

## **LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **RUSSELL COURT QUIETWAY BALLYKEEFEE**

### **SECTION 38 REPORT**

**June 2024**

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**Revision Control Table**

For & On Behalf of MRG Consulting Engineers Limited				
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

MRG Consulting Engineers Limited were appointed by Limerick City & County Council to provide engineering consultancy services to prepare designs, planning documentation and tender documentation for the provision of improved Active Travel facilities on the L-1429 Father Russell Road and the R526 St. Nessans Road.

Part 8 Planning Approval for the L-1429 Father Russell Road was granted in September 2022 with the Scheme comprising the provision of segregated cycle tracks and footpath upgrade works along the roadway between the Quinn's Cross Roundabout and the junction with Gouldavoher. Construction works are due to be completed in Summer 2024 on the scheme.

Part 8 Planning Approval for the St Pauls to Ballykeeffe Roundabout Active Travel Scheme on the R526 was granted in February 2024. Amendments to the Scheme as advertised in May 2024 under a subsequent Section 38 procedure are to be incorporated into the final design. The St Pauls to Ballykeeffe Roundabout Active Travel Scheme comprises the provision of segregated cycle tracks and footpath upgrade works on the R526 and improvements to pedestrian/cyclist crossings at St Pauls and Ballykeeffe Roundabout.

The Schemes are located in the greater Raheen / Dooradoyle area which is a large residential area in the Southwest of Limerick City with a number of local schools and employers in the locality. University Hospital Limerick is located on the R526 to the south of the St. Pauls Roundabout. The Crescent Shopping Centre is situated off the R926 adjacent to Ballykeeffe Roundabout and is adjacent to Limerick City & County Council's County Hall building and library.

In order to provide an improved link between the segregated cycling facilities provided with the Father Russell Road and St Pauls to Ballykeeffe Roundabout Active Travel Schemes it is proposed to utilise the existing street through Russell Court (L-1431-4). Russell Court is a low traffic neighbourhood which enables local cycling trips and provides a connection between the surrounding cycle network on Father Russell Road and the St Pauls to Ballykeeffe Roundabout Active Travel Schemes.

Russell Court and the adjoining Father Russell Road and St Pauls to Ballykeeffe Roundabout Active Travel Schemes are shown in Figure 1.1

The proposed works to improve the street in Russell Court include :

- Renewal of road markings on local primary road within Russell Court;
- Upgrading of existing throughway onto the R526 St Nessan's Road to include provision of a 3m wide footpath at the eastern end of Russell Court and improvements to the existing pedestrian access from Russell Court to the R526

Details of the proposed works are shown on the attached drawings which are contained within the Part 8 Planning Pack ;

- 120051-450 Site Location Map
- 120051-451 Layout Plan



Figure 1.1 Site Location Map showing Russell Court Quietway

## 1.2 Policy Context and Relevant Design Standards

### 1.2.1 Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028

Chapter 7 - Sustainable Mobility and Transport of the Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028 outlines the Council's strategy to provide an effective, sustainable and accessible transport system. A functional and effective transport network is fundamental to the creation of a compact and connected place. The National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) seek to reduce dependency on the private car and secure a shift towards sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport.

The Plan notes that a key project critical to enabling growth in Limerick includes the delivery of a comprehensive cycling and walking network for the Limerick City Metropolitan Area. The following policies and objectives are included in the plan.

#### **Policy CS P6 – LSMATS (Refer to Section 1.2.3 below)**

It is a policy of the Council to ensure that the Core Strategy is in line with the objectives of the final LSMATS and the integration of land use planning and transport in reducing the need to travel and promote modal shift from the use of the private car.

#### **Objective TR P3 – Integration of Land Use and Transport Policies**

It is a policy of the Council to support and facilitate the integration of land use and transportation policies ensuring the delivery of sustainable compact settlements served by sustainable modes of transport.

#### **Objective TR P4 – Promotion of Sustainable Patterns of Transport Use**

It is a policy of the Council to seek to implement in a positive manner, in co-operation with the other relevant authorities and agencies, the policies of the NPF, RSES and the Department of Transport's Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020 (and any subsequent updates), to encourage more sustainable patterns of travel and greater use of sustainable forms of transport, including public transport, cycling and walking.

#### **Objective TR P5 – Sustainable Mobility and Regional Accessibility**

It is a policy of the Council to support sustainable mobility, enhanced regional accessibility and connectivity within Limerick, in accordance with the National Strategic Outcomes of the National Strategic Outcomes of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region.

#### **Objective TR P6 – Delivery of Transport Infrastructure in line with National Policy**

It is a policy of the Council to support the delivery of transport infrastructure identified within the National Planning Framework, National Development Plan 2021-2030 (and any update) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region and to support enhanced connectivity within Limerick and inter-urban connectivity within the regions.

#### **Objective TR O2 – Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (Refer to Section 1.2.5 below)**

It is an objective of the Council to support the appropriate road design standards of all roads and streets within the urban areas, including suburbs, towns and villages within the 60km/hr zone as per the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and TII Publication Standards DN-GEO-03084 The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads.

#### **Objective TR O5 – Limerick – Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy**

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the implementation and delivery of the proposals that will be contained in the final Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy, in conjunction with the National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and Clare County Council and other relevant stakeholders. This partnership will achieve successful integration between land use and transport planning, and targeted growth along high-quality public transport corridors and sustainable

higher densities.

#### **Objective TR O6 – Delivering Modal Split**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Promote a modal shift away from the private car towards more sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling, carpool and public transport in conjunction with the relevant transport authorities;
- b) Support investment in sustainable transport infrastructure that will make walking, cycling carpool and public transport more attractive, appealing and accessible to all.

#### **Objective TR O7 – Behavioral Change Measures**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- c) Continue to implement behavioural change initiatives and ‘softer measures’ aimed at enabling and promoting sustainable travel across Limerick’s workplaces, campuses, schools and communities as identified in LSMATS;
- d) Facilitate and implement school streets and school zones, including slow zones around schools, park and stride facilities and promote and facilitate active travel options for school children, to reduce the health and safety risk associated with traffic congestion, pollution and inactive lifestyles.

**Objective TR O8 - Walking and Cycling Infrastructure** - It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Improve and provide clear, safe and direct pedestrian linkages, cycle networks as identified in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS), including the greenways and primary segregated cycle routes, between the employment zones, shopping areas and residential areas throughout Limerick;
- b) Maintain and expand the pedestrian route network, infrastructure and where possible retrofit cycle and pedestrian routes into the existing urban road network, to provide for accessible safe pedestrian routes within Limerick.

#### **Objective TR O9 - Limerick Cycle Network**

It is an objective of the Council to implement in full, the Cycle Network, which will be set out in the final LSMATS, with priority given in the short term to delivering the primary cycle network and cycle routes serving schools.

#### **Objective TR O42 – Roads and Streets**

It is an objective of the Council to secure improvements of the road network in Limerick, including improved pedestrian and cycle facilities, in conjunction and co-operation with relevant stakeholders, subject to resources becoming available.

### **1.2.3 Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS)**

The National Transport Authority (NTA) have published the Limerick Metropolitan Cycle Network Study. 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). LSMATS sets out a framework for investment in transport for the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area for the next 20 years and includes proposals for the significant development of the cycle network.

Section 2.1.5 of LSMATS makes reference to reducing social disadvantage through the improved frequency of public transport services to regeneration areas, the provision of safe and secure cycling facilities, provision of pedestrian linkages and public realm improvements.

Section 9 of LSMATS outlines the proposals 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.

It is an objective of LSMATS to cultivate a cycling culture through the development of cycling facilities through the following:

- Identification of Primary, Secondary, Inter-Urban, Feeder and Greenway Routes, and Quiet Ways to develop a comprehensive cycle network across the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area (LSMA);
- Provide cycle facilities designed to National Cycle Manual standards;
- Provide full or light segregation from other modes of transport to ensure safety and comfort of all road users;
- Provide local traffic calming, lower speed limits and junction treatments, particularly at complex junctions in an urban context; and
- Provide supporting measures including the public Bike Share Scheme, end-of-trip facilities, and behavioral change initiatives.

#### **1.2.4 Cycle Design Manual - 2023**

The Cycle Design Manual is a national guidance document that details the principles of sustainable safety that offers a safe traffic environment for all road user including cyclists. The manual provides guidance on integrating the bicycle in to the design of urban areas. The manual sets out five principle requirements for providing an adequate, safe cycle facility:

- **Road Safety:** Providing cycle infrastructure along a route should seek to maximise road safety for all road users, including cyclists. Any perception of a lack of safety could be a deterrent to cycling.
- **Coherence:** A cycling network should link all main origin and destination zones/centres for cyclists. Cycling routes should be logical and continuous.
- **Directness:** Cycling infrastructure should be as direct as possible and should minimise 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.
- **Attractiveness:** The cycling environment along a route should be pleasant and interesting.
- **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. Providing adequate comfort includes design aspects such as width, gradients, surface quality, stopping and delays and shelter.

#### **1.2.5 Design Manual for Urban Roads And Streets (DMURS)**

DMURS provides guidance relating to the design of urban roads and streets. It presents a series of principles, approaches and standards that are necessary to achieve balanced, best practice design outcomes with regard to street networks and individual streets.

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. 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.

The focus of the manual is to create a place – based sustainable street network that balances the pedestrian and vehicle movements. The manual references the different types of street networks, including arterial streets, link streets, local streets, and highlights the importance of movement.

### 1.3 Proposed Design

The design is based on TL105 Mixed Traffic Cycle Design Manual (CDM) which relates to cycle facilities in low speed, low traffic environments. Refer to Figure 1.2 below.



*Figure 1.2: TL105 Mixed Traffic*

The existing carriageway width in Russell Court is typically 6.0m with a slightly wider section at the tie-in to Father Russell Road at 6.5m and a narrower section at the east end.

The cycle facilities selection guide for determining the type of cycle facility extracted from the CDM 2023 is illustrated in Figure 1.3 and sets out speed limits and cyclist volumes against the type of facility to be provided. The speed limit in Russell Court is 30 km/ph with the selection guide indicating that a mixed traffic environment is permissible in this location. There is no through traffic in Russell Court.



Table 2.1 - Cycle facilities selection guide

Speed Limit <sup>1</sup>	Two-way traffic flow (peak hour pcus)	Remote Cycleway/ Greenway	Standard cycle track (incl. two-way tracks)	Stepped cycle track	Protected Cycle Lane	Mandatory Cycle Lane	Mixed Traffic
20 km/h	< 200	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	200-400	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	> 400	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Orange
30 km/h	< 200	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	200-400	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange
	> 400	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Black
40 km/h	< 200	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Pink
	200-400	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Pink
	> 400	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Pink	Black
50 km/h	< 200	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Pink
	200-400	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Pink
	> 400	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Pink	Black
60 km/h	Any	Green	Green	Orange	Pink	Black	Black
≥ 80 km/h	Any	Green	Pink	Pink	Black	Black	Black

- Provision should be suitable for most users.
- Provision may not be suitable for all and may exclude some potential users (Departure required).
- Provision not recommended as it's unlikely to be suitable for a range of users (Departure required).
- Provision not suitable.

**Notes:**  
1. If the 85th percentile motor traffic speed is more than 10% above the speed limit, the next highest speed limit should be applied.

Figure 1.3: Cycle Facilities Selection Guide (Source: CDM 2023)

## **2. IMPACT OF THE SCHEME**

### **2.1 Ecological Constraints**

#### **2.1.1 Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**

The scheme is greater than 600m from the Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation and greater than 1 kilometer from the proposed National Heritage Area of the Inner Shannon Estuary Southern Shores. The scheme is greater than 500m from the proposed NHA of Loughmore Common Turlough. Any potential improvement options will need to be checked for potential downstream impact on the above sites arising from potential construction stage site works spillage or contaminated run-off. Water pathways will need to be checked for storm water road surface water runoff and collection system.

The scheme is not close enough to any of the Natura 2000 protected sites to be a cause for concern and based on the current proposed arrangement of the cycle facilities and associated development works no significant ecological constraints have been identified at this stage.

#### **2.1.2 AA and EIA Screening**

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Stage I Screening Report and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Reports have been completed in respect of the development works associated with the Father Russell Road Scheme and the St Pauls to Ballykeeffe Roundabout Scheme.

The works associated with the Russell Court quietway are minor in nature comprising road markings, construction of a footpath of length of 30m and amendments to an existing opening in the boundary wall/fence separating Russell Court from the R526. In this regard there is no requirement to amend the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Stage I Screening Report and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Reports.

### **2.2 Road Safety Issues**

As part of the proposed design of the Father Russell Road Scheme and the St Pauls to Ballykeeffe Roundabout Scheme a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been completed and the recommendations of the Audit are being implemented in the design of both schemes. The extent of the works associated with the Russell Court quietway are minor in nature comprising road markings, construction of a footpath of length of 30m and amendments to an existing opening in the boundary wall/fence separating Russell Court from the R526. The works associated with the Russell Court quietway will undergo a Road Safety Audit in conjunction with the Stage 2/3 Road Safety Audits on the adjoining Schemes.