to facilitate improvements to the junction of the SCRd and Lifford Avenue. However, the proposal also includes a detailed landscaping plan that proposes a host of additional landscaping features along the route that include tree planting, rain gardens, wildflower meadows, grass/lawns, hedges, planters, and bulbs. This is considered to be a significant benefit of the scheme and would improve the route and area through the introduction of green infrastructure, whilst adding to the visual amenity and ecological value of the land. This is considered consistent with Objective EH O10 Trees and Hedgerows of the Limerick Development Plan (2022-2028) and in particular with part c).

### **3.8 Flooding**

A Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared in support of the proposal which accompanies this Part 8 Planning Application.

The proposed cycle route has been assessed in accordance with the “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management” Guidelines and LCCC’s Development Plan 2022-2028.

CFRAMS Flood Extent Maps were consulted to establish the Flood Zone. It was determined that the southern and northern extents of the proposed cycle route are currently located in Flood Zone A for coastal flooding. The proposed cycle route is classified as a Water Compatible Development under “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management” Guidelines and as such is considered appropriate in this location.

## 4 Transport Context

### 4.1 Local Road Network

As seen below in Figure 4-1, the proposed route is connected to a number of important transport routes leading into the city. To the south, the route joins the R526 and R926 north of the Ballykeefe Roundabout whilst at the north, the route joins Henry Street & Bishops Quay. There are various side road priority junctions along the scheme which access the surrounding residential housing areas with a significant number or direct access entrances onto the SCRd.

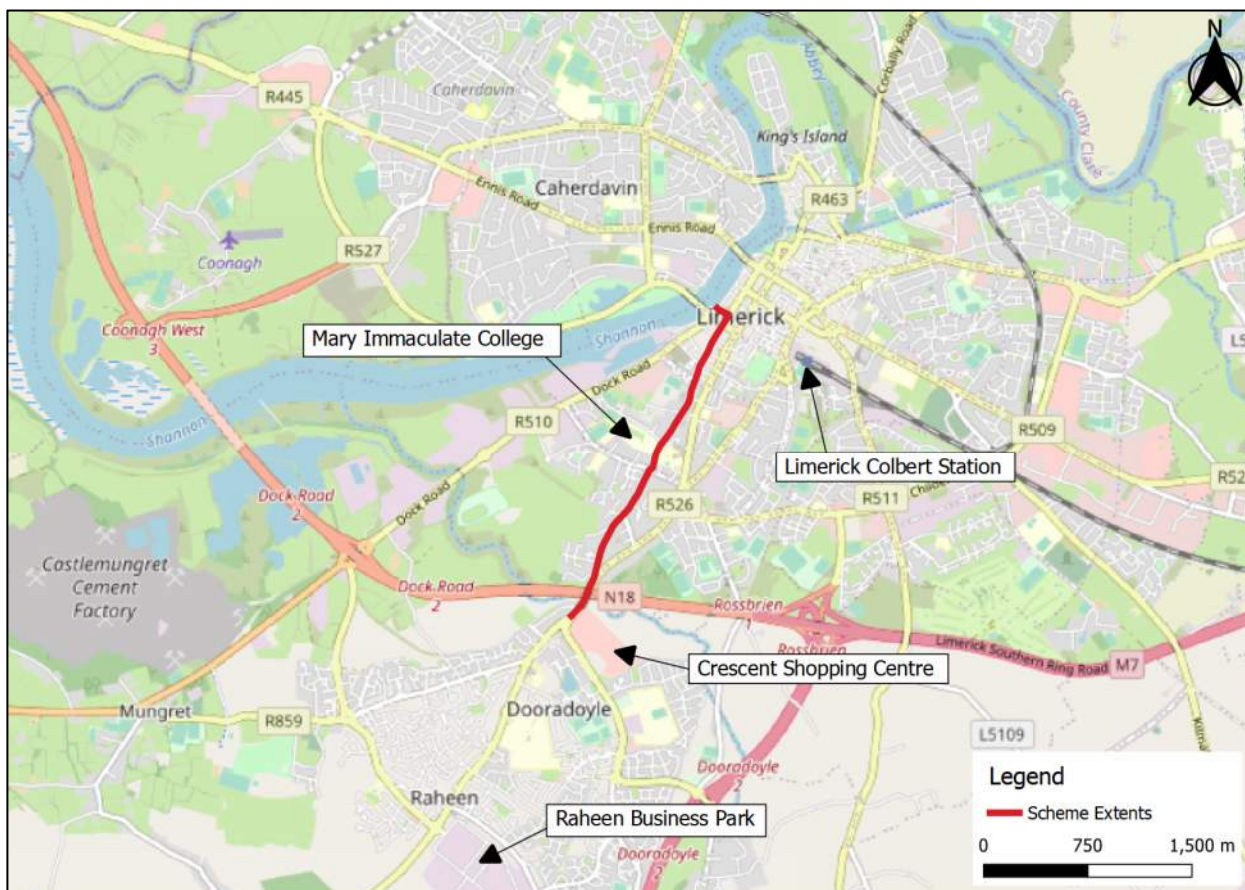


Figure 4-1: Surrounding Road Network

### 4.2 Existing Traffic Conditions

The entire route has a 50km/hr speed zone designation. The proposal includes changes to the speed limits including a 30km/hr zone from the junction of the SCRd/Ballinacurra Road east towards the city centre, and a 20km/hr shared space at the junction of Summerville Ave and the SCRd.

A number of traffic surveys and speed surveys have been carried out and consulted for this report. Surveys were scheduled to mitigate traffic related impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. A speed survey carried out in September 2021 followed by traffic counts and further speed surveys in April & September 2022.

Approximate AADTs on the route have been derived from the survey information received in accordance with TII Project Appraisal Guidelines Unit 16.2 Expansion Factors for Short Period Traffic Counts as deemed appropriate for a high-level study of AADTs for this scheme. The results, based on the April 2022 surveys, are shown in Figure 4-2.

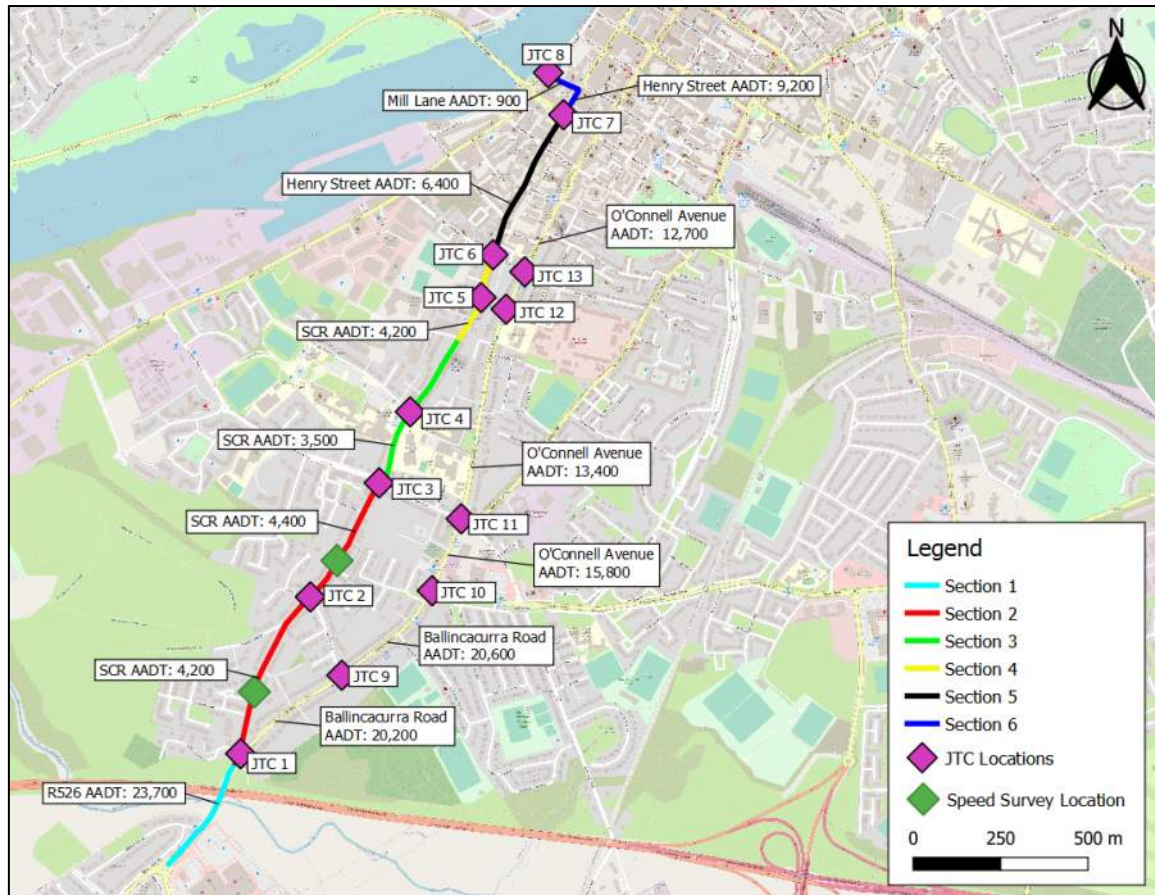


Figure 4-2: AADTs on the Route

### 4.3 Parking

The proposal would involve the reconfiguration and removal of some existing on-street parking bays to facilitate the construction of improved footpaths and two-way cycle tracks. The parking bays are currently occupied by disk/paid parking or are accessible through a parking permit system whereby residents of the area can apply for a parking permit. Further details of the existing and proposed car parking can be found in the Car Parking Report consisting of a car parking analysis, which accompanies this Part 8 Planning Application.

The parking bays along the northern side of the route on the SCRd from the junction with Ashbourne Avenue/New Street as far as Saint Alphonsus Street are proposed to be removed to facilitate a two-way cycle path. However, the proposal does include the creation of formalised parking spaces along the route from the junction with the Ballinacurra Road up to the junction with Ashbourne Avenue/New Street, close to the junctions of Greenpark Avenue, Lifford Park, and the junction with Ashbourne Avenue/New Street. In addition to this an infill car parking area consisting of 10 spaces is proposed on the corner of the SCRd and Laurel Hill Ave which would be accessible by residents. The parking permit system in place is also not confined to a specific location but rather takes in a number of side streets. There are also opportunities in some locations for parking to the rear of dwellings where possible.

Therefore, whilst it is acknowledged that there would be some losses in terms of the overall numbers of available on-street car parking spaces alternatives are proposed as well. The proposal would also facilitate the use of alternative and sustainable modes of transport through improved footpaths and segregated cycle tracks, which would offer an alternative to the use of private cars for local residents. This is considered to be consistent with objectives TR O6 and TR O7 of the Limerick Development Plan (2022-2028), which seeks to encourage modal shift and behavioural change regarding transport. The proposal would allow people to travel on foot or bicycle in a much safer manner to employment locations

such as within the city centre, the Raheen/Dooradoyle areas, or further afield using other proposed/existing routes, as well the primary, post-primary and 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions in the immediate and wider vicinity of the application site. The improvements proposed are considered to be consistent with Objective TR O8 which seeks to improve pedestrian linkages, the cycle network and the retrofit of cycle and pedestrian routes into the existing road network. This is considered to be a significant benefit of the scheme in terms of tackling climate change, addressing car dependency and providing people with a safer environment to travel in using sustainable modes of transport, which is consistent with the aims of national, regional and local planning policy.

#### **4.4 Road Safety Issues**

A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) is completed on the current preliminary design drawings. The site visit took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2022. The RSA accompanies this Part 8 Planning Application.

#### **4.5 Public Transport Network**

##### **4.5.1 Existing Bus Stops**

There are three existing bus stops along the proposed route which are included in a number of bus routes, two are outbound while the other is inbound. All three stops are located between the Ballykeeffe Roundabout and Ballinacurra Road Junction. All three bus stops will be maintained. There is also a bus stop at Mary Immaculate College, however there is no public bus service currently on this route.

##### **4.5.2 Existing Railway Network**

The northern extents of the proposed route are located within approximately 600 metres of Limerick Colbert train station. The proposed route is designed to provide connections with Colbert Station through secondary and feeder cycle routes off the main route, as per the proposed Limerick Cycle Network in the draft and revised LSMATS.

#### **4.6 Existing Pedestrian Facilities**

The proposed route is currently reasonably well served for pedestrians with footpaths on both sides of the road for much of the route. There are however some sections with a footway only on one side of the carriageway, or where the footpath width is substandard at less than 1.8m. There are uncontrolled pedestrian crossings at many of the existing junctions. There are Zebra crossings with belisha beacons at all of the arms at Fennessy's Roundabout, the southern arm of the Summerville Avenue/SCR/Mount Gerard Ct Junction, in front of the Limerick Diocese Office on Henry Street, and a signal-controlled junction at Lower Mallow Street/Henry Street Junction.

The proposal includes wider footpaths to bring them up to standard and improve walking conditions for people and vulnerable users as well as improvements to junctions. These elements are therefore considered a significant improvement on the current situation and are consistent with Objective TR O8, which seeks to improve and create accessible pedestrian linkages and routes within Limerick.

## 4.7 Existing Cycle Network & Facilities

### 4.7.1 Existing Network

There are currently no existing cycle tracks or lanes along the proposed route, other than a short section of cycle lane on the southbound side of the Ballinacurra Road bridge over the N18. The proposal would see the creation of a dedicated two-way cycle track north of the Ballykeefe Roundabout and terminating at the junction of the SCRd with the Ballinacurra Road. The route would then transform into a dedicated shared space with reduced access for vehicles until the junction with Ashbourne Ave/New Street. After this, the proposal would consist of another dedicated two-way cycle track along the SCRd, Henry Street and finishing at Mill Lane, just off Bishops Quay.

As such, the proposal is considered to be a significant improvement on the current cycling facilities in place and would allow people to travel in a much safer environment, which in turn is anticipated to encourage people to cycle. This is considered to be consistent with objectives TR 06, TR 07, and TR 08 in terms of delivering modal split by encouraging people to cycle rather than drive, changing behaviour, and improving cycling infrastructure by retrofitting the existing road network in an established residential area.

This proposed scheme is part of a wider and strategic plan to link up Limerick City Centre and its suburbs through the creation of primary, secondary, feeder and green cycling routes as per the LSMATS. This is considered to be consistent with Objective TR 09 which seeks to implement in full the cycle network that will be set out in the final LSMATS.

### 4.7.2 Existing Facilities

#### Public Bike Scheme

There are 23 Transport for Ireland (TFI) bike stations with 215 bikes in circulation in Limerick City as shown in Figure 4-4.

Three of these stations are located on the proposed route;

- Mary Immaculate College (12 stands)
- Mount Saint Alphonsus (8 stands)
- Bishop's Quay (8 stands)

There are also a number of bike stations located within close proximity to the route;

- Mount Saint Vincent (10 stands) - 220 m
- O'Connell Avenue (14 stands) - 150 m
- Newenham Street (17 stands) - 80 m
- O'Connell Street (10 stands) - 180 m

#### Public Parking & Maintenance Facilities

There are a small number of additional facilities also located within close proximity to the route.

There are 20 no. secure cycle lockers located within Limerick City at the following locations;

- Henry Street Car Park (10 lockers) - 50 m
- Howley's Quay Car Park Henry St (7 lockers) - 180 m
- Denmark Street Car Park Ellen St - (2 lockers) - 700 m

There are also a significant number of bicycle stands located throughout the city and are noted on a map provided by LCCC shown in Figure 4-3 below. Recently, LCCC have provided four new bicycle service stations throughout the city. There is one station currently located outside Henry Street Garda station directly adjacent to the proposed route.

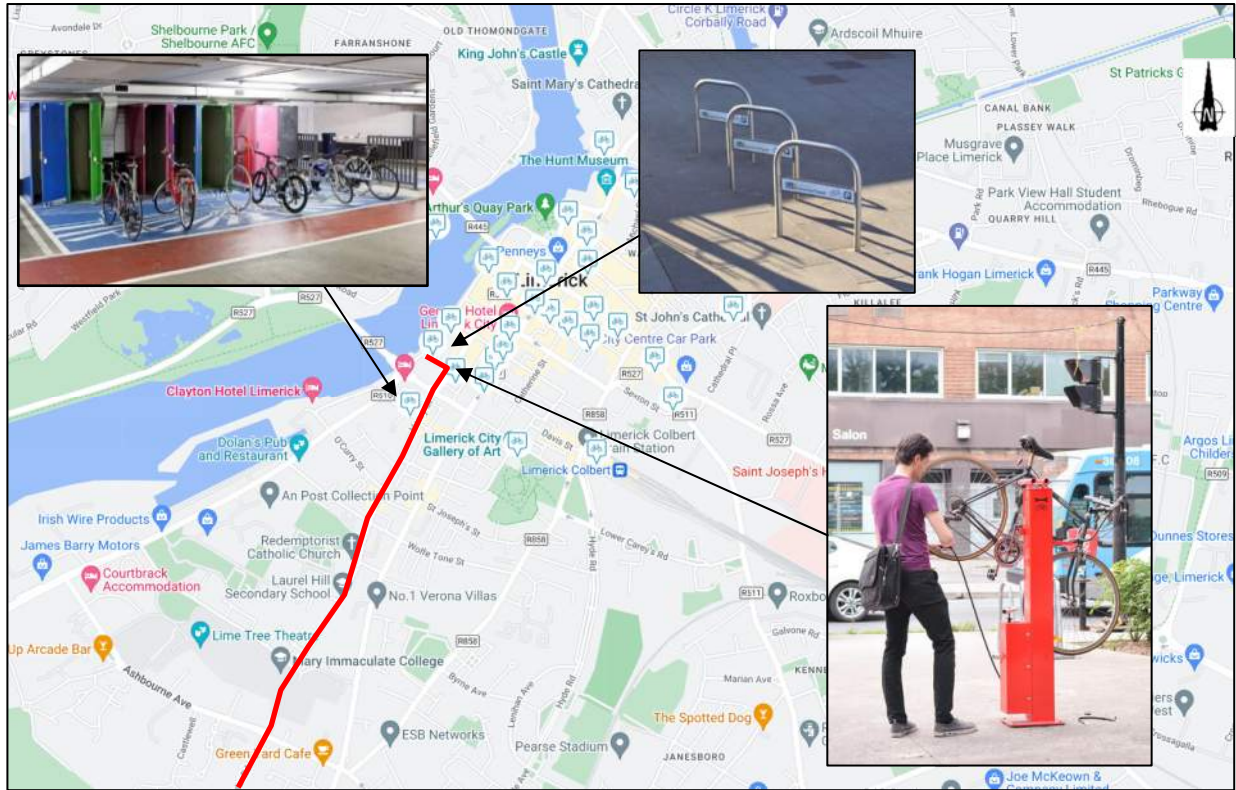


Figure 4-3: Limerick City Bike Stands and Facilities

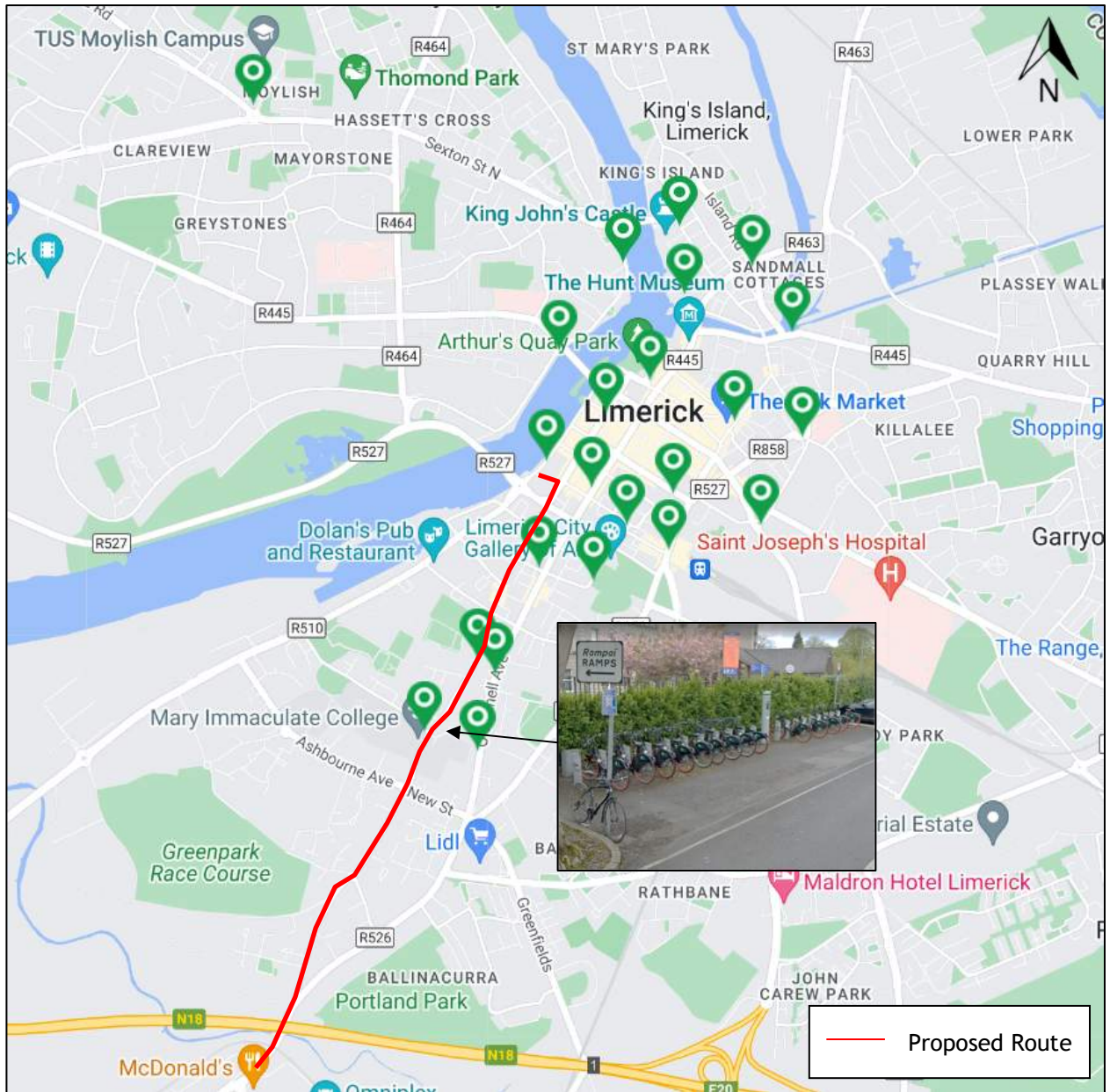


Figure 4-4: Location of TFI Bike Stands



## **5 Conclusion**

The key aim of the proposal is to improve road safety for vulnerable cyclists and pedestrians through the provision of dedicated cycle facilities and the upgrading of footpaths, improved junction arrangements and upgraded and additional crossing points. As set out in this report, the proposed scheme has strong national, regional, and local planning policy support. This includes the National Planning Framework, Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy, the Limerick Development Plan (2022-2028) and the Limerick Metropolitan Cycle Network Plan.

The scheme would provide improved connectivity for residential areas, employment zones, public transport and educational facilities. The proposed scheme would result in an improvement in safety for all road users and enhance the quality of service for both walking and cycling. This is anticipated to encourage more people to use sustainable modes of transport given the improvements proposed.

The design of the proposed cycle scheme is in accordance with current best design guidance including the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and the National Cycle Manual. The proposal would provide people with improved infrastructure and increase the safe use of alternative and sustainable modes of transport. This is considered to be a significant benefit of the scheme in terms of tackling climate change, addressing car dependency and providing people with a safer environment to travel in by using more sustainable modes of transport, which is consistent with the aims of national, regional and local planning policy.

The proposal has had regard to and is considered to be consistent with the policies and objectives of the Limerick Development Plan (2022-2028) and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.