

# CROSS-BORDER GREENWAYS AND CYCLE ROUTES ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND:

A review of policies and future opportunities in  
the development of a regional network

by  
Dr Andrew McClelland



Literature & Policy Review



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ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND:

*A review of policies and future opportunities in the development  
of a regional network*

*Literature and Policy Review*

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The International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) is a North-South-US partnership. It was formally established in 2006 to explore and expand the contribution that spatial planning and development of physical, social and economic infrastructure could make to peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland, and elsewhere. The ICLRD has developed out of a unique collaboration between academics and spatial planning specialists from the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) at Maynooth University, the School of the Built Environment at the University of Ulster, the Centre for Cross Border Studies (CCBS) in Armagh, and the Institute for International Urban Development (I2UD) in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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<b>AIRO</b>	All-Island Research Observatory
<b>CCBS</b>	Centre for Cross Border Studies
<b>CroSPlaN</b>	Cross-Border Spatial Planning and Training Network
<b>C2C</b>	Sea to Sea
<b>DRD</b>	Department for Regional Development
<b>DTTAS</b>	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
<b>EBR</b>	East Border Region
<b>EGA</b>	European Greenways Association
<b>HEAT</b>	Health Economic Assessment Tool
<b>ICBAN</b>	Irish Central Border Area Network
<b>ICLRD</b>	International Centre for Local and Regional Development
<b>INICCO</b>	Ireland-Northern Ireland Cross-Border Cooperation Observatory
<b>NCN</b>	National Cycle Network
<b>NIEL</b>	Northern Ireland Environment Link
<b>NITB</b>	Northern Ireland Tourist Board
<b>NRA</b>	National Roads Authority
<b>NSMC</b>	North South Ministerial Council
<b>NSS</b>	National Spatial Strategy
<b>NWRCBG</b>	North West Region Cross Border Group
<b>OFMDFM</b>	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
<b>RDS</b>	Regional Development Strategy
<b>SEUPB</b>	Special EU Programmes Body
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation

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# SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

The academic and policy literature relating to cycling and the development of greenways and cycle routes on the island of Ireland is reviewed within this report, with a particular emphasis on exploring the potential for cross-border cooperation in the creation of a ‘joined-up’ regional network of cycling routes. The multiple benefits of cycling and cycle route development are underlined, including in relation to health, the environment, economy and the creation of shared public spaces. The capacity for cycling and the associated physical infrastructure of greenways and cycle routes to intersect with, and influence, a range of policy agendas, is widely acknowledged, including within key public policy documents in both jurisdictions on the island. Indeed, broadly speaking, the policy environment appears to have shifted markedly in favour of cycling and other forms of sustainable transport within the last half-decade, albeit it will take longer for the infrastructure deficit to be successfully addressed before the island of Ireland can compare favourably with other northern European countries. Furthermore, although there are numerous references to cross-border cooperation within the policy-based literature, particularly in the development plans of the southern Border counties, more definitive action is needed if the opportunity to create a comprehensive cross-border network of greenways and cycle routes is to be grasped across the entirety of the Border region.<sup>1</sup> To this end, the following interlinked recommendations are made:

- *A masterplanning process for the long-term development of greenways and cycle routes in the Border region should be initiated to guide strategic decision-making.*

*The Draft Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland* proposes developing detailed masterplans to allow for a more joined-up approach to the provision of bicycle infrastructure, primarily intended to cover urban areas. However, it is argued that an overarching masterplan is needed to guide the long-term development of a network of greenways and cycle routes in the Border region, cognisant of the interdependency between the provision of bicycle infrastructure in urban and rural areas in order to meet a variety of strategic purposes. A ‘Masterplan for Cycling Infrastructure in the Irish Border Region’<sup>2</sup> would ultimately tie-in with the wider proposals for greenways and cycle route development in Ireland and Northern Ireland, but the masterplan would be progressed in light of the particular challenges and opportunities inherent in creating such infrastructure over the long-

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<sup>1</sup> A recent editorial in the *Irish Times* asserted this very point, and subsequent letters to the editor over the months of November and December 2014 are indicative of the keen public interest in the development of walking and cycling infrastructure in Ireland (*Irish Times*, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> This is a suggested title for illustrative purposes only.



term on a cross-border basis.

- *Strategic coordination should be established to plan for, and implement, the development of a regional network of greenways and cycle routes on a cross-border basis.*

The Department for Regional Development (DRD) in Northern Ireland and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) in Ireland will clearly be central to strategic coordination arrangements given their responsible positions in relation to cycling and the development of cycling infrastructure.<sup>3</sup> Although both these departments will likely assume a leading role, the cross-cutting nature of the issue ensures that other government departments and agencies will also of necessity be involved in the masterplanning and implementation phases, including those responsible for spatial planning, agriculture, health and tourism. In addition, non-governmental actors such as Sustrans, given its capacity and extensive experience of cycle route development, can also play a critical supporting role in partnership with central and local government.

The potential role of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC), however, should not be overlooked, and its function as a coordinating mechanism for cross-border cooperation on transportation issues is already underlined in the Department of Transport's (DT) 2009 policy document *Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future*. More encouragingly, a recent communiqué emanating from the NSMC's Transport meeting in November 2014 included reference to cycling/cross-border greenways, in which developments concerning cross-border cooperation in this area were welcomed (NSMC, 2014). The experience of Waterways Ireland in opening up inland waterways, are similarly instructive, particularly given the potential usage of canal towpaths for greenways and cycle routes on a cross-border basis. To this end, the inclusion of Waterways Ireland on the National Trails Advisory Committee in Ireland is noted, as is the possible inclusion of a representative from the DTTAS on the DRD's recently established 'Greenways Working Group' in Northern Ireland (NSMC, 2014).

More explicit policy references are required in national/regional level documents to support the master planning and implementation of cross-border cooperation in the provision of cycling infrastructure.

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<sup>3</sup> *The close engagement of both departments on the greenways issue is already evidenced by their success in ensuring that a sustainable transport theme was included within the SEUPB consultation document on the INTERREG V programme (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2014).*

The review of policies in Section 6 of this report indicates that many of the national and regional transportation policy documents in both jurisdictions on the island are supportive of closer cross-border cooperation. Nonetheless, key policy documents specific to cycling, including the Draft Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland and Ireland's First National Cycle Policy Framework, make limited reference to the potential for cross-border cooperation in this area. More explicit policy references to the development of a regional cross-border network of greenways and cycle routes are, therefore, required within these strategic documents. Such references can conceivably be inserted into the final version of the *Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland* and during any future review of the *National Cycle Policy Framework*.

The critical importance of spatial planning to sustainable transport policies is asserted within *Investing in our transport future: A strategic framework for investment in land transport*. Indeed, the success of cycling in the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark is considered due to the 'coordinated implementation of [...] [a] multifaceted, mutually reinforcing set of policies' made possible through strict land-use planning systems (Pucher, 2008, p.495). The existence of the *Framework for Co-operation: Spatial Strategies of Northern Ireland & the Republic of Ireland* is positive insofar as it underlines the strong cross-border cooperation already occurring in spatial planning on the island of Ireland. The proposed replacement of *the National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020* with a new National Planning Framework can ultimately facilitate an updating of the framework agreement, and will hopefully ensure that reference to the development of cross-border greenways and cycle routes is fully integrated into these overarching strategic documents. Furthermore, the emergence of the proposed Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and Local Economic and Community Plans in Ireland will likewise provide opportunities for the insertion of specific policy references to cycling infrastructure development, and those advocates of cycling and cross-border cooperation in this area should be alert to this in responding to future consultation exercises.

- *More explicit policy references are required in local authority level documents, particularly in Northern Ireland, to support the provision of cycling infrastructure on a cross-border basis.*

The existing and draft county development plans in the southern Border counties in Ireland are supportive of the development of cycling infrastructure and all make reference to cross-border or cross-jurisdictional cooperation in this area. It is hoped that the generation of local development plans that will eventually emerge from the new local authorities in Northern Ireland will echo their counterparts and include similarly encouraging policy references. In addition, the critical work of local authorities in implementing greenway and cycle route developments on the ground should be

sustained into the future, with enhanced opportunities for Northern Ireland councils to take a leading role given the wider range of powers soon at their disposal.

- *An inclusive approach should be taken to defining strategic priorities and prospective outcomes in the development of a regional network of greenways and cycle routes on a cross-border basis.*

It is recognised that potential exists for competing priorities and outcomes in the development of cycling infrastructure, with a strong emphasis in existing national and regional policies towards encouraging a modal shift from private vehicles towards more sustainable forms of transport. This objective has underpinned much of the impetus behind recent policy pronouncements and positive developments in support of cycling, but the creation of greenways and cycle routes aimed at tourist and recreational users should also feature prominently in future initiatives as a means of helping to grow the economic base of rural areas in particular. Indeed, the creation of a long-term masterplan for the Border region should be aimed at successfully accommodating the multiple outcomes toward which greenways and cycle routes can contribute. Such an inclusive and all-embracing approach would not only benefit urban and rural areas, but also commuter, recreational, tourist and other types of cyclist, in addition to the entirety of the Border region with its variegated needs and potentialities.

- *Further research and engagement is needed on key issues pertinent to the development of greenways and cycle routes on the island of Ireland, particularly concerning innovative approaches to funding.*

The 2010 *Declaration of Madrid* seeks the creation of a ‘European Green Network’ and specifically requests ‘permanent funding lines for planning, construction, promotion and maintenance of greenways’, including investment from the private sector backed by ‘strategies of corporate social responsibility’ (European Greenways Association, 2010, p.3). The pressures on public finances in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland underlines the imperative that new sources of funding are accessed and developed, whether deriving from tax incentives, the philanthropic activities of multinational corporations, or through more innovative means such as online ‘crowdfunding’.<sup>4</sup> Learning from international experience and creative examples of the provision of other critical infrastructure projects, would be invaluable for all those with an interest in the development of

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<sup>4</sup> For instance, the York Greenway Champions group utilised crowdfunding to raise finances in 2014:

[http://www.york.gov.uk/news/article/568/council\\_applauds\\_crowd\\_funding\\_bid\\_by\\_cycling\\_charity](http://www.york.gov.uk/news/article/568/council_applauds_crowd_funding_bid_by_cycling_charity).

cycling infrastructure. Furthermore, conceiving of the creation of a network of greenways and cycle routes as a long-term objective, facilitated by a coordinated masterplanning process, is essential to ensuring that collaboration in delivering a comprehensive network for mutual benefit is asserted rather than the pursuit of a competitive approach for scarce resources in a piecemeal fashion.

- *Key stakeholders in both jurisdictions should convene at the earliest opportunity to define priorities and determine an agreed course of action in the development of a comprehensive greenways and cycle route network in the Border region.*

The recommendations made within this report will hopefully resonate with key stakeholders in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Although the increasingly supportive policy environment and public mood for cooperation should galvanise the key stakeholders, the ICLRD is open to assisting and potentially playing a role in facilitating and animating future action in this regard.

## SECTION 2.0

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### BACKGROUND

The International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD), in partnership with the Centre for Cross Border Studies, is responsible for delivering the INTERREG IVA programme, Ireland-Northern Ireland Cross-Border Cooperation Observatory (INICCO II), which comprises a suite of eight distinct projects focused on the Border region. ICLRD is taking a lead on three of the projects, collectively known as the Cross-Border Spatial Planning and Training Network (CroSPlaN II), aimed at making a significant contribution towards increasing public sector collaboration on a cross-border basis. The three linked CroSPlaN II projects include, firstly, an Executive Training and Animation Programme, involving seminars, discussion forums and working groups comprising elected representatives and officials from local government, cross-border networks and community fora. Secondly, an Evidence-Based Planning element comprises training in the use, interpretation and application of data in the implementation of cross-border programmes, in addition to online resources and a hard-copy All-Island Atlas utilising the 2011 censuses in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Finally, a Shared Services element involves the establishment of a ‘learning network’, the creation of a website dedicated to the shared services agenda,<sup>5</sup> and the publication of a research report aimed at identifying the greatest potential for local government to share services across jurisdictional boundaries.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the Shared Services element of the programme encompasses the initial development of two pilot initiatives designed so that they can be driven forward and operationalised by local government once the programme has concluded. Following consultation with the CroSPlaN II Steering Committee and the Shared Services Advisory Committee, it was determined that the two pilots would focus on the thematic areas of tourism (particularly the development of greenways) and emergency planning. This report relates to the former and the establishment of a regional greenways pilot project.

The Cross-Border Greenways Pilot focused partly on the mapping of existing and proposed greenways and cycle routes and the identification of gaps within the regional cross-border network that could conceivably be addressed in the future. ICLRD worked with the Border Regional Authority (defunct since end September 2014), and others, particularly the National Trails Office (Irish Sports Council), the All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO), and Sustrans in Northern Ireland, to progress the

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://iclr.org/sharedservices>

<sup>6</sup> See Creamer and Driscoll, 2013: <http://iclr.org/sharedservices/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/ICLRD-Shared-Services-The-Common-Good-Final-Report.pdf>

mapping aspect. The mapping exercise, together with the learning embedded within this report, is intended to assist local authorities and others in the preparation of proposals and funding bids for the creation of a comprehensive greenway and cycle route network in the Border region on a cross-border basis.<sup>7</sup>

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*7 The term 'greenways and cycle routes' is predominantly used throughout this report and it is recognised that this can mean a variety of different things in relation to cycling-related infrastructure. Key definitions, however, are provided in Section 4 of this report, while further complexity in relation to mapping greenways and cycle routes are briefly addressed in Section 7.*

## SECTION 3.0

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### INTRODUCTION

The development of a cycling culture on the island of Ireland and the associated physical infrastructure consisting of greenways and cycle routes has lagged somewhat behind many other European countries. In particular, the car has predominated as the principal mode of transport of citizens in both jurisdictions on the island and the number of those commuting to work by car has increased over the last decades. The figures and trends are alarming. For instance, 58 per cent of the daily commuting population in Ireland drive to work, and the number of those cycling to their place of employment fell from 5.9 per cent in 1986 to 1.9 per cent in 2006 (Manton and Clifford, 2011, p.2).<sup>8</sup> In Northern Ireland, car usage amongst the population is considered ‘habitual, convenient and normal’, with extremely low levels of walking and cycling in comparison with other countries, and such a degree of dependence on the private car that it negatively impacts on the economy, environment and health of the population (McKibbin, 2011, pp.1, 7). Furthermore, a significant cycling infrastructure deficit is also apparent in both jurisdictions on the island, and this is identified as the main barrier to the development of a local cycling culture (Fáilte Ireland, 2007; Manton and Clifford, 2011; McKibbin, 2011). Moreover, evidence suggests that a higher demand for cycle tourism occurs where good cycling networks are already in place, such as in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands (Weston and Mota, 2012). This suggests that achieving behavioural change towards increased levels of cycling amongst the population will require significant infrastructure development in addition to the promotional and other policy interventions referenced in the literature (see, for example, Caulfield, 2014; McKibbin, 2011).

In spite of the relatively low base from which to develop a cycling culture and associated physical infrastructure, it is nonetheless evident that a renaissance in interest has occurred with obvious potential for cross-border cooperation on the island of Ireland. Indeed, quite apart from the social, environmental, health and other benefits of cycling that are considered later in this report, there is also an increasing recognition of the economic potential of cycling. For instance, the staging of the early stages of the Giro d’Italia cycle race on the island of Ireland in May 2014 was expected by the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) to generate about £2.5 million visitors-spend and ‘at least £10m in terms of our international media coverage’ for the Northern Ireland economy (Simpson, 2014). Such television exposure derived from hosting one of the largest professional cycling

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*8 More up-to-date statistics from the recent census in Ireland indicate that the combined modal share for walking, cycling and public transport had fallen to 24 per cent in 2011 from 34 per cent in 1991 (DTTAS, 2014b, p.6).*

events in the world represents one method of generating an economic return. Another relates to the swift payback period on the investment in the 42km long Great Western Greenway in County Mayo, which is calculated at six years based solely on the tourism revenue accruing from visitors (Deenihan *et al.*, 2013, p.76). Moreover, the Ballyclare-based online retailer, Chain Reaction Cycles, reported total sales revenues of £144.9 million in 2013, providing further evidence of the numerous ways that cycling has a positive local economic impact (Ross, 2014). The scale of the revenues generated is not surprising given the interest in cycling as evidenced by the growth in individual membership of Cycling Ireland from 5,600 in 2009 to 23,000 in 2014, in addition to the burgeoning network of cycling clubs on the island, which increased from 174 to 398 in the same period (Cycling Ireland, 2014, p.5).

The increasing public and business-sector interest in cycling and its development is supplemented over recent years by a range of policy initiatives undertaken in a more concerted manner on the island of Ireland aimed at redressing the infrastructure deficit referenced above. In Ireland, this includes the publication by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) in 2009 of *Ireland's First National Cycle Policy Framework*, which outlined the envisaged creation of a 2000km long National Cycle Network (NCN) – see the Appendix. In addition to the opening of the Great Western Greenway and the Great Southern Trail, many other greenways and cycle routes are under active development, including as part of a €4 million package to link Athlone and Mullingar via the proposed 277km Galway to Dublin Greenway (DTTAS, 2014a).<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, progress is also expected in the medium-term concerning the development of the two EuroVelo network routes crossing the island of Ireland, the Atlantic Coast Route (EuroVelo 1) and the Capitals Route (EuroVelo 2).<sup>10</sup> The former route will continue into Northern Ireland and connect to Scotland via the ferry service in Belfast. The Atlantic Coast Route, when completed, will traverse six countries– Norway, United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Spain and Portugal – while the Capitals Route will eventually stretch from Galway to Moscow. Both of these form part of 15 proposed EuroVelo routes that intersect the European continent – see Figure 1.

In Northern Ireland, several notable announcements in 2014 demonstrate the impetus building in support of the further development of cycling. Firstly, a Cycling Unit was established within the Department for Regional Development (DRD), charged with developing and promoting the bicycle ‘as an everyday mode of transport for everyone in Northern Ireland’ (Northern Ireland Executive, 2014).

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<sup>9</sup> The €4 million forms part of a €10 million proposed investment by the Irish Government in greenways in Waterford, Kerry, Tipperary, Clare, Mayo, Kildare, Limerick, Roscommon and Westmeath (DTTAS, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Follow this link for further information: <http://www.eurovelo.com/en/cycling-in/ireland>



Secondly, a *draft Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland* was published for public consultation, with comments invited on the proposals by 21 November 2014.<sup>11</sup> Thirdly, an Inquiry into the Benefits of Cycling to the Economy was launched by the Committee for Regional Development at the Northern Ireland Assembly, which had yet to report by the end of 2014. A further potentially positive development, with an obvious cross-border dimension, concerns the inclusion of a ‘Sustainable Transport’ theme in the public consultation issued by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) on the proposed INTERREG 2014-2020 funding programme.<sup>12</sup> It is likely that only a percentage of the £40 million allocated under the draft Sustainable Transport proposal will be directed towards the ‘development of a comprehensive cross-border cycle network’, but its inclusion, nonetheless, underscores the recognition of the need for joined-up green transport solutions in the Irish Border region (SEUPB, 2014, p.16). Finally, the significant work of Sustrans in progressing and maintaining the National Cycle Network in Northern Ireland over several decades should be acknowledged. These recent developments are inevitably building on the solid foundations established by that non-governmental organisation which will also undoubtedly have an important role to play in their future elaboration.

The momentum reflected in the developments noted above provides the very positive context to this report, which seeks to take stock of the potential for the creation of a regional cross-border greenway and cycle route network. In particular, the report seeks to identify policy gaps in addition to local, regional and national policy synergies between the two jurisdictions on the island. This desktop analysis and literature review thereby summarises and complements the networking and mapping activities that have taken place previously, and which are referred to in Section 7.0. It is recognised, however, that the report is emerging in a fluid institutional environment on the island of Ireland, particularly in relation to local government. For example, new local authorities will come into operation in Northern Ireland in April 2015, and Regional Authorities and Town Councils have recently been abolished altogether in Ireland. The uncertainties in relation to the priorities of the new local authorities in Northern Ireland, the continuing constraints on public funding, and the increased competition for other external resources, means that the development of a region-wide cross-border network of greenways and cycle routes will inevitably be a long-term aspiration. Nonetheless, certain critical issues and key learning identified in the academic and policy literature are drawn out in this report with a view to supporting the development of a long-term greenway/cycle route strategy on the island of Ireland. It is

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<sup>11</sup> The draft Strategy can be accessed through this link: <http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-details.htm?docid=9903>

<sup>12</sup> The consultation document can be accessed through this link: [http://www.seupb.eu/Libraries/2014-2020\\_Programmes/2014-06-04\\_ETC2014-2020\\_ConsultationInformationDocumentFinal.sflb.aspx](http://www.seupb.eu/Libraries/2014-2020_Programmes/2014-06-04_ETC2014-2020_ConsultationInformationDocumentFinal.sflb.aspx)

intended that the report will more generally act as a useful resource and a summary guide for those seeking to progress the greenways and cycling agenda in the Irish Border region.

Figure 1: The European cycle route network (EuroVelo)



Source: [www.eurovelo.com/en/eurovelos](http://www.eurovelo.com/en/eurovelos)

## Section 3.1      Report structure

The report proceeds over the following pages to present the purpose, objectives and methodology pursued in undertaking this research. Key definitions in relation to greenways and cycle routes are introduced in Section 4, while the many benefits ascribed to cycling in the academic and policy literature are reviewed in Section 5. The national, regional and local policies of relevance to cycling and greenway and cycle route development on the island of Ireland are subsequently considered in Section 6. The mapping exercise associated with this research together with pointers towards existing and potential funding sources aimed at developing cycling infrastructure in both jurisdictions, and on a cross-border basis, are respectively addressed in Section 7 and Section 8. Finally, the report concludes with an extensive bibliography, a list of abbreviations used, appendices referenced within the text, and details of useful websites of relevance to those interested in cycling and greenway development.

## Section 3.2      Purpose

The purpose of this report is to review national, regional and local policies and potential opportunities relating to greenways and cycle routes on the island of Ireland so as to support local authorities and others in the development of a region-wide greenway and cycle route network on a cross-border basis.

## Section 3.3 Objectives

- *To complement the mapping exercise focused on the identification of existing and proposed greenways/cycle routes and gaps within the regional cross-border network;*
- *To review national, regional and local policies applicable to the development of greenways and cycle routes in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, including the identification of references within the key policy documents to cross-border cooperation;*
- *To identify policy and other gaps in relation to the potential development of a regional greenway and cycle route network on a cross-border basis; and*
- *To consider key opportunities to further the development of a region-wide cross-border greenway and cycle route network, including the potential for strategic investment in regionally and nationally significant routes.*

## Section 3.1 Methodology

The critical issues discussed in this report were derived from a desk-based review of the academic and policy-based literature on cycling and greenways, including national, regional and local government policy documents on the island of Ireland (from both jurisdictions). A wide range of tourism – *Tourism Planning & Development; Journal of Sport & Tourism; Tourism Management Perspectives; Journal of Sustainable Tourism; Tourism Management – transport – Transportation Research Part A; Transportation Research Part D; Transport Policy; Journal of Transport Geography; Proceedings of the ICE: Transport; Transport Reviews* – and health-related journals – *European Journal of Public Health; Journal of Transport & Health; Journal of Physical Activity and Health; Preventive Medicine* – were accessed as part of this review. In addition, a number of pertinent reports and useful websites were also reviewed emanating from the Northern Ireland Assembly, Sustrans, the Institute of Transport and Tourism at the University of Central Lancashire, Cycling Ireland and the World Health Organisation, amongst others.

## SECTION 4.0

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### KEY DEFINITIONS

The clarification of certain definitional distinctions between the main types of cycling infrastructure is important when developing a strategic approach to the provision of greenways and cycle routes, given that the selection has a significant effect on a range of other issues. For instance, there are clear qualitative differences between cycling routes that form part of the road network and others, such as greenways, on which cyclists are fully segregated from vehicular traffic. Indeed, survey evidence affirms that everyday cyclists commuting to work in Dublin prefer routes that are fully segregated from vehicular traffic (Caulfield *et al.*, 2012), while tourists also prefer such routes and are willing to markedly increase their cycling time when these are available (Deenihan and Caulfield, 2015). The knock-on consequences, in terms of the numbers cycling, and the ensuing health, economic and other benefits that can be derived from increasing those numbers, is, therefore, critically impacted by the selection of the type of cycling infrastructure.<sup>13</sup>

The National Road Authority's (NRA) *National Cycling Network Scoping Study* identifies four main types of cycling infrastructure, differentiated according to their relationship and proximity with roads, and also in relation to pedestrian sharing. These are shown in Figure 2.<sup>14</sup> As seen below, the characteristics of the cycle trail most closely align it with the definition of the greenway elaborated by the European Greenways Association (EGA) in the *Declaration of Lille*:

Communication routes reserved exclusively for non-motorised journeys, developed in an integrated manner, which enhances both the environment and quality of life of the surrounding area. These routes should meet satisfactory standards of width, gradient, and surface condition to ensure that they are both user-friendly and low -risk for users of all abilities. In this respect, canal towpaths and disused railway lines are a highly suitable resource for the development of greenways. (EGA, 2000)

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<sup>13</sup> Deenihan and Caulfield (2015) found an important gender dimension to the likelihood of male and female tourists cycling dependant on the type of infrastructure available. For instance, older female tourists who do not own a bicycle were more likely to choose a road with a cycle lane or a route fully segregated from vehicular traffic, in contrast to the stated preferences of younger male tourists.

<sup>14</sup> Photographs indicating the four main types of cycling infrastructure can be found in Appendix 1 of the *National Cycle Network Scoping Study*.

Figure 2: Main types of cycling infrastructure

Type	On road	Pedestrian use	Key characteristics
Cycle lanes	Yes	No	Contiguous part of road surface delineated by white line. Not for exclusive use of cyclists
On-road cycle ways	Yes	Yes	Contiguous part of road surface delineated by physical markers or markings at least 0.5m wide
Off-road cycle ways	No	Yes	Physically separated from road surface by grass verge or other barrier, but forms part of road corridor
Cycle trails (off-road)	No	Yes	Physically distinct from road surface and road corridor and typically associated with canal towpath or disused railway beds

Source: Adapted from NRA, 2010, pp.16-19

The development of a segregated greenway and cycle route network is undoubtedly preferable from the point-of-view of cyclists. However, the potential economic and other benefits of developing such routes must inevitably be considered in tandem with the costs associated with route selection – including the purchase of land – and design. The mechanisms through which land for greenways and off-road cycle routes is made available, whether following ‘permissive agreements’ with land-owners, or due to compulsory purchase by public agencies, will have a profound impact on the costs and time associated with their development. The time and resources available for the creation of a region-wide network will inevitably vary depending on the approach preferred, as will the choice of delivery agency and the associated powers at its disposal. While reaching amicable agreement with landowners must be the preferred option in instances where the land is not already in public ownership, the power of compulsory acquisition may also be required in order to assemble the land required for cycling infrastructure development.

Many of the design considerations in relation to greenways are analysed in greater detail by Manton and Clifford (2011, 2013), whose work is particularly useful in exploring the differing characteristics and requirements of commuter, tourist and leisure cyclists. In addition, the same authors consider the various design considerations of greenways, including international standards concerning their width, speed, gradient, horizontal and vertical alignment, and these aspects will not be further discussed in this

report.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, Manton (2013) elaborates a ‘multi-criteria analysis’ in relation to route selection for greenways, consisting of six principal criteria:

- *Safety – considered one of the biggest impediments to growth in cycling, particularly in urban areas where most fatalities occur;*
- *Economy – the ‘journey ambience’ derived from cycling on a greenway has a positive economic impact in addition to the other health-economic related benefits of cycling;*
- *Environment – A balance sheet of carbon costs versus carbon benefits in the construction of greenways should be created;*
- *Design – design considerations should also be based on user preferences in addition to best practice in the specification of greenway geometry, materials used etc.;*
- *Connectivity – multiple issues concerning accessibility to population and particular destinations, public transport, shopping and other facilities etc.; and*
- *Integration – relating to whether proposals for the development of cycling infrastructure align with other policies and plans from the international to the local scale.*

The factors above will clearly have to be considered in detail by the coordinating body established to take charge of the masterplanning and implementation phases in the development of a comprehensive network of greenways and cycle routes on a cross-border basis.

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<sup>15</sup> For instance, poor surface quality is considered to affect cyclists ‘to a much greater degree than motorists’ (Manton and Clifford, (2013, p.4).

## ASCRIBED BENEFITS OF CYCLING AND GREENWAY DEVELOPMENT

A feature of the literature relating to cycling and the development of greenway and cycle routes is their potential contribution towards multiple public policy goals. Indeed, the interconnections between various policy goals and agendas and the thematic benefits often ascribed to cycling, are usefully illustrated by the DRD in the *Draft Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland*, and these are indicated in the diagram in Figure 3. The multivariate benefits include improved access for citizens to services and facilities, which, in turn, are asserted to support social equity and integration within the community (DRD, 2014).

Figure 3: 'Making the connections' between cycling and other policy agendas



Source: DRD, 2014, p.7



It is critically important to outline the key benefits stemming from the creation of a comprehensive network of greenways and cycle routes given that the weighted merits of the ascribed benefits will inevitably underpin the substantial public investment needed to develop the necessary infrastructure from the relatively low base that currently exists. Therefore, four thematic areas are considered further that broadly encapsulate the principal benefits to society derived from increased levels of cycling, including health, environment, the economy and shared spaces.

## Section 5.1 Health

The physical and mental health benefits derived from cycling and the development of cycling infrastructure are well documented in the literature, including the cost-effectiveness of investment in this activity as a means of achieving public health outcomes. For instance, the provision of access to open spaces, walking and cycling trails and parks is demonstrated to encourage physical activity and improve the general health of the population (West and Shores, 2011; Starnes *et al.*, 2011; Lee and Maheswaran, 2011; Rojas-Rueda *et al.*, 2013). Their study of the impact of the Connswater Community Greenway in East Belfast suggests that the cumulative impact of the introduction of the greenway across a large urban population is substantial, although the direct health gains for any individual may be small. Indeed, it is estimated that if 10 per cent of those living within the catchment of the greenway previously classified as inactive became active, 880 cases of certain health conditions, and 75 deaths, could be prevented by 2050 (Dallet *et al.*, 2013).<sup>16</sup> The cost effectiveness of the greenway development, vis-à-vis other health care oriented interventions, was also deemed positive in the study, leading to increased physical activity levels amongst the population and overall improvements in mortality rates. As the DTTAS (2014b, p.43) notes: ‘The European Charter on Counteracting Obesity includes “promotion of cycling and walking by better urban design and transport policies” as one of the key elements of a package of essential preventative action’.

The World Health Organisation’s (WHO) Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT) measures the health-economic benefits resulting from reductions in mortality due to increased cycling and/or walking within a population, and is utilised in several studies (WHO, 2011).<sup>17</sup> For example, the HEAT model was applied by Transform Scotland, which found that an annual saving of £1-2 billion could be

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<sup>16</sup> The health conditions positively impacted include heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, colon and breast cancer (Dallet *et al.*, 2013)

<sup>17</sup> See [www.heatwalkingcycling.org](http://www.heatwalkingcycling.org) for further information.

achieved in Scotland if the current 1 per cent share of all journeys under 5 miles undertaken by bicycle were to rise to 13 per cent (cited in McKibbin, 2011, p.12).<sup>18</sup> In essence, if the population is healthier, it can generally make a more productive contribution to the economy. The full economic benefits of investment in cycling infrastructure, therefore, can be factored into the decision-making process using the HEAT tool. Indeed, Henrikson *et al.* (2010) show that the levels of absenteeism amongst cycling commuters are one day less than with non-cyclists, effectively resulting in a financial gain for employers in addition to the associated health benefits for employees.

## Section 5.2 Economy

The development of greenways and cycle routes has demonstrable economic benefits. The most obvious economic impact is derived from the cycling tourist industry, which is estimated to be worth €54 billion in Europe, with €353 the average spend of cycling tourists on a typical 6-day trip (ITT and CSTT, 2009, p.8). In Ireland, the 2011 Fitzpatrick Associates (2011, p.13) report on the Great Western Greenway, found that non-domestic tourists on average spent €50.71 per day during their visit, based on an average length of stay of 6.8 days.<sup>19</sup> A higher figure is achieved on the Danube Cycling Route in Austria, where cycling tourists spent €65.70 per day on average (Meschik, 2012, p.52). According to Meschik (2012, p.52), this latter figure breaks down as approximately €28.41 on accommodation, €27.15 on food and beverages, and €7.30 and €2.83 respectively on shopping and other sundries.<sup>20</sup> In the North East of England, by comparison, the typical cycle tourist spend was 48 per cent on accommodation, 40 per cent on food and beverages and 12 per cent on other goods and services (ITT *et al.*, 2007, cited in Manton and Clifford, 2012, p.3). The spread out nature of this spend, on local accommodation and restaurants in different localities along the route; can clearly have a positive multiplier effect for the local economy. However, as Manton and Clifford (2011, p.1) stress, cycle tourism in Ireland is currently underperforming in comparison with continental Europe, with only 2 per cent of visitors cycling during their stay – representing an estimated spend of €97 million.

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<sup>18</sup> In terms of supporting a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport, encouraging cycling and walking for journeys under 5 miles is deemed particularly important in the key policy documents in Ireland and Northern Ireland (see, for example, DRD, 2012b).

<sup>19</sup> The projected number of overseas visitors was 8,000 (Fitzpatrick Associates, 2011, p.13).

<sup>20</sup> During the summer months of July and August up to 80,000 cyclists pass the counting meters on the Danube Cycling Route (Meschik, 2012, p.53).

There are certain interconnected characteristics of cycle tourism that are worth emphasising to further underline its attractiveness as a model of sustainable development. Firstly, the creation of long-distance greenway and cycle routes, particularly in rural areas, not only enhances the visitor attractions and existing tourist facilities within the vicinity of the route, but they also become destinations and reasons to visit in their own right. This potential is recognised by Lumsdon, who states the following in relation to the NCN in England:

Between cities, it [the NCN] takes the form of a linear tourism transport attraction, which facilitates access, for example, to appealing landscapes, visitor attractions, villages and small towns as well as providing sightseeing opportunities. The network is designed to enhance the overall appreciation of the tourism offering of a destination, but it also represents an additional visitor attraction in its own right. (Lumsdon, 2000, p.367)

The extended period of time that cycling tourists typically choose to spend on attractive long-distance greenway and cycle routes effectively supports the statement above. For instance, Meschik (2012, p.49) informs that the majority of tourists on the Danube Cycle Route spend at least one week. It seems a reasonable assumption that the longer tourists can be enticed to stay in a particular region, the more they are likely to spend on accommodation, food and other sundries to the benefit of the local economy. Moreover, the creation of 106km of greenway routes in the Girona Province of Spain not only assisted the development of the tourist industry in this rural locality, but also contributed to making tourist demand less seasonal throughout the year (Mundet and Coenders, 2010).<sup>21</sup> The complementarities of greenways and cycle routes, and their contribution towards supporting the sustainability of existing tourist attractions, is clearly important. However, they can also be promoted as standalone attractions in their own right, which can be particularly beneficial for remote rural areas not traditionally included on the tourist itinerary. The new All-Island HP Deprivation Index underlines the high level of deprivation in rural areas on the island of Ireland, particularly in the Border counties, ensuring that measures aimed at improving connectedness and developing the local tourist industry can have a potentially significant positive impact.<sup>22</sup>

A further characteristic of cycling tourism that enhances its economic attractiveness for the island of Ireland is the potential to attract a particular type of high-spending tourist from abroad. In particular,

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<sup>21</sup> Mundet and Coenders (2010, p.672) state that Girona usually only receives 'summer sun-and-beach' tourists.

<sup>22</sup> The Deprivation Index was developed by Trutz Haase and Dr Jonathan Pratschke in collaboration with the ICLRD and AIRO, and is available to search via this link: <http://airo.maynoothuniversity.ie/external-content/deprivationindex2014>.

Germany and the UK are recognised as the main outbound markets for the tourism sector in Europe, with German tourists making up the majority of international visitors on a number of European cycling routes (ITT and CSTT, 2009, p.24).<sup>23</sup> Indeed, German tourists account for a large proportion of those using the Danube Cycle Route, with Austrian nationals comprising only 24 per cent of users (Meschik, 2012, p.48).<sup>24</sup> Although the UK remains the largest tourist market for Ireland, the number of those visiting from Germany has increased by 16 per cent in the last year (Tourism Ireland, 2014). The importance to the national economy of attracting spend from overseas visitors is recognised by Fitzpatrick Associates, who calculate the projected national economic impact of the Great Western Greenway at €2.8 million, effectively representing new money to the Irish economy.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, revenue from overseas visitors accounts for 59 per cent of all tourism revenue generated in Ireland (Tourism Ireland, 2014). The development of greenways and cycling routes to attract tourists from abroad potentially dovetails with other high spending and sought after tourists markets, such as cultural tourists and those interested in local heritage. The Artists Initiative developed along the route of the Great Western Greenway exemplifies the types of cooperative ventures between local businesses and arts and cultural entities that can organically develop once cycling infrastructure is in place (Quinn *et al.*, 2014).<sup>26</sup> Cognisant of such initiatives, the draft *Solidarity Charter for the Economic Revitalisation of the Irish Border Development Corridor*, jointly promoted by the Centre for Cross Border Studies (CCBS) and ICLRD, specifically calls for improved connectivity between both sides of the Border, including through the development of greenways.<sup>27</sup>

The economic considerations in support of the development of cycling and walking infrastructure are not solely concerned with growth in the economy, of course, but relate to social equity and the fact that many people do not have access to private cars. For example, approximately 40 per cent of households in the city of Belfast did not have access to a car in the years 2011-2013 (DRD, 2013, p.12). The provision of alternative means of transportation is, therefore, a necessity; a message underlined in policy documents in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The recent DTTAS (2014b, p.40) consultation on *Investing in our transport future*, states that transport ‘plays a crucial role in combating social exclusion through

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23 However, the domestic cycling tourist market remains the most important in most countries in terms of the percentage share of overall visitors – see, for example, Table 3 in ITT and CSTT (2009).

24 The importance of the German cycling tourist market is partly in its ‘propensity to travel to other countries’, with German tourists particularly prominent in the Austrian and Scandinavian markets (ITT and CSTT, 2009, p.23).

25 Approximately €2.8 million of this is considered additional spend as a survey indicated that 45 per cent of overseas visitors considered the existence of the Greenway an important factor in their decision to visit the local area (Fitzpatrick Associates, 2011, p.14).

26 The work of local artists was exhibited along a section of the greenway.

27 The text of the draft Charter can be read in Volume 9 of the *Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland* published in 2014 by the Centre for Cross Border Studies – see pages 25-35.

providing access to jobs, education, health services and social networks'. Furthermore, the DRD (2012b, p.6) recognises in *Building an Active Travel Future for Northern Ireland* that promoting more sustainable forms of transport inevitably improves 'access to jobs, training and key services, particularly for those without access to a car'. The relative affordability of cycling, particularly in comparison to car ownership and public transport, ensure that it is an attractive proposition in terms of low-cost travel, albeit the necessary infrastructure and other supportive measures are usually needed before it is widely taken up within the population as an alternative form of transport (Pucher *et al.*, 2008).

## Section 5.3 Environment

The typical cycle tourist, according to Meschik (2012, p.43), tends to 'favour the concept of ecotourism' and is generally 'proud of travelling in an environmentally friendly manner'. In spite of the 'high-growth [greenhouse gas] emission trends' caused by international tourism (Scott *et al.*, 2010, p.394), cycle tourism is recognised as having an 'important role to play in the sustainability of tourism' (Weston and Mota, 2012, p.1), and, indeed, is acknowledged (along with walking) as the 'ultimate "zero carbon" and environmentally friendly solution' for personal transport (Chapman, 2007, p.363). The primary environmental benefits commonly ascribed to cycling and the development of greenways and cycle routes, relate to the potential reduction in the usage of cars and the concomitant impact in lessening greenhouse-gas emissions (Lumsdon, 2000; McKibbin, 2011; Manton and Clifford, 2012). However, reductions in carbon emissions are not a given, and research indicates that a modal shift of 115 commuters per year (from private car to bicycle) is needed to offset the carbon footprint of constructing one 10km asphalt greenway (Manton *et al.*, 2014, p.3).<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, the accumulated benefits derived from reducing the number of cars on the road due to increased cycling would undoubtedly improve a host of environmental and other interrelated quality of life indicators.

The development of greenway and cycle route networks in many European countries typically resulted in the use of existing, often underused, transport infrastructure, such as old railway track beds and canal towpaths. As Lumsdon (2000) records, this occurred in the case of the NCN in England, the Vias Verdes in Spain and the Ravel network in Belgium. In County Monaghan, a recently completed 4km section of the Ulster Canal Greenway utilised the old canal towpath, and many of the proposed

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<sup>28</sup> These calculations were based on research into a greenway in Ireland, which has an asphalt finish and an assumed 20-year life cycle (Manton *et al.*, 2014).

greenways and cycle routes on the island of Ireland will follow this tried-and-tested formula. In addition to chiming with the ‘reduce, reuse, recycle’ ethos of many environmental campaigns, the reuse of disused transportation infrastructure has the potential to protect important habitats and provide corridors for people and wildlife (Mundet and Coenders, 2010). The reanimation of these routes can help conserve associated elements of the local historic environment, such as canal bridges, lock houses, railway stations and warehouses. Although Cope *et al.* (1998) stress that the development of the ‘Sea to Sea’ (C2C) route in the north of England had minimal environmental impact, it is acknowledged that tourism can be detrimental to local communities, environments and wildlife if not sensitively monitored and managed (see, for example, Lindsay *et al.*, 2008). The predominant emphasis with the policy and academic literature, however, is on the positive environmental benefits that can be derived from greenway and cycle route development.

## Section 5.4      Shared spaces, vibrancy and animation

The potential for greenways and cycle routes to help create vibrant and animated spaces, in both urban and rural areas, is evident from the literature. The experience of the Great Western Greenway in County Mayo, for example, is instructive, particularly as it is viewed as a ‘social’ and ‘tourism corridor’, which has helped promote good community relations, whilst uniting ‘small towns and villages in the vicinity’ (Robinson and O’Connor, 2013, p.311). As Fitzpatrick Associates (2011) acknowledge, an important component in ensuring that this positive outcome occurred was the early engagement with local residents and the involvement of landowners in the development process. Indeed, recent media attention on the announcement of a greenway project in Kells, County Kerry, prior to the full approval of all local landowners, is indicative of the sensitivities potentially surrounding such projects (Minihan and Lucey, 2014). Nonetheless, in the United States, greenways have contributed towards fostering neighbourhood, community and regional pride, and have become the new ‘front porches’ in many communities (Moore and Ross, 1998, cited in Mundet and Coenders, 2010, p.659). Their catalytic qualities in connecting disparate communities socially and economically, as well as physically, merits further research and consideration. In urban areas, too, it is recognised that the creation of cycling and walking friendly environments through, for instance, pedestrianisation schemes, can improve the attractiveness, vibrancy and use of public spaces.

In the context of Northern Ireland, and the potential for cross-border cooperation in the development of a greenway and cycle route network, the imperative to create ‘shared space’ resonates with the positive community experiences referenced above. For instance, the OFMDFM states that the

‘maintenance and protection of shared space’ is an overarching strategic objective and ‘cross-cutting responsibility’ for the ‘entire Northern Ireland Executive, other public bodies and civic society’ (OFMDFM, 2013, p.53). However, this is recognised as not simply an urban problem, or one associated with ‘peace walls’ and other familiar manifestations of segregation, but is also evident in rural towns and villages (OFMDFM, 2013). The recently published SEUPB consultation document on the forthcoming PEACE Programme, underlines the continuing need to address such issues, and proposes the following objective concerning ‘Shared Spaces and Services’: ‘To create a more cohesive society through an increased provision of shared spaces and services’ (SEUPB, 2014, p.22). The development of greenways and cycle routes, particularly on a cross-border basis, arguably constitutes one means of creating shared space, and those contemplating future proposals for such routes can conceivably look towards the PEACE Programme as a possible source of funding. Indeed, the transformation of a physical divide into a cycle route and tourist attraction has already occurred in mainland Europe with the inclusion of the Iron Curtain Trail within the EuroVelo network (EuroVelo 13). The Trail, as the name suggests, traces the former Iron Curtain along a 6,800km route stretching from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea, in the process passing through 20 countries.<sup>29</sup>

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*29 For more information on the Iron Curtain Trail, visit the following websites: [www.ironcurtaintrail.eu](http://www.ironcurtaintrail.eu) and [www.eurovelo13.com](http://www.eurovelo13.com).*

## SECTION 6.0

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# REVIEW OF POLICIES AND POLICY DOCUMENTS

As referenced in the introduction to this report the marked upturn in interest in cycling and the associated development of greenways and cycle routes is matched by an increasing number of policy initiatives from central and local governmental that are supportive of cycling. Indeed, the review of policy documents below, although not exhaustive in its coverage, indicates an overwhelmingly positive policy environment within which those advocating for investment in cycling infrastructure are currently operating. The policies and policy documents referenced below are not all cycling specific, however; some dealing more broadly with strategic spatial planning issues, while others are focused thematically on transportation matters, with cycling identified as one concern amongst many. Moreover, it is evident that the emphasis of those policy documents focused entirely on cycling matters also differs considerably, whether specifically oriented towards promoting cycle tourism or cycling as a sustainable mode of transportation and alternative to the private car.

The policy documents are considered at two distinct spatial scales: the national/regional level and the local authority level. In addition, they are also categorised according to the jurisdiction to which they predominantly relate, whether Ireland or Northern Ireland, although several others are considered whose principal focus is on cross-border cooperation. Nonetheless, in the case of those documents with a specific jurisdictional focus, particular attention is paid in the review to any references made to cross-border cooperation on the island of Ireland. Furthermore, the key policies relating to cycling and the development of greenways and cycle routes are also noted. It is not the intention of the narrative below to provide a detailed policy analysis. Rather, it provides an introductory to the range of policies and policy documents of relevance to the potential development of a cross-border greenway and cycle route network in the Border region. In so doing, gaps in policy, particularly as they relate (or fail to relate) to cross-border cooperation, are identified, which has informed the recommendations made at the beginning of the report.



## Section 6.1 National/regional policies and policy documents

The key policy documents at the national and regional levels in Ireland and Northern Ireland potentially relating to greenways and cycle routes are detailed in Figure 4. They are firstly categorised according to their year of publication and primary jurisdictional focus. Whether or not they contain specific policies relating to cycling, greenway and cycle route development is also noted, as is the appearance of references to cross-border cooperation.

*Figure 4: National/regional policy documents pertinent to cycling/greenway and cycle route development on the island of Ireland:*

Policy document	Year Published	Primary jurisdictional focus	Cycling/ greenway & cycle route policies	Reference to cross-border cooperation
Northern Ireland Cycling Strategy	2000	Northern Ireland	Yes	No
National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020: People, Places and Potential	2002	Ireland	No	Yes
Planning Policy Statement 13: Transportation and Land Use	2005	Northern Ireland	Yes	Yes
Planning Policy Statement 3: Access, Movement and Parking	2005	Northern Ireland	Yes	Yes (not in relation to cycling)
A Strategy for the Development of Irish Cycle Tourism: Conclusions Report	2007	Ireland	Yes	Yes
Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020	2009	Ireland	Yes	Yes

Ireland's First National Cycle Policy Framework	2009	Ireland	Yes	No
Regional Planning Guidelines (2010-2022)	2010	Ireland (Border region)	Yes	Yes
Regional Development Strategy 2035: Building a Better Future	2010	Northern Ireland	Yes	Yes
Building an Active Travel Future for Northern Ireland	2012	Northern Ireland	Yes	No
Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation	2012	Northern Ireland	Yes	Yes (not in relation to cycling)
Framework for Co-operation: Spatial Strategies of Northern Ireland & the Republic of Ireland	2013	Cross-border	No	Yes
Regional Strategic Framework for the Central Border Region 2013-2027	2013	Cross-border	Yes	Yes
Draft Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland	2014	Northern Ireland	Yes	Yes

### Section 6.1.1 Ireland

*National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020: People, Places and Potential* – Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2002

The *National Spatial Strategy* identifies broad spatial strategies for Ireland and sets down indicative policies concerning the location of development, including concentrating investment in nine gateway locations at the national level. The Strategy is effectively implemented through its influence on regional and local planning policies, the *National Development Plan*, and other investment plans and programmes, including informing transport and other infrastructural investment policy decisions. There are multiple supportive references to cross-border cooperation in spatial planning and development within the document, with reference made to the three broad areas of the North West, Western and Central and Eastern parts of the region. Although no specific policies address greenways and cycle routes, the

definition of sustainable development is taken to include ‘maximising access to and encouraging use of public transport, cycling and walking’ (DEHLG, 2002, p.15). The NSS is due to be replaced by a National Planning Framework (NPF) in 2016, and it is recommended that the new strategic document should contain a firm policy section on the development of greenways and cycle routes, with key objectives also recognising the potential for cross-border cooperation on this issue.

*Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020* – Department of Transport (DT), 2009a

The *Smarter Travel* policies aim, amongst other things, to encourage around 200,000 people to switch to cycling and walking from other transportation modes, and to ensure that 55 per cent of commuter journeys are taken by alternatives to the private car, such as walking, cycling and public transport. Forty-nine actions are elaborated on to focus on a broad range of policy measures, including those supportive of deeper integration between transportation and land-use planning, and others aimed at strengthening institutional arrangements to ensure delivery of the established targets. Although many of the proposed actions refer to cycling, several are specifically concerned with cycling and walking, including the following:

- *Action 15 – ‘Our vision is to create a strong cycling culture in Ireland and ensure that all cities, towns, villages and rural areas will be cycling-friendly’ and ‘by 2020, we envisage around 160,000 people cycling for their daily commute, up from 35,000 in 2006. Cycling will be encouraged as a mode for other purposes so that by 2020 10% of all our trips will be by bike’ (DT, 2009a, p.43); and*
- *Action 17 – ‘Many State properties are used for recreation and leisure. We will ensure that, where feasible, areas of State-owned lands such as canal towpaths, former rail lines, Coillte estates, etc. are made available for the development of walking and cycling trails’ (DT, 2009a, p.45).*

In essence, *Smarter Travel* recognises the multiple environmental, health, economic and other benefits derived from cycling, and seeks to encourage infrastructure development and behavioral change within the population, including through investment in a national cycle network, integration with other transport modes, and the publication of a National Cycle Policy Framework (see below). Moreover,

and particularly significant for the purposes of this report, the all-island dimension to sustainable transport is emphasised within the report, which acknowledges the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) as the ‘main mechanism for cross-border co-operation’ in this area (DT, 2009a, p.58). The potential for alignment of sustainable transport strategies on a cross-border basis is supported in Actions 43 and 46, which propose close liaison between the relevant departments in Ireland and Northern Ireland, particularly on the issues of sustainable travel towns, branding and promotion.

### *A Strategy for the Development of Irish Cycle Tourism: Conclusions Report* – Fáilte Ireland, 2007

This strategy first articulated the objective of developing a National Cycle Network (NCN) in Ireland and identified an approximately 3000km long network of cycle routes across the country, with detailed costing and an implementation plan provided. The tourist cycling market formed the principal target market of the strategy, including the recommended creation of ‘world-class traffic-free routes’ such as greenways, and the proposed development of a ‘dedicated signage system for cyclists based on the model developed for Euro-Vélo’ (Fáilte Ireland, 2007, pp.26, 30). Moreover, ensuring consistency in the signage used with the National Cycle Network in Northern Ireland is emphasised in the strategy. A number of potential cycling hub towns were also identified in the document, including Dundalk, Sligo, Donegal and Buncrana.

### *Ireland’s First National Cycle Policy Framework* – Department of Transport, 2009b

The vision of the *National Cycle Policy Framework* is ‘to create a strong cycling culture in Ireland’ and it proposes that 10 per cent of all trips in the country will be by bicycle by the year 2020. The Framework acknowledges the decline in cycling that had occurred over the previous decades and seeks to reverse this decline through planning and infrastructure development and the associated communication and education of the general public. In essence, the 19 objectives elaborated in the document aim to support the development of the Irish National Cycle Network, including urban and rural cycle networks with a particular emphasis on greenways and off-road routes. The objectives cover the creation of the physical infrastructure, communication/education, financial resources, legislation and enforcement, human resources and coordination, and evaluation and effects. However, there is only one reference within the Framework to Northern Ireland and the potential development of a cross-border network of greenways and cycle routes is not addressed.

## *Regional Planning Guidelines (2010-2022)* – Border Regional Authority, 2010

The *Regional Planning Guidelines* acknowledge that the cycling infrastructure within the Border region is currently limited and that significant investment will be required to redress the situation, including the development of ‘off-road’ routes using canal towpaths and disused railway lines. The creation of greenways and cycle routes is considered necessary to support a modal shift from cars to more sustainable forms of transport, particularly in urban centres such as Letterkenny, Sligo, Dundalk and Drogheda, and to improve connectivity and accessibility within/to rural areas as well as rural tourist attractions. A specific cycling and walking policy is elaborated in the Guidelines, Policy INFP13, which seeks to ‘Promote and support cycling and walking within the Region, particularly within urban centres’ (BRA, 2010, p.93). The provision of cross-border routes is also explicitly supported in the document in the context of improving access to tourist assets.

### Section 6.1.2 Northern Ireland

#### *Regional Development Strategy 2035 - Building a Better Future*, Department for Regional Development, 2010

The *Regional Development Strategy 2035* provides the overarching spatial planning guidance for the Northern Ireland Executive and other central and local public bodies must ‘have regard’ to its contents when exercising their own development functions. A number of Regional Guidance policies elaborated in the *Strategy* specifically refer to cycling, including:

- *RG4: Promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure – ‘Sports tourism, for example golf, walking, cycling, equestrian, surfing, and other water sports actively contribute to the Northern Ireland economy’ (DRD, 2010, p.35).*
- *RG9: Reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate mitigation and adaptation to climate change whilst improving air quality – ‘This will include reducing the need to use the car. By designing neighbourhoods that have shops, workplaces and services, schools, churches, parks, and other amenities near homes, residents and visitors will have increased*

*opportunities for walking, cycling, or taking public transport as they go about their daily lives' (DRD, 2010, p.44).*

- *RG11: Conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment – 'Such networks [ecological networks] could also be of amenity value if linked to the green infrastructure provided by walking and cycle routes to heritage and other recreational interest' (DRD, 2010, p.49).*

The development of greenways and cycle routes are referenced in the Strategy in relation to the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area and North West centred on Derry/Londonderry, with multiple references to cross-border cooperation in a variety of thematic areas also prominent within the document.

### *Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future - A New Approach to Regional Transportation* – Department for Regional Development, 2012a

The new approach to regional transportation articulated within this document is intended to build on the *Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012* and complement the *Regional Development Strategy 2035*. It outlines a number of high-level aims and strategic objectives intended to guide decision-making processes in transportation beyond 2015. The three high-level aims include supporting the growth of the economy, enhancing the quality of life for all citizens and reducing the environmental impact of transport. Cycling, and the development of cycling routes, is liberally referenced in the document, including in Strategic Objective 4 ('Improve access in our towns and cities'), which recognises that 'not everyone has access to a car' and that creating a 'more inclusive society' can be enabled through the availability of quality cycling routes (DRD, 2012a, p.26). There is no reference within the document to the potential for cross-border cooperation in the development of greenways and cycle routes, albeit liaison with SEUPB over future European Union funding to deliver transport proposals is referenced.

*Planning Policy Statement 3: Access, Movement and Parking* – Department of the Environment, 2005

This Planning Policy Statement (PPS) sets out the Department's policies for vehicular and pedestrian access, transport assessment, the protection of transport routes and parking, and is taken into consideration in the preparation of development plans and on determining individual planning applications and appeals. A key objective of the PPS is to promote the safety of vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians, in addition to promoting a modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport. Policy AMP 8 deals specifically with 'Cycle Provision', and specifically provides for the multiple needs of cyclists – access, parking and linkages – in approved development schemes and development plans. Moreover, the potential for the reuse of disused transportation routes for a variety of purposes, such as canal towpaths and railway beds, is recognised within the document, which aims to protect these routes through Policy AMP 5 ('Disused Transport Routes').

*Planning Policy Statement 13 -Transportation and Land Use* – Department for Regional Development, 2005

This policy statement seeks to promote sustainable transport choices, accessibility for all, and to reduce the need to travel, especially by private car. It specifically addresses cycling and the provision of cycle routes in General Principle 9, which states: 'Reliance on the private car should be reduced through a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport' (DRD, 2005, p.24). The potential of disused transport routes for recreational and tourism-related use is recognised under General Principle 8, which affords protection under planning policy from inappropriate development, and underlines the improved cross-border connections that their reuse could facilitate. Other principles within PPS 13 touch on the benefits of cycling and seek to facilitate, amongst other things, improvements in accessibility, mobility, cycle parking and facilitate, and to integrate cycling with other forms of transport.

*Building an Active Travel Future for Northern Ireland* – Department for Regional Development, 2012b

The vision for active travel promoted within this document is ‘To put walking and cycling at the heart of local transport, public health and well-being and wider government strategies for the benefit of society, the environment and the economy as a whole’ (DRD, 2012b, p.2). The strategy aims to increase the average distance cycled by the population and the percentage of trips taken by bicycle so that they are in line with UK counterparts by 2020. The need for a cross-sectoral approach is emphasised, in addition to the inter-dependencies with other government policies and strategies. The document also recognises the necessity to develop and maintain partnership with a range of organisations, including the third sector. However, no reference is made to cross-border cooperation in this matter.<sup>30</sup>

*Northern Ireland Cycling Strategy* – Department for Regional Development, 2000

The *Northern Ireland Cycling Strategy* sought to quadruple the number of trips by bicycle (on figures for the year 2000) by the end of 2015 through a number of planned actions relating to health, access, safety, tourism and the raising of public awareness, amongst other measures.<sup>31</sup>

*Draft Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland* – Department for Regional Development, 2014

This recently published draft strategy document aims, over a 25-year horizon, to ‘establish a cycling culture in Northern Ireland to give people the freedom and confidence to travel by bicycle, and where all road users can safely share space with mutual respect’ (DRD, 2014, p.5). The Strategy proposes to achieve this cultural change through a ‘three pillar approach’ involving the provision of appropriate infrastructure, putting in place supportive measures such as safety measures, and supporting cycling through marketing campaigns and flagship events. The importance of developing off-road greenways is underlined, in both urban and rural areas, and the potential development of cross-border routes is briefly acknowledged in the context of tourism and culture.

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<sup>30</sup> The Department published an associated *Action Plan for Active Travel in Northern Ireland* in 2013.

<sup>31</sup> McKibbin (2011, p.4) records in relation to these targets that the ‘levels achieved were well below these targets with reviews suggesting that poor infrastructure was a factor’.



### Section 6.1.3 Cross-border on the island of Ireland

*Framework for Co-operation: Spatial Strategies of Northern Ireland & the Republic of Ireland* – Department for Regional Development and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013

The *Framework for Co-operation* recognises the ‘strong commonality of themes and approaches’ between the *Northern Ireland Regional Development Strategy 2035* and the *National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020* (DRD and DECLG, 2013, p.15). It sets out four priority areas for cross-border cooperation under the themes of ‘Enhancing Competitiveness’, ‘Competitive Places’, ‘Environmental Quality’ and ‘Spatial Analysis’, and emphasises that engagement in these areas must occur at central and local government levels. The Framework makes no specific reference to cycling. Nonetheless, this high-level policy document acknowledges the necessity of dealing with strategic issues, including greenhouse gas emissions and the implications of increased road congestion. It can, therefore, be interpreted as providing a supportive policy environment within which specific policies, programmes and projects for the development of greenways and a comprehensive cycle route network can be elaborated on a cross-border basis.

*Regional Strategic Framework for the Central Border Region 2013-2027*  
– Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN), 2013

The Regional Strategic Framework developed and promoted by ICBAN is supportive of the creation of cross-border greenways and cycle route networks. For instance, under the theme of ‘A Sustainable Region’ the Framework calls for the creation of a ‘Regional Action Plan for Cycling and Walking’, which it considers should embrace the ‘Greenways concept’ (ICBAN, 2013, p.33). The development of such a cross-border network resonates with the other key strategic themes articulated in the document, including ‘A people centred and inclusive region’ and ‘An accessible and connected region’.

## Section 6.2      Local authorities' policies and policy documents

The analysis below indicates a marked difference between local authorities in Ireland and Northern Ireland in terms of volume of policies generated and, in particular, the 'up-to-dateness' of the local development and land-use plans. This contrast can be partially explained by the centralised location of planning, regeneration and other powers in Northern Ireland since the early 1970s, in comparison with the more diverse range of spatial planning-related functions held by local authorities in Ireland, including the preparation of local development and other plans. Policy in Northern Ireland has tended to emanate from the regional level, whereas local authorities in Ireland, as the discussion below evidences, have articulated many of their own policies in the county development plans, albeit these also emanate from the policies established at the regional and national levels. However, the culmination of the local government reform processes in Northern Ireland in 2015 will ultimately provide the new local authorities with similar powers to their counterparts across the Border. This should provide greater scope for local policy formulation and innovation in practice, in addition to enhanced potential for the development and delivery of greenway and cycle route proposals on the ground.

### Section 6.2.1      Ireland

The policies relating to cycling and the development of greenways and cycle routes contained within local development plans for each of the Border counties in Ireland are included in Appendix B. As can be seen from Figure 5, the plans are recently published, albeit several remain in draft form, and each contains policies specific to cycling and the development of greenways and cycle routes within their local authority area. Moreover, the plans are all supportive of cross-jurisdictional and/or cross-border cooperation, and a number of existing and proposed cross-border routes are identified in several. This includes on the former route on the old Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties railway line (SLNCR), and the long-established 230 mile Kingfisher Cycle Route (NCN Route 91), which was the first mapped and sign-posted trail on the island of Ireland.

Figure 5: Policies pertinent to cycling/greenway and cycle route development in local county development plans in the Border counties of Ireland

Local authority plan	Cycling/greenway & cycle route policies	Reference to cross-border cooperation	Existing/proposed greenway and cycle routes identified in plan
Cavan County Development Plan 2014-2020	Yes	Yes	NCN Cavan Leitrim Greenway – <i>proposed</i> NCN Boyne Valley to Lakelands County Greenway and associated looped Kingscourt Greenway – <i>proposed</i> NCN SLNCR (The Sligo Leitrim North Counties Railway Greenway) from Enniskillen to Sligo – <i>proposed</i> NCN Cavan Lakelands Cycle Loop extending from Cavan Town to Killashandra Village – <i>proposed</i>
Draft Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021	Yes	Yes	Eastern Greenway – <i>partially complete</i> (Phase 1 Carlingford-Omeath) NCN Dundalk to Sligo (Route 1) – <i>proposed</i> NCN Dundalk to Wexford (Route 5) – <i>proposed</i> NCN Drogheda to Trim (Route 3) – <i>under development</i> Brú na Boinne Greenway Drogheda to Mornington – <i>partially complete</i>
Draft Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021	Yes	Yes	Sligo to Enniskillen route along railway line (NCN SLNCR) – <i>proposed</i> NCN Sligo to Dundalk (Route 1) – <i>proposed</i> NCN Limerick to Carrick-on-Shannon (Route 11) – <i>proposed</i> NCN Carrick-on-Shannon to Mullingar (Route) – <i>proposed</i> Dromod to Mohill and Ballinamore route along railway line – <i>proposed</i> Kingfisher Cycle Route – <i>existing</i> North West Trail – <i>existing</i>

			Tour De Humbert Trail – existing
County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018	Yes	Yes	North West Cycle Trail – <i>existing</i> Inis Eoghain Cycleway – <i>existing</i> Ballyshannon to Ballycastle – <i>existing</i> Foyle Valley Cycle Route – <i>existing</i> The Gap Trail (Ardara/Glenties) – <i>existing</i>
Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017	Yes	Yes	Strandhill, Rosses Point, Ballysadare and Collooney to Sligo City routes – <i>proposed</i> Claremorris to Collooney route along railway line – <i>proposed</i>
Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019	Yes	Yes	Kingfisher Cycle Route – <i>existing</i> Ulster Canal Greenway – <i>existing and proposed</i>

A noticeable feature of the cycling policies in the local county development plans is the multiple policy arenas to which they relate, whether concerning tourism development, farm diversification, sport and recreation, health and wellbeing, a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, or a modal shift from cars to sustainable forms of transport. A range of policies also relate to the promotion of cycling (including in schools), parking provision for cyclists, road safety issues (greenways being recognised as preferable in this regard), and the necessity to improve mobility on greenways and cycle routes for those with disabilities. Furthermore, certain potentially negative aspects of greenway and cycle route development are also acknowledged, such as the impact on environmentally sensitive sites, and the possible strategic trade-off between the use of old railway beds for greenways versus the reestablishment of rail connections. Nonetheless, the majority of the policy references to cycling are encouraging and recognise the multiple long-term benefits that can be accrued from its further development, including on a cross-border basis.

The majority of development plans for the local authority areas in Northern Ireland that are contiguous with the Border are significantly out-of-date, as can be swiftly determined from Figure 6. The contents of the plans referenced, as a consequence, have not been reviewed in the same manner as the county development plans in Ireland, with the exception of the *Banbridge/Newry & Mourne Area Plan 2015*, the most up-to-date of those listed. The field of action of the existing 26 local authorities in Northern Ireland is limited insofar as land-use planning and development is concerned, but the new local authorities from April 2015 will have much greater scope for action given their range of available powers. The new generation of local development and/or community plans that will be developed once the new councils become embedded and begin to exercise their new planning functions, will likely be similar and complementary to development and local area plans in Ireland.

None of this is to suggest that existing local councils in Northern Ireland have not engaged in the development of cycling and cycling infrastructure in their areas, either by themselves, or in partnership with other organisations. For example, Armagh City and District Council recently completed a walking and cycling route within the historic Palace Demesne, linking with the city centre, the cathedrals and the Mall (Northern Ireland Executive, 2013). A range of other initiatives led by, or involving, local councils are outlined in *An Action Plan for Active Travel in Northern Ireland*, including under the Sustrans Connect 2 project – the Omagh Riverside Walk and Cycle Path<sup>32</sup> – and the Derry City Council Active Travel Programme – Boomhall and Bay Road Greenway.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/news/new-riverside-walk-and-cycle-path-opened-omagh>

<sup>33</sup> See <http://www.derrycity.gov.uk/News/DRD-Minister-launches-Derry-Londonderry-Active-Tra>

Figure 6: Local development plans relevant to Northern Ireland councils in the Border region

Development Plan	Date Adopted
<i>Armagh Area Plan 2004</i>	1995
<i>Derry Area Plan 2011</i>	2000
<i>Dungannon &amp; South Tyrone Area Plan 2010</i>	2005
<i>Fermanagh Area Plan 2007</i>	1997
<i>Banbridge, Newry &amp; Mourne Area Plan 2015</i>	2013
<i>Omagh Area Plan 1987-2002</i>	1992
<i>Strabane Area Plan 1986-2001</i>	1991

The *Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015* contains many similar policies and policy references to the county development plans in Ireland. As seen in Appendix C, this includes encouraging cycling and walking with the objective of facilitating a reduction in traffic congestion and a modal shift to more sustainable forms of transportation. Other references concern the enhancement of cycle and waling networks with new development projects, the integration of cycling with other forms of public transport through, for example, creating better connections to stations and the provision of bicycle stands. Moreover, the potential of disused transportation routes, such as old railway beds and canal towpaths, to be used for the provision of greenways and cycle routes.

## SECTION 7.0

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# EXISTING AND PROPOSED ROUTES IN THE IRISH BORDER REGION

A mapping exercise has also been completed to accompany this report indicating existing and, in the case of the southern border counties in Ireland, proposed greenways and cycle routes. This data was collated and made available to ICLRD by Sustrans and the National Trail Office and was mapped by the All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO). The map contains information on the following:

- *In Northern Ireland, the National Cycle Network, with routes delineated according to whether they are on-road or off-road; and*
- *In Ireland, existing cycle routes are delineated according to whether they are a cycle lane, on-road, off-road, mixed (some on-road, some off-road) and greenway; cycle routes proposed by local authorities; the proposed EuroVelo routes, also delineated according to whether existing (greenway or on-road), conceptual/proposed and work-in-progress; and, routes submitted to the DTTAS in 2014 for funding under the NCN programme, delineated according to their success in the competitive funding round.*

However, due to the sensitivities surrounding agreed routes and ongoing negotiations over the ownership, purchase price, and use of land, the map representing the above is not provided within this report. Rather, it is available to view upon request to ICLRD and following the express consent of Sustrans and the National Trails Office. In the interim, comprehensive maps showing the existing greenways and cycle routes on the island of Ireland can be freely explored online via the interactive and downloadable maps available through the following web-links:

- <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map>
- <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/northern-ireland/national-cycle-network/free-leaflets-and-maps>
- <http://www.discovernorthernireland.com/downloads/cycleNI.pdf>
- <http://www.cycleni.com/routes>

The proposed National Cycle Network in Ireland can be seen in Appendix A. Further derivations of the network are contained in the National Roads Authority's 2010 *Scoping Study*, albeit these merely provide a framework from which to progress rather than a definitive position of the relevant government agencies: (See <http://www.smartertravel.ie/sites/default/files/uploads/FINAL%20NCNScopingStudyAugust2010%5B1%5D.pdf>). *Figure 5* in the previous section also indicates those existing and proposed greenway and cycle routes identified in the local authority developments plans in the border counties of Ireland.

Northern Ireland already hosts an extensive National Cycle Network, with several of the designated trails developed on a cross-border basis (Kingfisher Cycle Route, Foyle Valley Cycle Route and the North West Trail). A range of short-distance, mostly circular cycle routes, supplement the NCN, many of which are within publically owned forest and country parks, such as the Castle Archdale Family Cycle Trail, Crom and Loughgall County Park. However, of the approximately 800 miles of the NCN in Northern Ireland, 106 miles are contained on off-road routes, while the majority of the network is on-road, albeit consisting of quiet country roads for the most part.<sup>34</sup> Of those greenways and routes that are traffic-free, with the exception of the Newry Canal Towpath (NCN Route 9), all are predominantly located in close proximity to urban settlements, including the Comber Greenway (NCN Route 93). It is evident in relation to the cities of Newry and Derry~Londonderry, given their border location, that the opportunity exists to link the existing greenway and off-road routes on a cross-border basis. Indeed, proposals are advancing to connect the Newry Canal Towpath with the Eastern Greenway emerging northwards from Dundalk. In the case of the latter, a community group is proposing the creation of a looped 97km greenway beginning and ending in Derry~Londonderry, but predominantly located in the Inishowen peninsula.<sup>35</sup> Several other proposed additions to the NCN in Northern Ireland will likely be developed over the coming years, including a route between Downpatrick and Warrenpoint skirting the northern fringes of the Mourne Mountains.

No greenways or off-road cycle routes currently advance through the heart of the Border region on an East-West axis; however, with best opportunities to progress such an initiative are arguably represented by the disused Ulster Canal towpath and the route of the former Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway (SLNCR) line. A 4km section of the Ulster Canal Greenway has already been completed in Monaghan town and proposals have been advanced in relation to extending this route along the canal

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<sup>34</sup> See <http://www.discovernorthernireland.com/downloads/cycleNI.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> See the Facebook campaign page of the Wee Greenway Initiative: <https://www.facebook.com/InishowenGreenway>.



towpath towards Clones and northwards towards the border with County Armagh.<sup>36</sup> An SLNCR Railtrail Working Group has also been established to promote the creation of a greenway along that particular route, and it is understood that discussions have taken place with landowners and potential sponsors.

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*36 A 77km Ulster Canal Cycle Trail already exists between Maghery in County Armagh and Clones in County Mongahan, although this route does not utilise the towpath of the old canal. Further details on the progress of the Ulster Canal Greenway can be found here: <http://www.monaghan.ie/en/services/communitydevelopment/smartertravel/ulstercanalgreenway>.*

## SECTION 8.0

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# EXISTING AND POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

The list of existing and potential funding sources identified below is not exhaustive and is simply intended to introduce a number of organisations that have previously funded greenway and cycle route developments on the island of Ireland. In addition, several funding programmes are also noted that can potentially support such projects in the immediate future.

## Section 8.1 Ireland

- *Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport under the National Cycle Network Programme;*
- *National Roads Authority;*
- *Fáilte Ireland under the Tourism Capital Investment Programme (note that this programme is currently closed to further applications);*
- *Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government under the LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020; and*
- *Local authorities own resources.*

## Section 8.2 Northern Ireland

- *Department for Regional Development;*
- *Department for Social Development;*
- *Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Rural Development Programme 2014-2020;*
- *Lottery funding – Big Lottery Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund;*
- *Other funders such as ENTRUST under the Landfill Communities Fund; and*
- *Local authorities own resources.*

## Section 8.3 Cross-border

- *Special EU programmes Body under the proposed INTERREG V (Sustainable Transport theme) and PEACE IV (Shared Spaces and Services) programmes;*

## SECTION 9.0

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## SECTION 10

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### USEFUL WEBSITES

<a href="http://www.communitygreenway.co.uk">www.communitygreenway.co.uk</a>	Connswater Community Greenway
<a href="http://www.cycleni.com">www.cycleni.com</a>	CycleNI
<a href="http://www.cyclingireland.ie">www.cyclingireland.ie</a>	Cycling Ireland
<a href="http://www.cyclingulster.com">www.cyclingulster.com</a>	Cycling Ulster
<a href="http://www.deisegreenway.com">www.deisegreenway.com</a>	Deise Greenway
<a href="http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/cycling-unit.htm">www.drdni.gov.uk/index/cycling-unit.htm</a>	DRD Cycling Unit
<a href="http://www.eurovelo.org">www.eurovelo.org</a>	EuroVelo
<a href="http://www.aevv-egwa.org">www.aevv-egwa.org</a>	European Greenways Association
<a href="http://www.ecf.com">www.ecf.com</a>	European Cyclists Federation
<a href="http://www.southerntrail.net">www.southerntrail.net</a>	Great Southern Trail
<a href="http://www.greenway.ie">www.greenway.ie</a>	Great Western Greenway
<a href="http://www.irishgreenways.com">www.irishgreenways.com</a>	Irish Greenways
<a href="http://www.cyclemanual.ie">www.cyclemanual.ie</a>	National Cycle Manual
<a href="http://www.nra.ie">www.nra.ie</a>	National Roads Authority
<a href="http://www.irishtrails.ie">www.irishtrails.ie</a>	National Trails Office
<a href="http://nigreenways.wordpress.com/">http://nigreenways.wordpress.com/</a>	Northern Ireland Greenways
<a href="http://www.sustrans.org.uk/northern-ireland">www.sustrans.org.uk/northern-ireland</a>	Sustrans in Northern Ireland
<a href="http://www.cyclist.ie">www.cyclist.ie</a>	The Irish Cycling Advocacy Network
<a href="http://ulstercanalgreenway.com">http://ulstercanalgreenway.com</a>	Ulster Canal Greenway

# APPENDIX A

The proposed National Cycle Network in Ireland (Source: NRA, 2010, p.12)

## Legend

### Town Populations (2006)

#### Population of 10,000 or greater

- Within 5 km
- Within 10 km

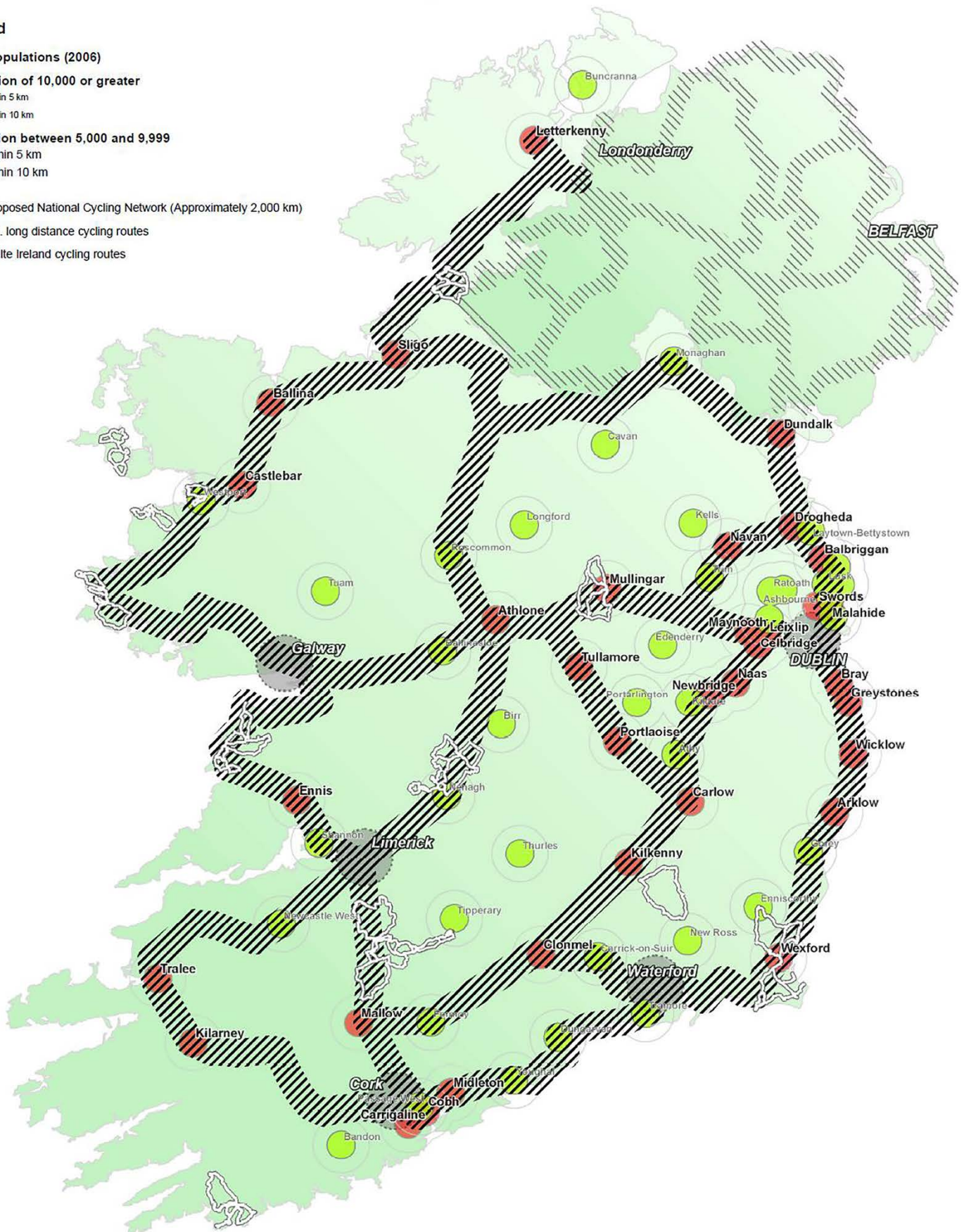
#### Population between 5,000 and 9,999

- Within 5 km
- Within 10 km

Proposed National Cycling Network (Approximately 2,000 km)

N.I. long distance cycling routes

Fáilte Ireland cycling routes



## APPENDIX B

County development plan policies relating to cycling and the development of greenways and cycle routes in the Border counties of Ireland

Local authority plan	Policies relating to greenways/cycle routes and cycling
<p>Cavan County Development Plan 2014-2020</p>	<p>Policy EPO12 Provision of Greenways, Walkways &amp; Cycleways in order to reduce greenhouse emissions.</p> <p>Policy EPO19 Reduce the production of Greenhouse Gases through the provision of Greenways, Walkways &amp; Cycleways.</p> <p>Policy CSP6 To promote the integration of land use and transportation policies, to prioritise cycling and walking, as sustainable modes of travel and strengthen public transport provision.</p> <p><b>Policy EDP4</b> To support the development of on-farm tourism enterprises including the provision of tourism facilities such as the renovation of farm buildings for tourism purposes, and the development of walking, cycling, angling, pony trekking and bird watching, subject to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. Proposed developments shall not adversely affect protected habitats and species.</p> <p>Policy PIO61 To promote and facilitate the development of cycling and walking facilities and routes in the County as they contribute to individual health and well-being, create a healthier population and promote more active lifestyles.</p>

**Policy PIO62**

To encourage the provision of secure bicycle parking facilities in towns, at Neighbourhood centres, at public facilities such as schools, libraries and in all new Developments - refer to car and bicycle parking standards.

**Policy PIO64**

Promote awareness of the health benefits of walking and cycling;

**Policy PIO65**

Facilitate the development of walking and cycling related tourism in Cavan.

**Policy PIO67**

Reduce traffic volumes and speeds where pedestrian and cyclist volumes are high.

**Policy PIO68**

Encourage and promote the modal shift from the private car to other modes of travel such as public transport, cycling and walking.

**Policy PIO69**

To protect and retain the existing railway corridors in the County for the development of greenways as a walking and cycling amenity and to develop and promote Walking & Cycling Amenities (Greenways) on the sections of the following routes through County Cavan:

- NCN Cavan Leitrim Greenway extending from Belturbet, County Cavan to Mohill, County Leitrim via Ballyconnell and Ballinamore primarily along the route of the Cavan – Leitrim Railway.
- NCN Boyne Valley to Lakelands County Greenway and associated looped Kingscourt Greenway through Dún na Rí Forest Park.
- NCN SLNCR (The Sligo Leitrim North Counties Railway Greenway) from Enniskillen, County Fermanagh to Collooney County Sligo and onwards to Sligo town which extends via Blacklion, County Cavan.

- NCN Cavan Lakelands Cycle Loop extending from Cavan Town to Killashandra Village via Killykeen Forest Park.

Policy NHEP25

To encourage physical activity and improved health and well-being by providing green spaces for walking and cycling and by providing attractive and safe routes linking key green space sites, parks and open spaces and heritage assets where feasible and appropriate and resist development that would damage, degrade, fragment or prejudice the green infrastructure network.

Objective RTO3

To recognise the importance of walking and cycling routes and other countryside recreational opportunities, promote their development and ensure their protection, maintenance and where feasible improvement.

**Objective RTO10**

To ensure the protection of and co-ordinate the continuing development of strategic walking routes, trails and other countryside recreational opportunities.

**Objective RTO17**

To investigate and facilitate, subject to resources, the re-use of railways lines for amenity and recreational purposes, and encourage their development as accessible walking and cycling routes

**Objective RTO18**

Protect established walking and cycling routes and keep free from development which would adversely impact upon them and their use as walking and cycling routes.

**Objective RTO19**

Encourage and support the enhancement and extension of existing walking and cycling routes, by utilising links from residential areas, parks, open spaces and existing or new public rights of way to facilitate the creation of a secure, safe green network, to provide access to scenic, mountain, lakeshore and river features and views of special interest.

	<p>To support, promote and encourage the development of walking and cycling routes, in conjunction with the Irish Sports Council, IW and Fáilte Ireland, which provide linkages with trails, particularly those with historical associations, in adjoining counties including cross border counties in partnership with their councils, the state, private and voluntary sectors.</p> <p><b>Objective RTO20</b></p> <p>To promote Walking and Cycling by securing the development of a network of safe cycle routes and footpaths on existing roads and on new road improvement schemes and on routes reserved exclusively for pedestrians and cyclists. To provide, improve and extend the network of cycle lanes and pedestrian routes on existing roads, on all new regional, local distributor and local collector roads and on roads being up-graded, to create a safer, more convenient and more user-friendly environment.</p> <p><b>Objective RTO22</b></p> <p>To ensure that in the preparation of walking/cycling strategy for the County, potential effects (both positive and negative) on the environment should be taken into account for potential cumulative effects.</p>
<p>Draft Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021</p>	<p>Policy RES 15</p> <p>To require that master plans and planning applications for residential developments identify where appropriate, pedestrian and cycle paths within the site and externally to adjoining residential areas, existing services and community facilities.</p> <p>Policy EDE 21</p> <p>To promote and facilitate the development of cycle routes in accordance with <i>The National Cycle Network Scoping Study 2010</i>.</p> <p>Policy EDE 22</p> <p>To protect the integrity and scenic quality of existing and future walking and cycling routes and their setting.</p> <p>Policy EDE 23</p> <p>To work in conjunction with adjoining authorities to extend and design new walking and cycling routes, including extending the Brú na Boinne Greenway from Drogheda to Mornington. Ensure all proposals include appraisal of environmental impacts and</p>



take full account of the potential for negative impacts on Natura 2000 Sites through the process of Habitats Directive Assessment Screening.

Policy TC 2

To support the implementation of government transport policy as expressed in Transport 21, A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 -2020, Spatial Planning and National Roads–Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012, National Cycle Policy Framework 2009, Smarter Travel and other relevant policy documents which may evolve during the course of the plan.

Policy TC 3

To promote land use planning measures which aim for coordination and integration between land use and transport throughout the county, thereby maximising the potential of the county’s transportation network and encouraging travel by public transport, walking and cycling.

Policy TC 5

To promote, in collaboration with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and other relevant agencies and organisations, the expansion of the network of walking and cycling routes throughout the county.

Policy TC 20

To provide where possible, traffic free pedestrian and cyclist routes especially where they would facilitate more direct, safer and pleasant alternative routes to those of the private car.

Policy TC 21

To incorporate, where feasible, provision for cycle and pedestrian paths within new road proposals and improvement schemes.

Policy TC 22

To promote the development of cycling by the provision of cycle routes in both rural and urban areas.

	<p>Policy TC 23</p> <p>To investigate the possibility of developing additional linear cycle routes utilizing existing natural or manmade corridors such as riversides and abandoned road and rail infrastructure.</p> <p>Policy TC 24</p> <p>To encourage the provision of secure bicycle parking facilities in towns, villages and at public facilities such as schools, libraries and in all new developments.</p> <p>Policy TC 25</p> <p>To continue to engage with and pursue funding opportunities offered through the National Cycle Network scheme, the Active Travel Towns Scheme or other similar funding streams that may become available over the course of the plan.</p> <p>Policy TC 28</p> <p>To support the Green Schools Programme across the County through the provision of dedicated walking and cycling infrastructure in close proximity to schools, subject to the availability of funding.</p> <p>Policy TC 31</p> <p>To encourage a modal shift from use of the private car towards more sustainable modes such as public transport, cycling and walking.</p>
<p>Draft Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2021</p>	<p>Policy 1</p> <p>It is the policy of the Council to:</p> <p>a) Focus on packaging and selling Leitrim’s tourism assets, working collaboratively with the private sector to develop Leitrim as a destination, build Leitrim’s brand, product/service portfolio, and promote and market Leitrim around the destination concept;</p> <p>b) Forge strategic and operational partnerships in tourism planning, marketing and promotion with surrounding Counties in the North West and Northern Ireland such as the Wild Atlantic Way; North West Linear Park; Kingfisher Cycle Route; and tourism developments through the Border Uplands Project and Harnessing Natural Resources;</p>

Policy 44

It is the policy of the Council to support the National Policy document Smarter Travel; A Sustainable Transport Future and implement, where feasible, guidance provided within the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets or any updated versions of these documents issued within the lifetime of the Plan.

In accordance with the principles of sustainable development, the basis of the Council's transportation policies will be to:

2. encourage walking and cycling as a recreational activity and a healthy exercise;

Policy 46

It is the policy of the Council to encourage safe walking and cycling by providing linear parks, footpaths, cycle paths and public lighting in towns and villages.

Objective 25

It is an objective of the Council to complete the design and progress to construction the provision of a walking/cycle way along the old Sligo to Enniskillen railway line in co-operation with Sligo and Cavan County Councils.

**Objective 26**

It is an objective of the Council to complete the design and progress to construction the provision of a walking/cycle way along the narrow gauge Railway from Dromod to Mohill and Ballinamore, and also along the former narrow gauge Railway route from Ballinamore towards Belturbet, in order to continue to secure this route, pending the re-introduction of rail line and services [ such as a tourist / heritage train] along this former line.

**Objective 27**

It is an objective of the Council to develop the National Cycle Network Corridors within the county – Corridor 1 (Sligo to Dundalk) and Corridor 11 (Limerick to Carrick-on-Shannon).

**Objective 28**

It is an objective of the Council to develop a National Cycle Network Corridor from Carrick-on-Shannon to Mullingar.

	<p><b>Objective 29</b></p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to seek opportunities for the development of suitable walking routes, cycle tracks and bridle paths along redundant railway lines and other suitable locations such as; along waterways and historical access routes.</p> <p>Policy 113</p> <p>It is the policy of the Council to co-operate with representative bodies to support the improvement and development of cycling routes throughout the County in an environmentally-sustainable manner.</p> <p><b>Objective 115</b></p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to maintain and signpost cycle routes.</p>
<p>County Donegal Development Plan 2012-2018</p>	<p>Policy T-P-30</p> <p>It is a policy of the Council to protect established/historic railway corridors throughout the County primarily for strategic infrastructure provision (such as rail/road projects) and secondly for recreational development. Along these corridors other uses shall not be considered. Where these corridors have already been compromised by development, adjacent lands which could provide opportunities to bypass such an impediment and reconnect these routes for amenity purposes (walking/cycling) shall be protected for this purpose. However, in all instances, the over-riding objective shall be the provision of strategic infrastructure.</p> <p>Policy T-P-36</p> <p>It is a policy of the Council to ensure that development proposals protect the route of potential linkages (such as linear parks, roads, footpaths, trails, cycleways) through the subject site where the planning authority considers that a strategic opportunity exists to provide a linkage to or between adjoining areas.</p> <p><b>Policy T-P-38</b></p> <p>It is a policy of the Council to ensure that large scale development proposals provide walking and cycling infrastructure.</p>

	<p>Policy T-P-40</p> <p>It is a policy of the Council to encourage and facilitate joined up long distance walking and cycling routes for recreation and as alternatives to the car, particularly in rural areas, between settlements.</p> <p><b>Policy T-P-41</b></p> <p>It is a policy of the Council to support and facilitate the maintenance, enhancement and expansion of the National Cycle Network.</p> <p>Policy TOU-O-8</p> <p>To recognise the importance of walking routes and cycleways and to preserve public rights of way which give access to the seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility in the County, including those listed in Chapter 10 of the Plan.</p> <p>Policy TOU-O-9</p> <p>To work with relevant cross border bodies in Northern Ireland and neighbouring Counties to promote and develop the tourism sector in the County in a sensitive and sustainable manner.</p> <p>Policy CCG-P-13</p> <p>It is a policy of the Council to ensure that relevant development proposals have appropriate regard for walking and cycling which will promote physical activity and reduce car use.</p> <p>Policy CCG-P-18</p> <p>It is a policy of the Council to protect and promote greenways and linear parks to facilitate the spread of parkland into urban areas at appropriate and strategic locations.</p>
<p>Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017</p>	<p><b>Policy SG-5</b></p> <p>c. Integrate the public transportation system with a quality bus and rail service, alongside the promotion of cycle and pedestrian facilities within and adjacent to existing settlements.</p>

Policy P-AGD-7

Facilitate the development of niche activities, such as those relating to food (particularly value-added products), forestry (e.g. wood products), crafts, eco-tourism and agri-tourism – e.g. farmhouse accommodation, pet farms, farm holidays, health farms, equestrian activities, bird-watching holidays, painting/photography tuition, angling tourism, field studies and hill-walking. Other pursuits that will be facilitate are: walking, cycling, mountain and other off-road biking, nature trails, wildlife trails, maritime trails, back-packing, orienteering, paragliding and hang-gliding, canoeing and kayaking, caving, mountaineering, rock climbing, adventure sports, swimming in waterways, wild camping, pony trekking, boating and archaeological guided walks.

Policy P-TOU-7

Promote walking, rambling and cycling as appropriate recreational and tourism activities within the Plan area.

Policy P-SRO-12

Where feasible, develop walkways/cycleways between coastal sites and green space in built-up areas.

Policy SP-MOB-2

Support the creation of an integrated and environmentally-sound transport system, in particular with regard to accessibility and choice of transport, with a quality intercity bus and rail service, alongside the promotion of cycle facilities and pedestrian movements.

**Objective SO-MOB-1**

Implement the relevant policies in relation to sustainable transport and in particular the Department of Transport's policy document Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future, A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009–2020.

**Objective SO-MOB-2**

Develop a strategy to promote and facilitate greater use of sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling, in line with the Department of Transport's Smarter Travel, Cycle and Walking Strategies.

Policy P-CW-1

Promote walking and cycling as sustainable transport modes and healthy recreational activities.

**Policy P-CW-2**

Promote cycling as a viable commuting mode of transport.

**Policy P-CW-3**

Require that all new developments are designed to integrate into a cycling network linking with adjoining development areas and schools, and provide cycle and pedestrian-friendly development layouts, infrastructure and facilities.

**Policy P-CW-4**

Consider the use of off-road routes, such as disused railway lines and bridle paths, for both walking and cycling to improve access to rural tourist attractions.

**Policy P-CW-5**

Protect and promote Greenways and consider designating them as public rights of way.

**Policy P-CW-6**

A number of long-distance walking routes exist throughout the county. These long distance walks, together with local walks, provide important access networks. This is an important recreational resource whose integrity should be protected. The impact of any proposed development on these routes should be taken into account when considering applications for permission for developments in their vicinity.

Objective O-CW-1

Provide, improve and extend cycle and pedestrian routes on existing roads, proposed roads, roads being upgraded and green corridors (including river corridors), where feasible and practical, subject to compliance with Habitats Directive.

**Objective O-CW-2**

Develop cycle routes from Strandhill, Rosses Point, Ballysadare and Collooney to Sligo City subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

	<p><b>Objective O-CW-3</b> Plan and make provision for the safe and efficient movement of cyclists and pedestrians in and around built-up areas.</p> <p><b>Objective O-CW-4</b> Make provision for the integration of pedestrian and cycle facilities (i.e. bicycle parking) at public transportation nodes and village/town centres.</p> <p><b>Objective O-CW-5</b> Implement the relevant policies of the Department of Transport’s National Cycle Policy Framework and support the provision of a national cycle network.</p> <p><b>Objective O-CW-8</b> Provide appropriate facilities for pedestrians and for people with special mobility needs.</p> <p><b>Objective O-CW-9</b> Prepare a Transport Plan for Sligo to include all modes of transport, in line with the Department of Transport’s guidelines, when published.</p> <p><b>Objective O-CW-10</b> Support the development of a footway and cycleway (greenway) alongside the disused railway line from Claremorris to Collooney, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive, insofar as such route does not compromise the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor.</p>
<p>Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019</p>	<p><b>Objective TRO 5</b> Promote and facilitate the use of cycling and walking as alternative sustainable modes of transport.</p> <p><b>Objective RNO 7</b> Provide for cycle lanes and footpaths along the roads network where appropriate.</p> <p><b>Objective URO 5</b> Identify and develop safe cycle lanes within the towns of Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones and Ballybay where possible during the lifetime of the plan.</p>



**Objective CWO 1**

Ensure that all plans and projects relating to the provision of cycling and walking facilities are subject to policies AAP1-AAP5 contained within Chapter 4, Environment and Heritage, of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019.

**Objective CWO 2**

Support, promote and facilitate walking and cycling as alternative modes of transport in appropriate locations throughout the county.

**Objective CWO 3**

Develop a walking and cycling strategy for the County during the lifetime of the plan.

**Objective CWO 4**

Support, promote and encourage the development and maintenance of looped walks, and long and medium distance walking and cycling routes (including long and medium distance trails) throughout the county in line with the Government's Smarter Travel Policy, particularly those which have cultural or historic association, which provide linkages with trails to existing established national, and local and cross border walking/cycling routes.

**Objective CWO 6**

Identify safe and convenient walking and cycle routes in urban areas and between the main towns and villages in the county, and provide signage and ancillary facilities at appropriate locations to promote their use, during the lifetime of the plan.

**Policy TOO 4**

Support sustainable agri-tourism in the form of on-farm visitor accommodation and supplementary activities such as health farms, heritage and nature trails, off road routes for walking and cycling, pony trekking and boating; ensuring that all built elements are appropriately designed and satisfactorily assimilated into the landscape.

## APPENDIX C

Policies within the *Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015* relating to cycling and the development of greenways and cycle routes within the area

Local authority plan	References to greenways/cycle routes and cycling
<p>Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015</p>	<p>Plan Objectives</p> <p>To facilitate integration between land use and transportation in order to reduce congestion and the need for car journeys and to encourage a shift to more sustainable modes of transport, particularly walking, cycling and public transport;</p> <p><b>Walking and Cycling</b></p> <p>Most journeys involve some walking and in urban areas, walking is an important alternative to the car. Cycling is an economical, environmentally friendly and healthy means of transport that can provide a realistic alternative to the car for short journeys.</p> <p>The Plan provides for the enhancement of walking and cycling networks through the Key Site Requirements for many of the zonings and development opportunity sites in Volumes 2 and 3 of the Plan.</p> <p>National Cycle Network routes 9 and 93 pass through the Plan Area and Sustrans intend to extend and improve these routes.</p> <p>The SRTP makes further provision for walking and cycling within the Plan Area, such as greater priority for pedestrians on local roads, Quality Walking Routes / Networks and development of the existing cycle network. The SRTP also targets improved integration between walking and cycling and public transport through better links to stations and stops and the provision of cycle stands.</p> <p>Disused Transport Routes PPS 3 – Access, Movement and Parking contains regional planning policy in relation to the protection of disused transport routes, which is to prevent development that would prejudice their future reuse for transport or recreational purposes. The Plan Area contains a number of disused rail and tramway track beds and the disused Newry Canal. Those sections of route with potential for future use are identified in Volumes 2 and 3 of the Plan. The potential of these for the provision of road lines, public transport routes, cycle or walking routes will be assessed during the Plan period.</p>



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