

AtkinsRéalis



Appropriate Assessment

Westmeath County Council

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ATHLONE ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEMES BUNDLE

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1. Introduction

AtkinsRéalis was commissioned by Westmeath County Council to prepare an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report for Route F of the Athlone Active Travel Schemes Bundle.

1.1 Background

The project is located in Athlone, a town on the border of counties Roscommon and Westmeath. It is situated to the south of Lough Ree. In total there is approximately 15.8 km of active travel planned for Athlone. The scheme extents and routes are identified in Figure 1-1. The 15.8 km identified has been divided into 6 separate routes, these routes are as follows:

- Route A [2.8 km] - Elliott Rd/Grace Rd/Old Galway Rd to Roscommon County Boundary at Baylough (R446) and Roscommon Rd (T914).
 - Route A1 [2.3 km] - Tesco Express in Baylough to Luan Gallery and St. Peter and Paul church (R446).
 - Route A2 [0.5 km] - Junction of the Old Galway Road (R446) and Roscommon Road (R914) to the Roscommon County boundary (R914).
- Route B [2.7 km] - Creggan Roundabout to Town Centre (R446).
- Route B2 [0.7km] - Town Centre (R446/R915) to Ankers Bower Roundabout. (Subject to approval and funding)
- Route C [2.6km] - Coosan National School to Town Centre (L1478/L4005).
- Route D [2.2km] - Cornamaddy Roundabout to Town Centre (N55/R915).
- Route E [2.5km] - Garrycastle Roundabout via Retreat Road to Town Centre (L4006/L4008).
- **Route F [2.3km] - Cornamaddy Roundabout to Wash House Turn Roundabout (R916).**

The subject of this assessment is Route F of the Athlone Active Travel Schemes Bundle, hereafter referred to as the proposed scheme. Figure 1-2 below illustrates the alignment of the routes.



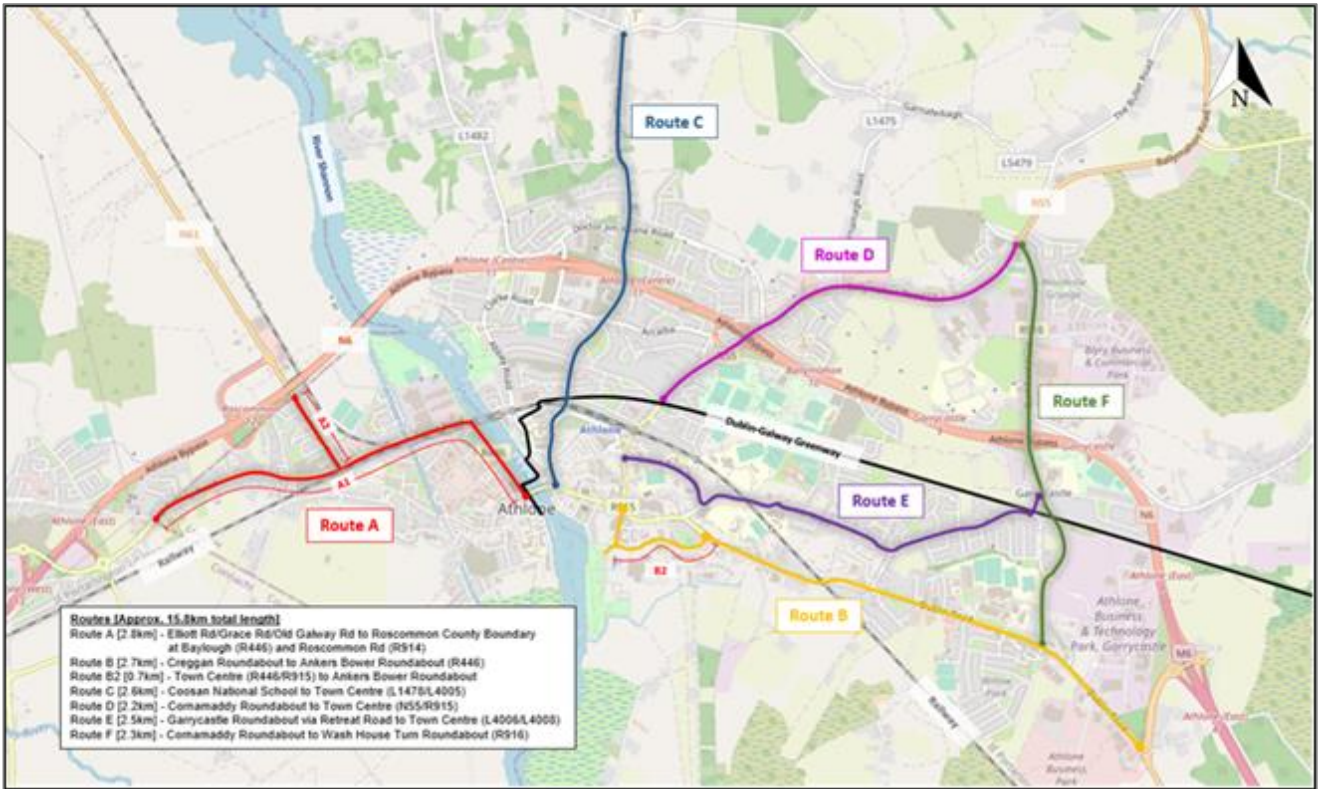


Figure 1-1 - Location of the Athlone Active Travel Schemes Bundle

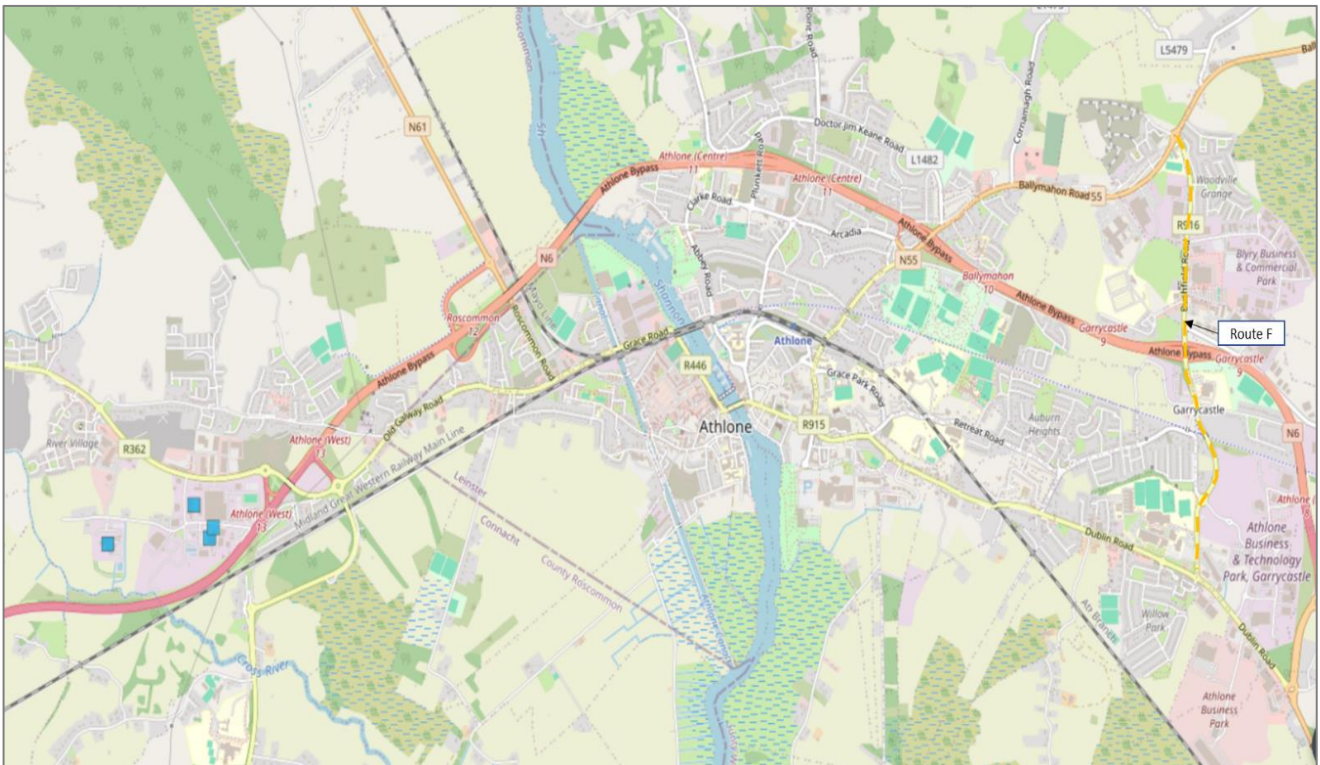


Figure 1-2 - Location and Alignment of F (shown as an orange dashed line)



1.2 Description of the Proposed Scheme

Route F, approximately 2.3km in length commences from Cornamaddy Roundabout to Wash House Turn Roundabout (R916). Due to changes in the characteristics of the corridor, such as road width, presence of turning bays, presence of active travel facilities etc, Route F has been divided into three segments along with two major junctions, as shown in Figure 1-3.

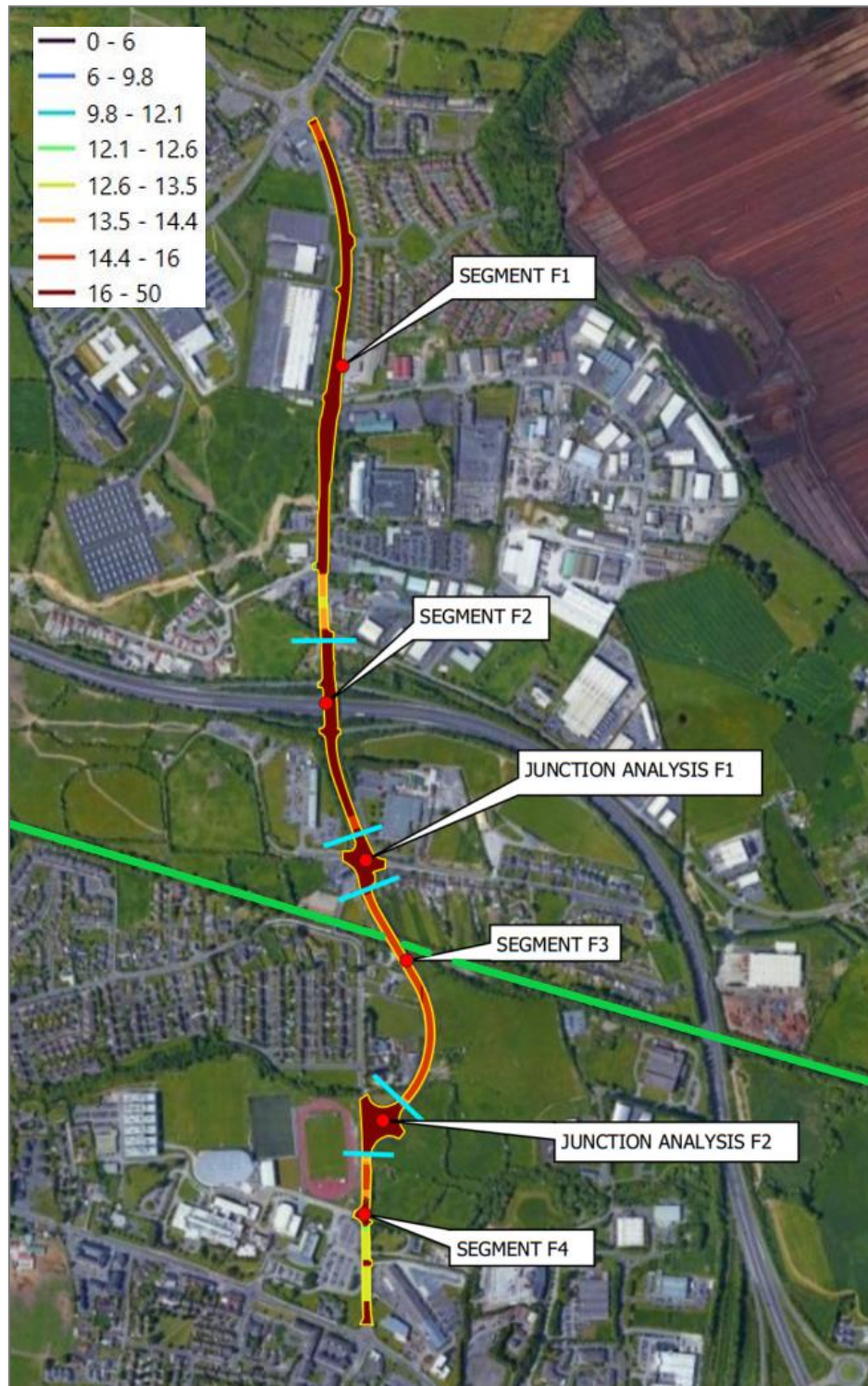


Figure 1-3 – Route F Segments

1.2.1 Segment F1: Cornamaddy Roundabout to Moydrum Road Junction

Segment F1 extends from Cornamaddy Roundabout to Moydrum Road Junction along Bushfield Road (R916), approximately 950m in length. This segment contains one vehicular lane in each direction and footpaths on both sides of the carriageway. On the western side, the footpath is approximately 1.7m-2.3m wide and on the eastern side is approximately 1.7m-2.5m wide. There is an existing cycleway facility in form of a One-Way Mandatory Cycle Lane (approx. 1m wide).

There is no on-street parking present along this segment, but vehicles parked within the hard shoulder have been observed adjacent to the National Learning Network Blyry. There is approximately 145m long vehicle drop-off bay (both sides) located outside the Cornamaddy school entrance.

There are a total of six junctions located along this segment. There is one dedicated pedestrian crossing (zebra, with belisha beacons) located outside the Cornamaddy school entrance and one signal-controlled crossing located on the Moydrum Road Junction.

There are two bus services running along the segment, which are A2 and 819, as well as two bus stops located for northbound users and two bus stops for southbound users along this segment. The speed limit along the segment is 50km/h. The segment typical cross-sectional width varies from 12.6m-16.0m in width. (Note all measurements outlined have been taken from boundary wall to boundary wall encapsulating footpaths and trafficked carriageways).

1.2.2 Segment F2: Moydrum Road Junction to Altown Garrycastle Roundabout

Segment F2 extends from Moydrum Road Junction to Altown Garrycastle Roundabout along Bushfield Road (R916), approximately 390m in length. This segment contains max. two vehicular lanes in each direction and footpaths on both sides of the carriageway.

On the western side, the footpath is approximately 1.7m-2.3m wide and on the eastern side is approximately 1.7m-2.5m wide. There is an existing cycle facility in form of a two-way cycle track (approx. 2.5m wide) located along this segment. The road along this segment links to N6 dual carriageway with a grade separated junction arrangement containing a 4-lane vehicular bridge along with a separate cycle/pedestrian bridge over the N6 dual carriageway adjacent to the vehicular overbridge.

There is no on-street parking area present along this segment. There is in total two junctions located along the segment. There is one controlled crossing north of the N6 Junction 9 and one uncontrolled crossing near the Altown Garrycastle Roundabout along this segment. There are two bus services running along the segment, which are A2 and 819 with one bus stop located for the northbound commuters and two bus stops for southbound commuters along this segment. The speed limit along the segment is 50km/h. The segment's typical cross-sectional varies in width from 13.5m-16.0m. (Note all measurements outlined have been taken from boundary wall to boundary wall encapsulating footpaths and trafficked carriageways).

1.2.3 Segment F3: Altown Garrycastle Roundabout to Garrycastle Roundabout

Segment F3 extends from Altown Garrycastle Roundabout to Garrycastle Roundabout along Garrycastle Road (R916), approximately 480m in length. This segment contains one vehicular lane in each direction and footpaths on both sides (approx. 1.6m-1.8m both sides) of the carriageway.



There is an existing cycleway facility in the form of One-Way Cycle tracks (approx. 1.2m-1.4 wide) located along both sides of the entire segment. There is neither on-street parking nor any junctions present along this segment. There are two uncontrolled crossings located at the start and the end of this segment. There are two bus services running along the segment, which are A2 & 819 service but no bus stops located within the segment. The speed limit is 50km/h. The segment typical cross-sectional varies in width from 14.4m-16.0m. (Note all measurements outlined have been taken from boundary wall to boundary wall encapsulating footpaths and trafficked carriageways).

1.2.4 Segment F4: Garrycastle Roundabout to Wash House Turn Roundabout

Segment F4 extends from Garrycastle Roundabout to Wash House Turn Roundabout along University Road (R916), approximately 360m in length. This segment contains one vehicular lane in each direction and footpaths on both sides of the carriageway.

On the western side the footpath is approximately 1.4m-1.7m wide and on the remaining eastern side is approximately 1.7m-2.8m wide. There is an existing cycle facility in form of One-Way Cycle Lane on both sides (approx. 1.6m-1.8m wide) that starts from the Garrycastle Roundabout.

There is no on-street parking area present along this segment. There is a total of four junctions located along the segment. There is one dedicated pedestrian crossing (pelican crossing with belisha beacons) located in the middle of this segment. There is one bus service running along the segment, which is the 819 services as well as one bus stop located for the northbound commuters. The speed limit along the segment is 50km/h. The segment typical cross-sectional varies in width from 12.6m-16.0m. (Note all measurements outlined have been taken from boundary wall to boundary wall encapsulating footpaths and trafficked carriageways).

An overview of the Route F (all the segments) is shown in Appendix A.



1.3 Construction Methodology

The Construction period for the proposed scheme is anticipated to be 12 months and can be summarised as follows;

1.3.1 Cycle path Construction

Works will commence with the clearance and off-site removal of redundant road signage, boundary treatment, road surface materials and topsoil. The works will be undertaken using a combination of operatives using hand tools, mechanical excavators and dumper trucks. To facilitate the main works, underground utilities which conflict with the main works will be uncovered using mechanical excavators and hand digging where appropriate. The need for significant utility diversions is not envisaged as part of the works; instead a 'lower and protect' approach will be favoured. This is likely to be restricted to locations where the walking and cycling facilities cross or interface with public roads.

Following the diversion of utilities, the initial pavement and cycle track construction phase will be undertaken. This will include the excavation and removal of the existing stone, soil, concrete and bitumen materials along the route followed by the installation of new path and track base materials. Excavations will be largely undertaken by mechanical means, with any spoil arising to be removed off site or reused locally where testing confirms its suitability. The proposed scheme involves an anticipated maximum excavation depth of 500mm below ground level to facilitate the base layers for the proposed footpaths / pavements and the ducting for the signalling associated with the scheme. The base layers of the pavement and track are to be made of compacted stone materials.

The works will also involve constructing the civil engineering elements required to facilitate the commissioning of the traffic signals and the public lighting elements at the latter stages of construction. Service chambers and underground duct sets will be laid within trenches and backfilled with granular material. Signal poles and public lighting columns will be erected, and ducting connections will be made to the base of each pole unit. Following completion of the lighting elements, the final pavement surface course will be laid using an asphalt paving machine followed by compaction using a vibrating roller.

1.3.2 Road Resurfacing

The scheme also involves the resurfacing of the roadways and painting of new road markings within the scheme footprint. The existing road surface course layer will be planed-out throughout the entire scheme extents with planings being removed off site. The planed-out area will be replaced with Hot Rolled Asphalt (HRA) or Stone Mastic Asphalt (SMA) surface course ca. 40mm - 60mm thick. Additional to this, and where required, additional bituminous layers may be replaced in localised areas where there is evidence of pavement failure. It is not envisaged that the foundations layers (i.e. sub-base or capping) will require replacement. Following road resurfacing new road markings will be painted on road surfaces.

1.3.3 Footpath Construction

The construction of the cycleway will also involve relocation and installation of footpaths and kerbs adjacent to the cycleway. Footpaths will be constructed similar to the cycleway; excavation of existing footpath with materials removed off site to a licenced waste facility, excavations along footpath alignment to depths of maximum 500mm, infill of footpath subbase materials (compacted stone) and the pouring of concrete footpaths in shuttered sections. A ca. 60mm upstand insitu concrete kerb will also be installed along the footpath edge.



1.3.4 Drainage Alterations

Drainage works, which will run in tandem with the pavement construction phase, are considered to be minimal and restricted to areas where the scheme interfaces with the public road. The drainage works at these locations are limited to the relocation of existing road gullies with the larger existing road drainage infrastructure (i.e. carrier drains) not being altered or adjusted. During these works the main carrier drains will be isolated / blocked off from works activities / work zones to facilitate the relocation of drainage gullies.

Typically, drainage will be provided using new gullies (relocated to alongside the proposed kerb positions) connecting to the existing surface water drainage infrastructure / main carrier drain. The new footpaths and cycle tracks will generally slope towards the road in order to minimise the need for additional drainage collection measures specific for these facilities. Alternatively, and where the proposed scheme results in a marked increase in catchment area (due to an increased hard-standing area), sections of footway and/or cycle track will be constructed using either porous surfacing; or where appropriate, the cross-fall will fall towards an adjacent grass verge (thus not discharging into the surface water network).

1.3.5 Verge Reinstatement

For soft landscaping areas topsoil profiles will be graded to tie into the new pavement levels followed by grass seeding. The top soiling and seeding will be undertaken using a combination of mechanical excavator, tractor unit drawing a rotavator / rake / seed spreader and also operatives using hand tools for areas where machinery access is unavailable.

There will be no additional demolition works associated with this scheme.

1.3.6 Traffic Management

The construction of the cycleway will be carried out in short segments (ca.100-200m in length) on one side of the roadway at a time to allow for continued traffic flow and will progress along the roadways, as such individual work zones will be relatively small.

1.3.7 Junctions

All junctions along the scheme will be segregated. This will feature cyclists passing through the junction on their own cycle tracks with dedicated traffic signal phases which are separate to the vehicular phasing and separate to the pedestrian phasing (where applicable). The proposed junctions are to include kerb upstands throughout (except at crossing points), providing vertical segregation and thereby increasing protection to the cycle tracks.

1.3.8 Bridge Crossings

The scheme crosses 2 no. overbridges; Athlone Old Rail Trail Greenway & N6 Motorway. The route will use the existing bridge to cross the existing greenway and N6 Motorway.

1.3.9 Site Compound

It will be the responsibility of the Contractor to determine a suitable location for the site compound within the proposed development area, but away from any identified environmental sensitive receptors (watercourses, designated sites etc). The final proposed site compound location will not be located within 25m of the River Shannon. It is planned that existing Local Authority (Westmeath County Council) controlled material storage



yards in the locality, currently used for the storage of inert materials, will be utilised during the construction phase to store similarly inert materials for incorporation in the proposed scheme. Materials will be brought to site on a periodic basis as required directly from suppliers. Parking for operatives will be at the main compound only. Operatives will be transported from the compound to the works area. No parking will be allowed within the temporary works area or on-street.



2. Scope of Study

The aim of this report is to provide supporting information to assist the competent authority, Westmeath County Council, to carry out an AA Screening determination with respect to the proposed scheme.

2.1 Legislative Context

2.1.1 Natura 2000

Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (*“the Habitats Directive”*) is a legislative instrument of the European Union (EU) which provides legal protection for habitats and species of Community interest. Article 2 of the Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of such habitats and species at a favourable conservation status, while Articles 3 to 9, inclusive, provide for the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of special areas of conservation (SACs), known as Natura 2000, which also includes special protection areas (SPAs) designated under Article 4 of Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (*“the Birds Directive”*). Both SACs and SPAs are commonly referred to as *“European sites”* or *“Natura 2000 sites”*.

SACs are selected for natural habitat types listed on Annex I to the Habitats Directive and the habitats of species listed on Annex II to the Habitats Directive. SPAs are selected for species listed on Annex I to the Birds Directive and other regularly occurring migratory species. The habitats and species for which a Natura 2000 site is selected are referred to as the *“qualifying interests”* of that site and each is assigned a *“conservation objective”* aimed at maintaining or restoring its *“favourable conservation condition”* at the site, which contributes to the maintenance or restoration of its *“favourable conservation status”* at national and European levels.

2.1.2 Appropriate Assessment

Article 6 of the Habitats Directive deals with the management and protection of Natura 2000 sites. Articles 6(3) and (4) set out the decision-making process, known as *“Appropriate Assessment”* (AA), for plans or projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites. Article 6(3) states: -

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”

The first sentence of Article 6(3) provides a basis for determining which plans and projects require AA, i.e. those *“not directly connected with or necessary to the management of [one or more Natura 2000 sites] but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects”*. In *Waddenzee* (C-127/02), the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled that significant effects must be considered *“likely”* if *“it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information”*, that they would occur. This clearly sets a low threshold, such that AA is required wherever there is a reasonable possibility of significant effects on a Natura 2000 site. In the same judgment, the CJEU established that the test of significance relates specifically to the conservation objectives of the site concerned, i.e. *“significant effects”* are those which, *“in the light, inter alia, of the characteristics and specific environmental conditions of the site”*, could undermine the site’s conservation objectives. In addition to the effects of the plan or project on its own, the combined effects arising from the plan or project under consideration and other plans and projects must also be assessed.



The last part of the first sentence of Article 6(3) defines AA as an assessment of the “*implications [of the plan or project] for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives*”. In the second sentence, Article 6(3) requires that, prior to agreeing to a plan or project, the competent authority must “*ascertain*” that “*it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned*”. In *Sweetman v. An Bord Pleanála* (C-258/11), the CJEU ruled that a plan or project “*will adversely affect the integrity of that site if it is liable to prevent the lasting preservation of the constitutive characteristics of the site that are connected to the presence of a priority natural habitat whose conservation was the objective justifying the designation of the site in the list of sites*”. On that basis, EC (2019) described the “*integrity of the site*” as “*the coherent sum of the site’s ecological structure, function and ecological processes, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitats, complex of habitats and/or populations of species for which the site is designated*”. As such, the “*integrity*” of a specific site is defined by its conservation objectives and is “*adversely affected*” when those objectives are undermined. In *Waddenzee*, the CJEU ruled that the absence of adverse effects can only be ascertained “*where no reasonable scientific doubt remains*”.

The “*precautionary principle*” applies to all of the legal tests in AA, i.e. in the absence of objective information to demonstrate otherwise, the worst-case scenario is assumed. Where the tests established by Article 6(3) cannot be satisfied, Article 6(4) applies (see explanation in Section 2.2 below).

2.1.3 Competent authority

The requirements of Articles 6(3) and (4) are transposed into Irish law by, inter alia, Part 5 of the European Communities (Birds and Natura Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (as amended) (“*the Habitats Regulations*”) and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) (“*the Planning and Development Acts*”). As per the second sentence of Article 6(3), it is the “*competent national authorities*” who are responsible for carrying out AA and, by extension, for determining which plans and projects require AA. The competent authority in each case is the authority responsible for consenting to or licensing a plan or project, e.g. local authorities, An Bord Pleanála, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) or a Government Minister. In all cases, it is the competent authority who is ultimately responsible for determining whether or not a plan or project requires AA and for carrying out the AA, where required.

2.2 Appropriate Assessment Process

The AA process can be described as being made up of three distinct stages, as described below, the need to progress to each stage being determined by the outcome of the preceding stage.

Stage 1: Screening – This stage involves a determination by the competent authority as to whether or not a given plan or project required AA. As explained in Section 2.1, AA is required in respect of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site, but for which the possibility of likely significant effects on one or more Natura 2000 sites cannot be excluded. The CJEU’s Judgment on *Eco Advocacy v. An Bord Pleanála* (C-721/21) and the Opinion of Advocate General Kokott in the same case set out the principles for identifying any aspects of a plan or project which may constitute what the CJEU termed in *People Over Wind* (C-323/17) “*measures intended to avoid or minimise harmful effects on a Natura 2000 site*” and, as such, cannot be taken into account in making an AA Screening determination. Consideration of the potential for in-combination effects is also required at this stage.

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment – This stage involves a detailed assessment of the implications of the plan or project, individually and in combination with other plans and projects, for the integrity of the Natura 2000 site(s) concerned. This stage also involves the development of appropriate mitigation to address any adverse effects and an assessment of the significance of any residual impacts following the inclusion of mitigation. In *Kelly v. An Bord Pleanála* (IEHC 400), the High Court ruled that a lawful AA must contain complete, precise and definitive findings based on examination and analysis, and conclusions and a final determination based on an evaluation of the findings. In the same judgment, the High Court stressed that, in order for the findings to be complete,



precise and definitive, the AA must be carried out in light of best scientific knowledge in the field and cannot have gaps or lacunae. In *Holohan v. An Bord Pleanála* (C-461/17), the CJEU clarified that AA must “*catalogue the entirety of habitat types and species for which a site is protected*” (i.e. the qualifying interests of the site) and assess the implications of the plan or project for the qualifying interests, both within and outside the site boundaries, and other, non-qualifying interest habitats and species, whether inside or outside the site boundaries, “*provided that those implications are liable to affect the conservation objectives of the site*”. The proposer of a plan or project requiring AA is furnishes the competent authority with the scientific evidence upon which to base its AA by way of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) or Natura Impact Report (NIR). If it is not possible to ascertain that the plan or project will not adversely affect one or more Natura 2000 sites, authorisation can only be granted subject to Article 6(4).

Stage 3: Article 6(4) – If a plan or project does not pass the legal test at Stage 2, alternative solutions to achieve its aims must be considered and themselves subject to Article 6(3). If no feasible alternatives exist, authorisation can only be granted where it can be demonstrated that there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) justifying its implementation. Where this is the case, all compensatory measures must be taken to protect the overall coherence of Natura 2000.

The three stages described above are illustrated in Figure 2-1 below.

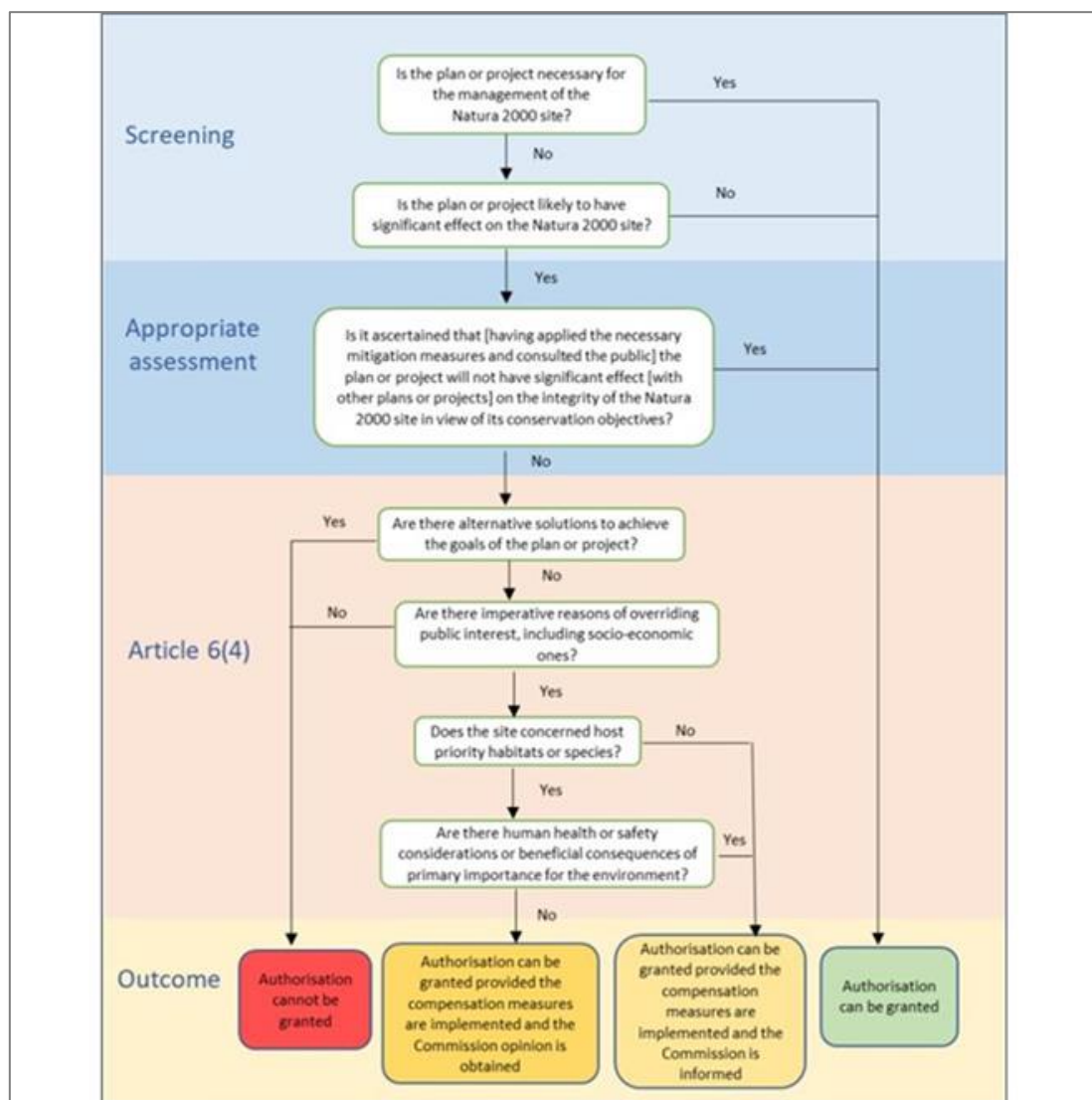


Figure 2-1 - Appropriate Assessment Process (Source: EC, 2021a)



3. Methodology

3.1 Sources of Guidance

This report was prepared with due regard to the relevant European and Irish legislation, case law and guidance, including but not limited to: -

- Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna. *Official Journal of the European Communities* L 206/7-50.
- Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds. *Official Journal of the European Union* L 20/7-25.
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011. *S.I. No. 77/2011* (as amended) (“the Habitats Regulations”).
- Planning and Development Act, 2000. *No. 30 of 2000* (as amended) (“the Planning and Development Acts”).
- Planning and Development Regulations, 2001. *S.I. No. 600/2001* (as amended) (“the Planning Regulations”).
- EC (2019). *Managing Natura 2000 sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. European Commission, Brussels. *Official Journal of the European Union* C 33/1-62.
- EC (2021a). *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. European Commission, Brussels. *Official Journal of the European Union* C 437/1-107.
- EC (2021b) *Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive*. *C(2021) 7301*. European Commission, Brussels.
- DG Env (2022) *Guidance document on assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – A summary*. Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission, Brussels. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
- DEHLG (2010a) *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Revised 11/02/2010*. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.
- DEHLG (2010b) *Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10. Dated 11/03/2010*. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.
- NPWS (2012) *Marine Natura Impact Statements in Irish Special Areas of Conservation. A Working Document. April 2012*. National Parks & Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dublin.
- NPWS (2021) *Guidance on the Strict Protection of Certain Animal and Plant Species under the Habitats Directive in Ireland. National Parks & Wildlife Service Guidance Series 1*, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Dublin.
- Mullen, E., Marnell, F. and Nelson, B. (2021) *Strict Protection of Animal Species – Guidance for Public authorities on the Application of Articles 12 and 16 of the EU Habitats Directive to development/works undertaken by or on behalf of a Public authority. National Parks & Wildlife Service Guidance Series 2*, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Dublin.



- OPR (2021) *Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*. OPR Practice Note PN01. Office of the Planning Regulator, Dublin.
- Case law, including *Waddenzee* (C-127/02), *Sweetman v. An Bord Pleanála* (C-258/11), *Kelly v. An Bord Pleanála* (IEHC 400), *Commission v. Germany* (C-142/16), *People Over Wind* (C-323/17), *Holohan v. An Bord Pleanála* (C-461/17), *Eoin Kelly v. An Bord Pleanála* (IEHC 84), *Heather Hill* (IEHC 450) and *Eco Advocacy v. An Bord Pleanála* (C-721/21).
- Sundseth, K. and Roth, P. (2014) *Article 6 of the Habitats Directive – Rulings of the European Court of Justice*. Ecosystems LTD (N2K Group), Brussels.

3.2 Desk Study

Baseline data regarding the receiving environment, including Natura 2000 sites, was gathered through a thorough desk study.

The boundaries of Natura 2000 sites were downloaded from *NPWS: Maps and Data* <<https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data>>. Information on sites, including their overall structures and functions, qualifying interests, conservation objectives and threats/pressures and activities therein, was found in the Site Synopsis, Natura 2000 Standard Data Form, Conservation Objectives and supporting documents for each site. Spatial data for site-specific conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites, and boundary data for other designated sites, such as Natural Heritage Areas, was also retrieved from *NPWS: Maps and Data*. Reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive (NPWS, 2019a-c; *Article 17 web tool*) and Article 12 of the Birds Directive (NPWS, 2024c; *Article 12 web tool*) provided further information on the habitats and species concerned at the national level.

Information relating to recent and historical records of species was obtained from the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) *Biodiversity Maps* <<https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Map>>, while data for other features of the natural environment, e.g. known occurrences of non-qualifying interest Annex I habitats and the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine's forest inventory, were viewed on the *Environmental Sensitivity Mapping (ESM) Webtool* <<https://airomaps.geohive.ie/ESM/>>.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) map viewer *EPA Maps (Water)* <<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/Water>> and spatial data for river, lake, canal, transitional and coastal waterbodies downloaded from the *EPA Geoportal* <<https://gis.epa.ie/GetData/Download>> was used to identify any hydrological connection between the proposed works and Natura 2000 sites or connected features. Satellite and aerial imagery from Google Earth, Bing Maps and Tailte Éireann as reviewed to identify hedgerows, treelines and other potential ecological features.

In order to inform the assessment of potential in-combination effects, planning applications from the surrounding area were reviewed using the National Planning Application Database, An Bord Pleanála's online map viewer and the EIA Portal.

Information from the aforementioned data sources was last accessed 14/03/2025.

3.3 Statement of Authority

The Screening for Appropriate Assessment report was prepared by Kevin Coogan, Daniel Blake and Colin Wilson. Owen O'Keefe provided peer review and support.

Kevin Coogan (AtkinsRéalis) has a BSc (Hons) in Zoology from University College Dublin. He has developed ecological surveying skills through country-wide small river sampling experience, as well as habitat evaluation experience in Spain and Ireland. He has volunteer experience in bird surveying on North Bull Island SPA and Ireland's Eye SPA. Kevin collated background information for this assessment.

Daniel Blake (AtkinsRéalis) has a degree in Wildlife Biology and has been working in the environmental consultancy sector for the past six years. He has worked in both large scale government infrastructure projects as well as domestic projects across the UK and Ireland conducting both environmental and ecological roles. Primarily conducting protected species surveys such as bats, badgers, birds, reptiles, small mammals and amphibians as well as invasive species surveys. He has also earned a Natural England licence for the survey of Great crested newt. He has been involved in habitat surveying and assisted in the writing of Appropriate Assessments, Preliminary ecological appraisals and protected species reports. Throughout his career he has acted as an ECoW for numerous sites to ensure environmental laws and practices are met. He has been involved in water and soil sampling surveys, levelling surveys and creation of hibernaculum. Daniel assisted with the collation of background information to inform this report.

Colin Wilson (AtkinsRéalis) has a BSc (Hons) in Environmental Science and is a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM). He has over 16 years working in the fields of ecology and environmental management. He is a Senior Ecologist with experience in ecological surveying, environmental assessment, on-site ecological supervision and mitigation. He has experience on multiple infrastructure projects regarding all elements of surface and groundwater management, monitoring, sampling and associated reporting. Colin also has a broad range of experience in invasive species management, biosecurity and control. Colin has prepared AA screening reports, Natura Impact Statements and has also been involved in the development of Environmental Operating Plans and Construction Environmental Management Plans for a number of national infrastructure projects. Colin is the author of this report.

Owen O’Keefe is a Senior Ecologist at AtkinsRéalis. Owen holds a BSc (Hons) in Ecology from University College Cork (2015) and is a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM). He has 8 years’ professional experience in ecological consultancy, specialising river ecosystems and Appropriate Assessment. Owen reviewed this report.



4. Existing Environment

The cycle way routes are entirely located within hardstanding areas and adjacent areas. Route F travels east side of the town from North of N55 to South along the R916 ending at the junction with R446. This route is on the outskirts of town on the East.

The location of the cycle way routes is through Athlone town along Dublin Road (R446) or from N55 Cornamaddy Roundabout traveling primarily along urbanised areas predominantly on hardstanding surfaces (roads, pathways) and also includes roadside grass verges and dedicated cycle networks along N55 as well. The surface water drainage network from the project site is via roadway drainage infrastructure and for the purposes of this assessment it is assumed to outfall to the River Shannon.

4.1 Designated Sites

4.1.1 European Sites

There are 13 no. European sites within the Zol of the proposed project as detailed in Table 4-1 below. Figures 4-1 and 4-2 below illustrate the locations of Europeans sites within the Zol of the proposed project.

The proposed project does not lie within nor is it adjacent to any SAC/SPA site extents and there is no direct connectivity to any European sites.

There is potential indirect connectivity to the River Shannon Callows SAC/SPA via the River Shannon as the river receives surface water drainage from the project site via the road drainage network. The lower stretches of the River Shannon are within the SAC/SPA site extents.

Lough Ree SAC, Lough Ree SPA and Lough Funshinagh, are upstream of the project site and therefore there is no indirect hydrological connectivity to these European sites from the project site.

There are several SACs/SPAs located in the wider environs of Athlone Town. There is no direct or indirect connectivity to these European sites.

Table 4-1 - European site within the Zol of the proposed project

European Site (Site Code)	Distance from OHL	Qualifying Interests (from NPWS Conservation Objectives documentation)
Crosswood Bog SAC (002337)	C. 1.1km East	Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]
Lough Ree (000440) SAC	C. 1.7km Northwest	Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] Bog woodland [91D0] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]



				<i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]
Lough Ree (004064) SPA	C. Northwest	1.7km		Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004] Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067] Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]
River Callows (000216)	Shannon SAC	C. South	2.3km	Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410] Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240]* Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]* <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]
Middle Callows (004096)	Shannon SPA	C. South	2.3km	Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] Corncrake (<i>Crex crex</i>) [A122] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]
Carn Park Bog (002336)	Bog SAC	C. East	3.9km	Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]
Mongan (000580)	Bog SAC	C. South	9.8km	Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]
Mongan (004017)	Bog SPA	C. South	9.8km	Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395]
Pilgirm's Road (001776)	Esker	C. South	10km	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]



Fin Lough (Offaly) (000576)	C. South	10.2km	Alkaline fens [7230] <i>Vertigo geyeri</i> (Geyer's Whorl Snail) [1013]
Castlesampson Esker (001625)	C. West	11.5km	Turloughs [3180] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]
Lough Funshinagh (000611) SAC	C. Northwest	11.5km	Turloughs [3180] Rivers with muddy banks with <i>Chenopodium rubri</i> p.p. and <i>Bidention</i> p.p. vegetation [3270]
Ballynamona Bog and Corkhip Lough SAC (002339)	C. West	11.8km	Turloughs [3180] Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150] Bog woodland [91D0]



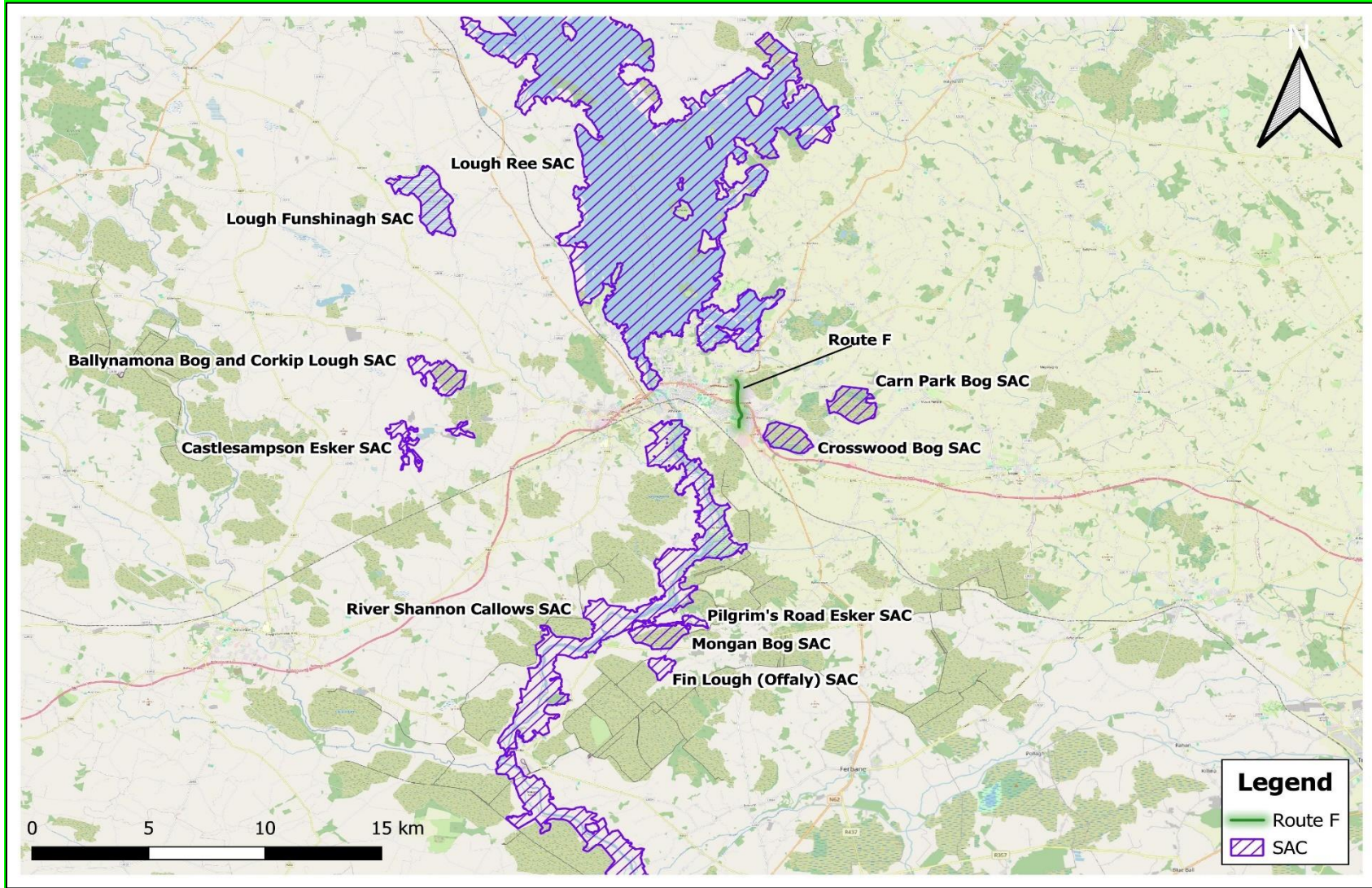


Figure 4-1 - SACs within the Zone of influence of the proposed project



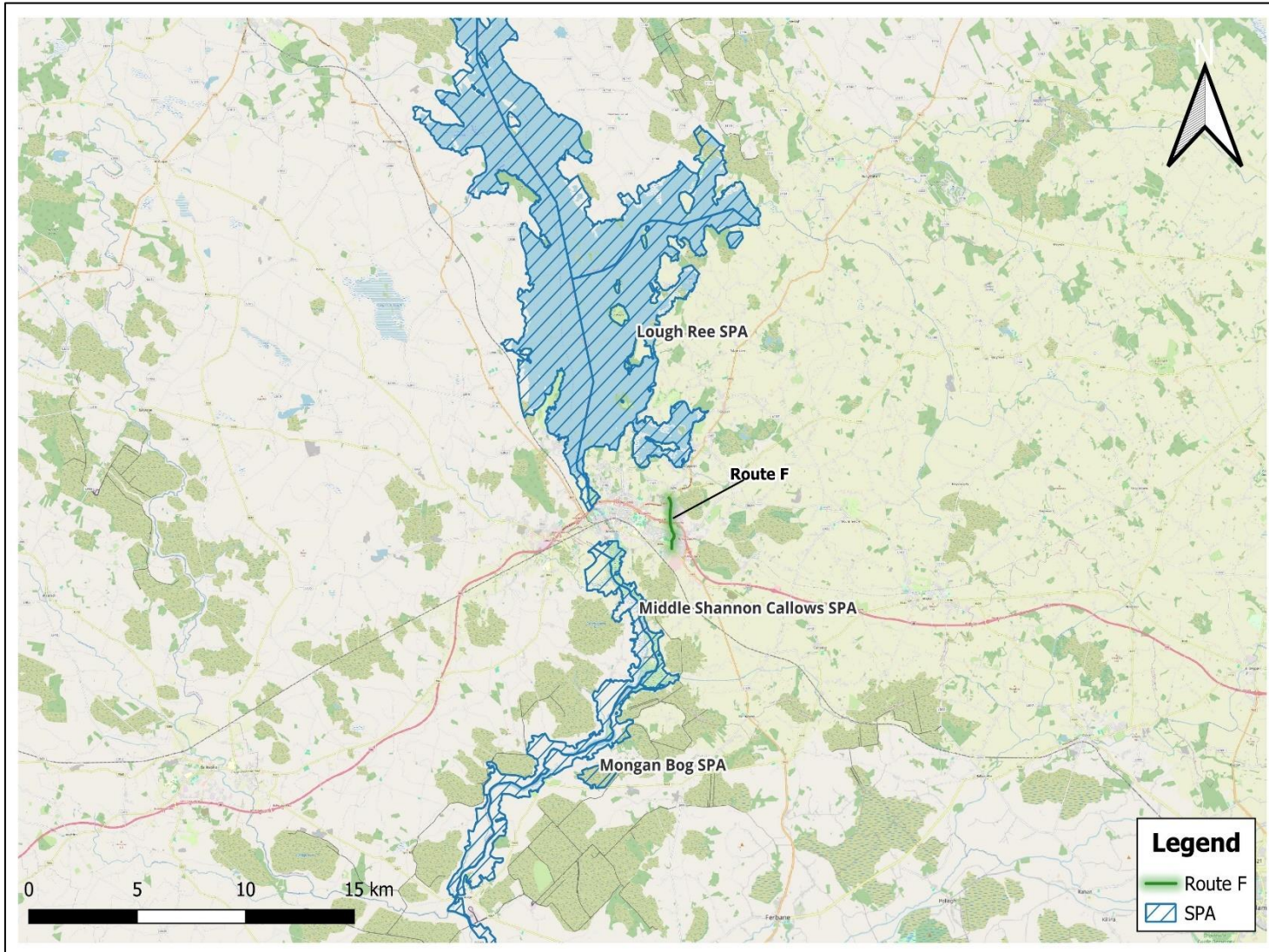


Figure 4-2- SPAs within the zone of influence of the proposed project



4.1.2 National Designated Conservation Sites

The proposed project site is not within, nor does it cross any Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) or proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs).

There is 1 no. NHA and 4 no. pNHA within 5km of the project site; Carrickynaghtan Bog NHA (001623), River Shannon Callows pNHA (000216), Crosswood Bog (000678) and Carn Park Bog (000676), Lough Ree (000440).

River Shannon Callows pNHA is designated for the same conservation interest as the SAC and SPA. There is potential indirect connectivity to the pNHA via the project site's road drainage network which outfalls into the River Shannon.

Carrickynaghtan Bog NHA is situated approximately 4km south of Athlone on the west of the River Shannon, mainly in the townlands of Cloonown and Carrickynaghtan in Co. Roscommon. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. The site is mostly bounded by reclaimed grassland and tracks¹. There is no direct or indirect connectivity to Carrickynaghtan Bog NHA from the project site.

Crosswood Bog is a pNHA designated for the same conservation interest as the SAC. There is no direct or indirect connectivity to the pNHA.

Carn Park Bog is a pNHA designated for the same conservation interest as the SAC. Carn Park Bog is situated 8 km east of Athlone. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. There is no direct or indirect connectivity to the pNHA from the project site.

Lough Ree is a pNHA designated for the same conservation interest as the SAC. Situated on the River Shannon between Lanesborough and Athlone, Lough Ree is the third largest lake in the Republic of Ireland. It lies in an ice-deepened depression in Carboniferous Limestone. There is no direct or indirect connectivity to Lough Ree from the project site

Figure 4-3 below illustrates NHAs and pNHAs around the project site.

¹ <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY001623.pdf>



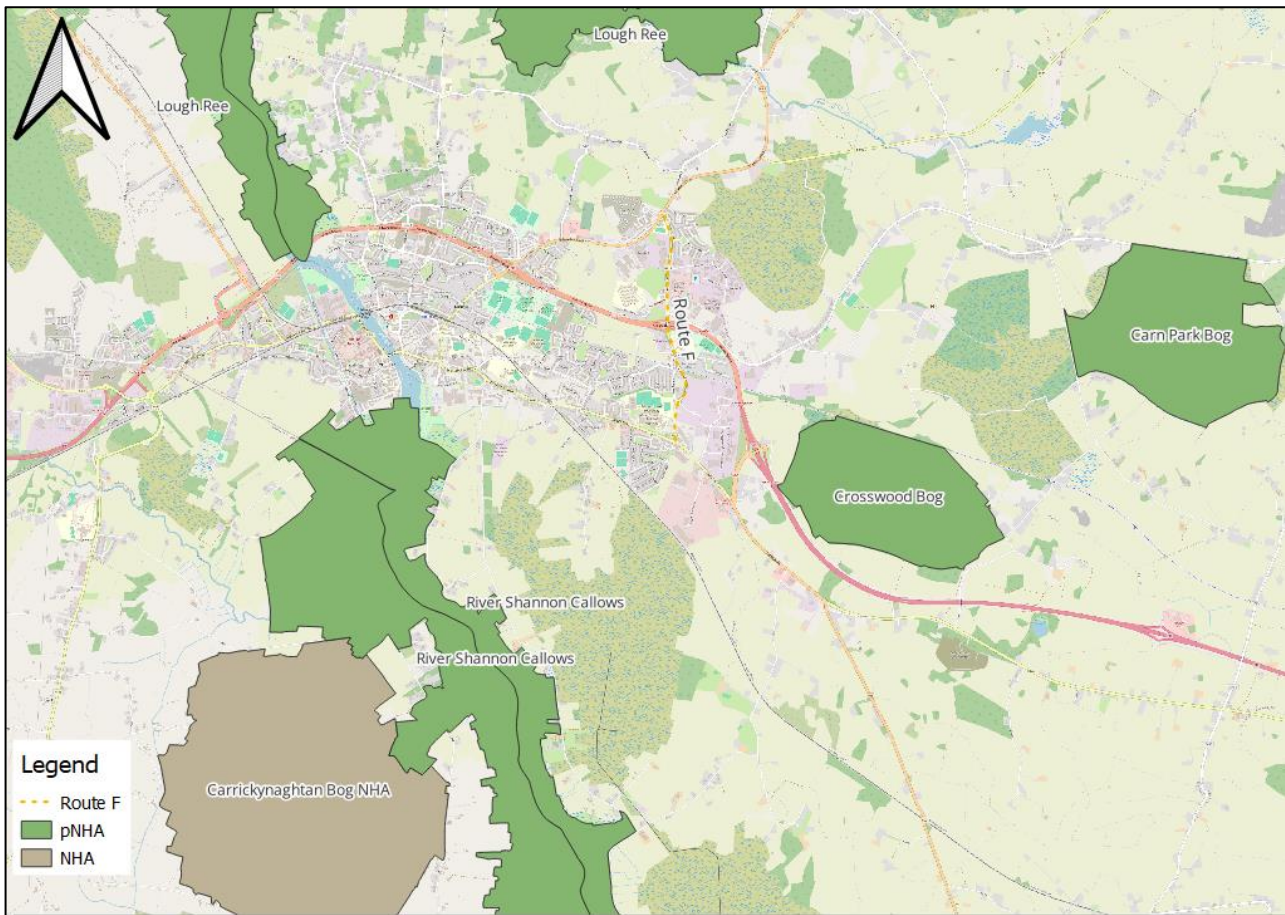


Figure 4-3 - NHAs and pNHAs within 5km of the project site

4.1.3 Nature Reserves / Ramsar Sites

There are no Nature Reserves or Ramsar Sites within or near the proposed project site. The nearest Nature Reserve and Ramsar Site is Mongan Bog Nature Reserve / Mongan Bog Ramsar Site located c. 10km south of Athlone town.

4.2 Surface Water Features

The entire project site lies within the Shannon Upper (SC_100) sub catchment. There is 1 no. EPA identified watercourse within 200m of the Southern section of Route F. The proposed project will not result in direct impacts to the River nor the protected species within. There is potential indirect connectivity to the river via the road drainage network within the project site.

EPA (2024) has identified 1no. river (SHANNON (Upper)_120) within the vicinity of Route F, however, the route and the watercourses do not intercept at any point.

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) status of the EPA reported watercourse is 'Poor' for the 2016-2021 monitoring period, making it 'At risk' of failing to achieve relevant WFD objectives by 2027.

The study area is located within the Shannon catchment. Route F is located within Shannon Upper sub catchment.

The location of watercourses in relation to the proposed project are illustrated in Figure 4-4 below.



The Water Framework Directive (WFD) status of the River Shannon is 'Poor' for the 2016-2021 monitoring period, with the watercourse 'At risk' of failing to achieve relevant WFD objectives by 2027. The Q value for the River Shannon taken downstream of the proposed scheme (Athlone; Burgess Park area) in 2023 is noted to be 4 giving this section a 'Good' biological status

As with the adjoining River Shannon, the unnamed stream, which is separated from the proposed scheme by the N6 and built-up areas, is similarly At risk with Poor water quality status. Note - this stream is part of the same Shannon (Upper)_120 waterbody as the main channel of the river, as such its poor status is likely as an extension of the river and it may not have been monitored in its own right.

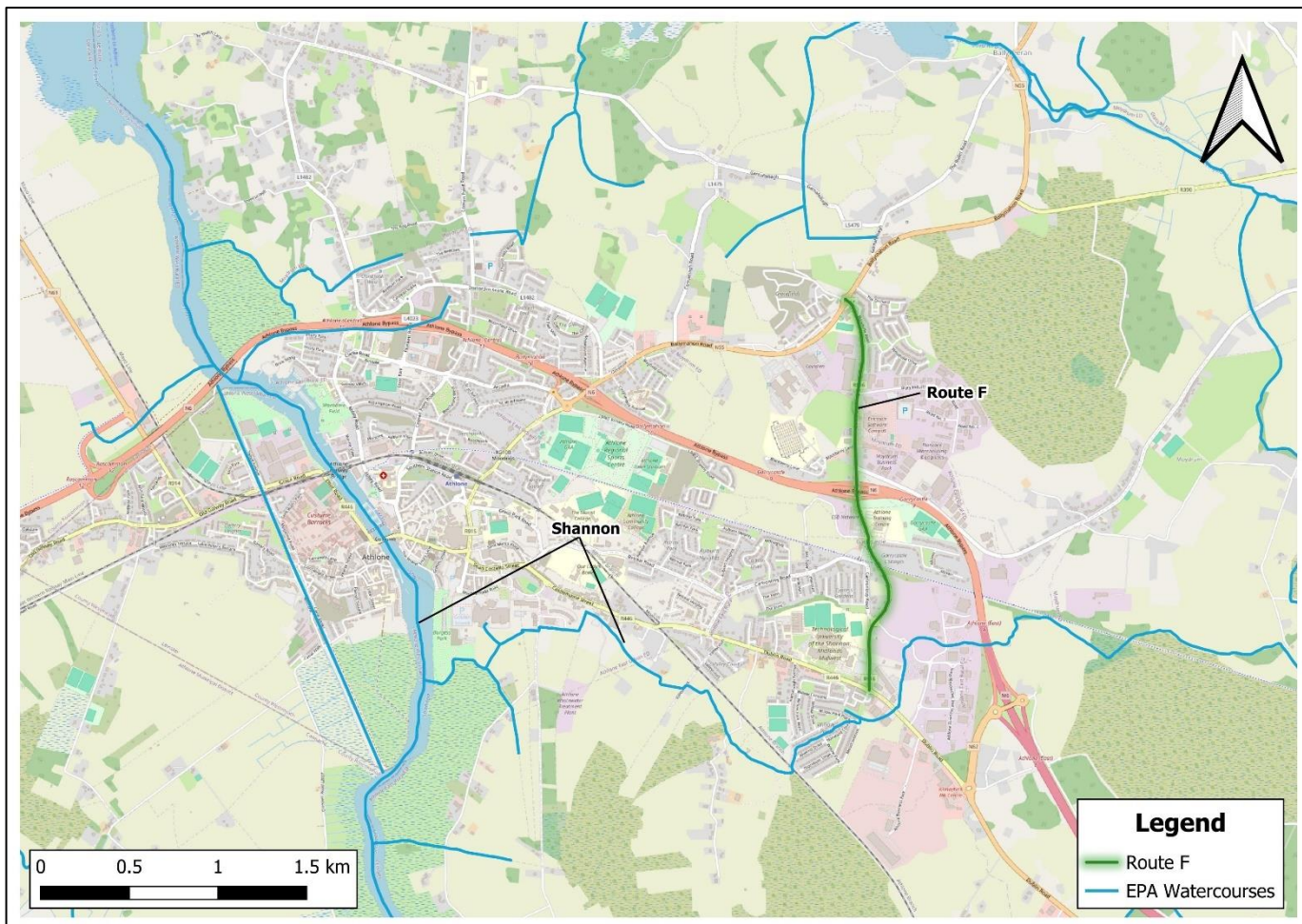


Figure 4-4 – River Crossing within the vicinity of Route F (EPA, 2024)

4.3 Groundwater Body

GSI (2024) have classified the groundwater vulnerability beneath Route F as 'High'. High groundwater vulnerability indicates that groundwater is potentially shallow and vulnerable to contamination.

GSI (2025) have classified the groundwater vulnerability beneath Route F as 'High' groundwater vulnerability. Route F is within the Inny and Athlone Gravels Groundwater Bodies (GWB) which are reported by the EPA (2025) as having 'Good' WFD status for the 2016-2021 monitoring period and are 'Not at Risk' of failing to achieve relevant WFD objectives by 2021.



These GWBs are reported by EPA (2024) as having 'Good' WFD status for the 2021-2027 monitoring period and are 'Not at Risk' of failing to achieve relevant WFD objectives by 2027.

4.4 Bird Sites

There are no Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS) count sites within or adjacent to the proposed scheme site. The nearest I-WeBS sites are the Shannon Callows Count Site (Site Code: 0R303), which is located along the River Shannon c. 995m from the proposed scheme and Lough Ree Count Site (Site Code: 0F002) located c. 1.7km from the proposed scheme. Tables 4-2 and 4-3 below lists the wetland bird species recorded within the Shannon Callows and Lough Ree count sites and provides the mean counts for each species between 2012 – 2021.

Table 4-2 - Summary of I-WeBS Counts for 0R303 Shannon Callows

Species	1% National	1% International	Mean (2012-2021)
Mute Swan	90	100	63
Whooper Swan	150	340	100
Wigeon	560	14000	184
Gadwall	20	1200	0
Teal	360	5000	24
Mallard	280	53000	7
Pintail	20	600	10
Shoveler	20	650	25
Tufted Duck	270	8900	25
Goldeneye	40	11400	0
Little Grebe	20	4700	0
Great Crested Grebe	30	6300	0
Cormorant	110	1200	3
Little Egret	20	1100	1
Grey Heron	25	5000	2
Water Rail			5
Moorhen			2
Coot	190	15500	13
Oystercatcher	610	8200	0
Golden Plover	920	9300	503
Lapwing	850	72300	507
Dunlin	460	13300	0
Ruff			0
Snipe			0
Black-tailed Godwit	200	1100	0
Curlew	350	7600	61



Species	1% National	1% International	Mean (2012-2021)
Redshank	240	2400	56
Black-headed Gull			169
Lesser Black-backed Gull			1

Table 4-3 - Summary of I-WeBS Counts for 0F002 Lough Ree

Species	1% National	1% International	Mean (2012-2021)
Unidentified duck			15
Mute Swan	90	100	195
Bewick's Swan	20	220	1
Whooper Swan	150	340	68
Greylag Goose	35	980	6
Wigeon	560	14000	270
Gadwall	20	1200	1
Teal	360	5000	155
Mallard	280	53000	302
Pintail	20	600	1
Shoveler	20	650	35
Pochard	110	2000	23
Tufted Duck	270	8900	708
Goldeneye	40	11400	24
Red-breasted Merganser	25	860	1
Goosander			1
Little Grebe	20	4700	54
Great Crested Grebe	30	6300	23
Cormorant	110	1200	33
Little Egret	20	1100	3
Grey Heron	25	5000	6
Moorhen			9
Coot	190	15500	388
Golden Plover	920	9300	1413
Lapwing	850	72300	1277
Dunlin	460	13300	1
Snipe			7



Species	1% National	1% International	Mean (2012-2021)
Curlew	350	7600	21
Redshank	240	2400	1
Black-headed Gull			237
Lesser Black-backed Gull			10
Herring Gull			1
Great Black-backed Gull			1

4.5 Species

National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) datasets of rare and protected species records within 200m of the proposed scheme were examined for the period 2000-2023. A review of species records was undertaken in March 2025.

No records of protected or invasive species were recorded in the 200m radius in the past ten years.

4.6 Invasive Species

There is historic evidence of Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) in the vicinity of Route F as per NBDC datasets.



5. Connectivity to Natura 2000 Sites

5.1 Zone of Influence

The “Zone of Influence” of a plan, project or development is the area which may experience ecological effects as a result of its implementation, including any ancillary activities. The various impacts of a plan or project will each have their own characteristics, e.g. nature, extent, magnitude, duration etc. Accordingly, the area subject to each impact (“zone of impact”) will vary depending on characteristics of the impact and the presence of pathways for its propagation. Ecological features within or connected to one or more zones of impact could, depending on their sensitivities, be affected by the plan or project under consideration. The area containing such features may be regarded as the Zone of Influence. As such, in establishing the Zone of Influence for a plan, project or development, regard must be had to the characteristics of its potential impacts, potential pathways for impacts and the sensitivities of ecological features in the receiving environment.

In its guidance on selecting which Natura 2000 sites to include in the AA Screening, *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities* (DEHLG, 2010a) recommends inclusion of sites in the following three categories: -

- Any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the plan or project area,
- Any Natura 2000 sites within the Zone of Influence of the plan or project (generally within 15 km for plans, to be established on a case-by-case basis for projects, having regard to the nature, scale and location of the project, the sensitivities of the ecological receptors and the potential for in-combination effects), and
- Following the precautionary principle, any other Natura 2000 sites for which the possibility of significant effects cannot be excluded, e.g. for a project with hydrological impacts, it may be necessary to check the full extent of the catchment for Natura 2000 sites with water-dependent qualifying interests.

In addition, *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (EC, 2021) recommends consideration of Natura 2000 sites hosting fauna which could move to the project area or its zone(s) of impact, and the potential for the project to sever ecological connectivity within or between Natura 2000 sites. *Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management* (OPR, 2021) emphasises the importance of employing the source-pathway-receptor model (rather than arbitrary distances such as 15km) when selecting Natura 2000 sites for inclusion in the AA Screening.

The proposed scheme does not lie within any European site nor is it adjacent to any European site. River Shannon Callows SAC, Lough Ree SAC, Middle Shannon Callows SPA and Lough Ree SPA are located within a 2km radius of the proposed scheme.

Based on the nature, scale and location of the proposed scheme and the baseline conditions in the receiving natural environment, the zones of impact of the proposed scheme are defined as: -

- For habitat loss and fragmentation, all areas within the proposed scheme boundary, including any areas temporarily required during construction,
- For disturbance to birds and other fauna, all areas within a precautionary buffer of 500m from the proposed scheme,



- For water quality impacts, all surface waters which intersect the proposed scheme or are located within 100m thereof, as well as connected downstream stretches, and
- For the introduction or spread of invasive alien species, the proposed scheme site, and adjoining areas, as well as any haul routes to/from the construction site.

The Zone of Influence was defined as the above zones of impact as well as other areas with potential ecological connectivity to them, i.e., woodlands and other semi-natural habitats connected to the proposed scheme by proximity or linear landscape features such as hedgerows or treelines and connected waterbodies.

Publicly available spatial data for watercourses and lakes (*EPA Maps*) was used in conjunction with aerial imagery to identify pathways and zones of impact for disturbance and water quality impacts from the proposed scheme. These were then mapped in relation to Natura 2000 sites. In addition, the Zone of Influence was examined to identify any other Natura 2000 sites with potential ecological connections to these zones of impact.

5.2 Identification of Sites

Habitat loss and fragmentation

There are no Natura 2000 sites within, intersecting or directly adjoining the proposed scheme boundary. Therefore, there will be no direct effects on any European sites arising from habitat loss or fragmentation associated with the proposed scheme.

The nearest European sites are the Lough Ree SAC (site code: 000440) and the Lough Ree SPA (site code: 004064), which are located c. 1.7km (over land) from the proposed scheme respectively, these Natura 2000 site are located upstream of the scheme site. In addition River Shannon Callows SAC (site Code:000216) and Middle Shannon Callow SPA (site Code:000216) are both located c. 1.2km (overland) from the proposed scheme, these Natura 2000 sites are downstream of the proposed scheme.

The 2 no. SACs are selected for 10 no. habitat types and species; otter (*Lutra lutra*). The proposed scheme site is within the urban area of Athlone and is dominated by hardstanding surfaces. The qualifying interest habitats associated with the 2 no. SACs do not occur within or adjacent to the footprint of the proposed scheme and as such the proposed scheme will not result in qualifying interest habitat loss or fragmentation. The River Shannon is located c. 725m and there is the potential for qualifying interest species otter to be found within the River Shannon adjacent to the project site.

The Lough Ree SPA and Middle Shannon Callows SPS are selected for 16 no. waterbird species, as well as wetland habitat within the SPA. There is no potential for habitat loss or fragmentation affecting the SPA as a result of the proposed scheme.

Disturbance to birds and other fauna

Disturbance impacts include noise, visual and other forms of disturbance to animal species. The extent of such impacts is highly dependent on their magnitude and the sensitivity of the receptors. In the case of the proposed scheme, a precautionary distance of 500m from the scheme site was used. Lough Ree SAC, Lough Ree SPA, River Shannon Callows SAC and Middle Shannon Callow SPA are located in the vicinity of the proposed scheme. The 2 no. SACs are designated for otters and the 2 no. SPAS are designated for a wide range of waterbirds and there is the potential for these species to use the River Shannon channel adjacent to the proposed scheme. Therefore, disturbance is considered to be a risk to otters of Lough Ree SAC and River Shannon Callows SAC and the waterbirds of Lough Ree SPA and Middle Shannon Callow SPA.



Water Quality Impacts

The proposed scheme does not necessitate any in-stream works or direct interaction with the watercourses within and/or adjacent to the scheme site i.e., River Shannon, however, road drainage infrastructure within the works area is assumed to outfall to the River Shannon. Potential water quality impacts can include pollution of surface waters by sediment, cementitious materials (e.g. concrete), hydrocarbons (e.g. diesel, hydraulic oils and lubricating oils) and other deleterious matter arising from the construction phase of the proposed scheme. In the case of the proposed works, these potentially include small amounts of fine sediment from excavations of grass verges, small amounts of concrete from relocation of kerbs and fuels and other hydrocarbons from vehicles and machinery. The use road surfacing materials (stone mastic asphalt and road paint) poses less of a risk to surface waters given they are non-fluid in nature and would not be subject to run-off from the works areas.

Considering the small amounts of contaminants the proposed works could potential generate and given the magnitude, extent and duration of any potential water quality impacts associated with the proposed scheme, and the dilution and dispersal that would occur within the hydrological pathways concerned, there is not considered to be any risk of water quality impacts affecting the features of interest encompassed within the downstream River Shannon Callows SAC and Middle Shannon Callow SPA.

The maximum excavation depths for the proposed scheme are c. 500mm below road surface level and as such no interaction with groundwater is considered likely. Given the nature, scale and extent of the works there will be no impacts to local groundwater bodies as a result of construction activities.

Invasive alien species

NBDC records identify Japanese knotweed as historically recorded near the scheme site on the Shannon River bank near Athlone Castle. The location of the knotweed is outside the extents of the proposed scheme and no works are necessitated on the river bank. Japanese knotweed has also been recorded near Galway Road which is east of River Shannon approx. 3 km from this route (exact location not recorded) and remote from any watercourse which could provide a pathway to the downstream River Shannon Callows SAC and Middle Shannon Callow SPA. Given that the proposed works are only on roadways and occasionally on grass verges there will be no interaction with areas of knotweed during the construction phase. In addition the proposed scheme does not necessitate any interaction with any watercourses.

Indirect effects

There are no additional Natura 2000 sites within or adjoining the wider Zone of Influence of the proposed scheme.

5.3 Site Descriptions

5.3.1 River Shannon Callows SAC

A summary of the site synopsis of the SAC, as detailed by NPWS, is as follows ²:

“The River Shannon Callows is a long and diverse site which consists of seasonally flooded, semi-natural, lowland wet grassland, along and beside the river between the towns of Athlone and Portumna. It is approximately 50 km long and averages about 0.75 km wide (reaching 1.5 km wide in places). Along much of its length the site is bordered by raised bogs (many, but not all, of which are subject to large-scale harvesting), esker ridges and limestone-bedrock

² <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY000216.pdf>



hills. The soils grade from silty alluvial to peat. This site has a common boundary, and is closely associated, with two other sites with similar habitats, River Suck Callows and Little Brosna Callows.

The Shannon Callows has by far the largest area of lowland semi-natural grassland and associated aquatic habitats in Ireland, and one in which there is least disturbance of natural wetland processes. Botanically, it is extremely diverse with two legally protected species of plants and many scarce species. Excellent examples of two habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive occur within the site – *Molinia* meadows and lowland hay meadows with good examples of a further three Annex habitats (two with priority³ status). In winter the site is internationally important for numbers and species of waterfowl. In spring it feeds large numbers of birds on migration, and in summer it holds very large numbers of breeding waders, rare breeding birds and the endangered Corncrake, as well as a very wide variety of more common grassland and wetland birds. The presence of Otter, an Annex II species, adds further importance to the site.”

5.3.1.1 Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives

The River Shannon Callows SAC was selected for the following qualifying interests: -

- *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*) [6410]
- Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*) [6510]
- Alkaline fens [7230]
- Limestone pavements [8240]
- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*) [91E0]
- *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355]

The conservation objectives for River Shannon Callows SAC (NPWS 2022) are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interests.

As set out in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive, Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when: -

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

As set out in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive, the favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when: -

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and

³ Annex I habitat types marked with an asterisk (*) are “priority habitat types”, i.e., natural habitat types in danger of disappearing and for the conservation of which the EU has a particular responsibility given the proportion of their natural ranges falling within the European territory of Member States.



- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

The Conservation Objectives for Shannon Callows 4(NPWS, 2022), as defined by their attributes and targets, are summarised below (* denotes priority status): -

- To restore the favourable conservation condition of *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinia caerulea*) in River Shannon Callows SAC
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*) in River Shannon Callows SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Alkaline fens in River Shannon Callows SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Limestone pavements* in River Shannon Callows SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*)* in River Shannon Callows SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Otter (*Lutra lutra*) in River Shannon Callows SAC

5.3.1.2 Potential Threats

The threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the SAC⁵ are listed below in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1 - Threats, Pressures and activities with impacts on Shannon Callows SAC⁶.

Threats and Pressures	Rank
Abandonment / lack of mowing	High
Abandonment of pastoral systems, lack of grazing	High
Flooding	High
Use of biocides, hormones and chemicals	High
Fertilisation	Medium
Forestry clearance	Medium
Intensive grazing	Medium
Modifying structures of inland water courses	Medium
Predation	Medium
Siltation rate changes, dumping, depositing of dredged deposits	Medium
Grazing in forests/ woodland	Low

⁴ https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000216.pdf

⁵ <https://biodiversity.europa.eu/sites/natura2000/IE0000216>

⁶ <https://biodiversity.europa.eu/sites/natura2000/IE0000216>



Threats and Pressures	Rank
Hunting	Low
Landfill, land reclamation and drying out, general	Low
Mechanical removal of peat	Low
Modification of hydrographic functioning, general	Low
Non intensive mixed animal grazing	Low
Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities	Low
Paths, tracks, cycling tracks	Low
Removal of hedges and copses or scrub	Low
Trampling, overuse,	Low

5.3.2 Brief Description of Lough Ree SAC

A summary of the site synopsis of the SAC, as detailed by NPWS, is as follows ⁷:

“Lough Ree is the third largest lake in Ireland and is situated in an ice-deepened depression in Carboniferous limestone on the River Shannon system between Lanesborough and Athlone. The site spans Counties Longford, Roscommon and Westmeath. Some of its features (including the islands) are based on glacial drift. It has a very long, indented shoreline and hence has many sheltered bays. Although the main habitat, by area, is the lake itself, interesting shoreline, terrestrial and semi-aquatic habitats also occur.

Lough Ree and its adjacent habitats are of major ecological significance. Some of the woodlands around the lake are of excellent. St John's Wood is particularly important; it is one of the very few remaining ancient woodlands in Ireland. The lake itself is an excellent example of a mesotrophic to moderate-eutrophic system, supporting a rare fish species and a good diversity of breeding and wintering birds.”

5.3.2.1 Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives

The Lough Ree SAC was selected for the following qualifying interests: -

- Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition* - type vegetation [3150]
- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (* important orchid sites) [6210]
- Active raised bogs [7110]
- Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]
- Alkaline fens [7230]
- Limestone pavements [8240]

⁷ <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY000440.pdf>



- Bog woodland [91D0]
- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*) [91E0]
- *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355]

The conservation objectives for Lough Ree SAC (NPWS 2016) are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interests.

As set out in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive, Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when: -

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

As set out in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive, the favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when: -

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

The Conservation Objectives for Lough Ree 8(NPWS 2016), as defined by their attributes and targets, summarised below (* denotes priority status): -

- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition*-type vegetation in Lough Ree SAC
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) in Lough Ree SAC
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration in Lough Ree SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Alkaline fens in Lough Ree SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Limestone pavements* in Lough Ree SAC
- The status of Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles as a qualifying Annex I habitat for the Lough Ree SAC is currently under review.

⁸ https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000440.pdf



- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Bog woodland* in Lough Ree SAC
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Otter in Lough Ree SAC

5.3.2.2 Potential Threats

The threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the SAC⁹ are listed below in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2 - Threats, Pressures and activities with impacts on Lough Ree SAC¹⁰.

Threats and Pressures	Rank
Antagonism arising from introduction of species	High
Invasive non-native species	High
Other siltation rate changes	High
Abandonment / lack of mowing	Medium
Diffuse groundwater pollution due to agricultural and forestry activities	Medium
Diffuse pollution to surface waters due to household sewage and waste waters	Medium
Dispersed habitation	Medium
Fertilisation	Medium
Forest and Plantation management & use	Medium
Grazing	Medium
Hunting	Medium
Leisure fishing	Medium
Nautical sports	Medium
Flooding modifications	Low
Inundation (natural processes)	Low
Piers / tourist harbours or recreational piers	Low
Thermal heating of water bodies	Low
Walking, horse riding and non-motorised vehicles	Low

5.3.3 Brief Description of Middle Shannon Callows SPA

A summary of the site synopsis of the SPA, as detailed by NPWS, is as follows ¹¹:

“The Middle Shannon Callows SPA is a long and diverse site which extends for approximately 50 km from the town of Athlone to the town of Portumna; it lies within Counties Galway, Roscommon, Westmeath, Offaly and Tipperary. The site averages about 0.75 km in width though in places is up to 1.5 km wide. Water levels on the site are greatly

⁹ <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000440>

¹⁰ <https://biodiversity.europa.eu/sites/natura2000/IE0000440>

¹¹ <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY004096.pdf>



influenced by the very small fall between Athlone and Portumna and by the weir at Meelick. The site has extensive areas of callow, or seasonally flooded, semi-natural, lowland wet grassland, along both sides of the river. The callows are mainly too soft for intensive farming but are used for hay or silage or for summer grazing. Other habitats of smaller area which occur alongside the river include lowland dry grassland, freshwater marshes, reedbeds and wet woodland. The diversity of semi-natural habitats present and the sheer size of the site attract an excellent diversity of bird species, including significant populations of several.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Whooper Swan, Wigeon, Corncrake, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Black-tailed Godwit and Black-headed Gull. It is also of special conservation interest for holding an assemblage of over 20,000 wintering waterbirds. The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands and, as these form part of this SPA, the site and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds.

5.3.3.1 Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives

The Middle Shannon Callows SPA was selected for the following qualifying interests: -

- Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) [A038]
- Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) [A050]
- Corncrake (*Crex crex*) [A122]
- Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140]
- Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) [A142]
- Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) [A156]
- Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179]
- Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]

The conservation objectives for Middle Shannon Callows SPA (NPWS 2022) are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interests.

As set out in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive, Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when: -

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

As set out in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive, the favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when: -

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and



- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

The Conservation Objectives for Middle Shannon Callows SPA12 (NPWS 2022), as defined by their attributes and targets, are summarised below: -

- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of whooper swan in Middle Shannon Callows SPA
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of wigeon in Middle Shannon Callows SPA
- The status of corncrake as a Species of Conservation Interest for the Middle Shannon Callows SPA is currently under review. The outcome of this review will determine whether a site-specific conservation objective is set for this species
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of golden plover in Middle Shannon Callows SPA
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of lapwing in Middle Shannon Callows SPA
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Black-tailed godwit in Middle Shannon Callows SPA
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of black-headed gull in Middle Shannon Callows SPA
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of wetlands in Middle Shannon Callows SPA

5.3.3.2 Potential Threats

The threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the Middle Shannon Callows SPA¹³ are listed below in Table 5-3.

Table 5-3 - Threats, Pressures and activities with impacts on Middle Shannon Callows SPA¹⁴.

Threats and Pressures	Rank
Bridge, viaduct	High
Grazing	High
Nautical sports	High
Urbanised areas, human habitation	High
Fertilisation	Medium
Leisure fishing	Medium
Walking, horse riding and non-motorised vehicles	Medium
Abandonment of pastoral systems, lack of grazing	Low
Fertilisation	Low
Hunting	Low

¹² https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000216.pdf

¹³ <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004096>

¹⁴ <https://biodiversity.europa.eu/sites/natura2000/IE0004096>



Threats and Pressures	Rank
Paths, tracks, cycling tracks	Low

5.3.4 Brief Description of Lough Ree SPA

A summary of the site synopsis of the SPA, as detailed by NPWS, is as follows ¹⁵:

'The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Whooper Swan, Wigeon, Teal, Mallard, Shoveler, Tufted Duck, Common Scoter, Goldeneye, Little Grebe, Coot, Golden Plover, Lapwing and Common Tern. The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands and, as these form part of this SPA, the site and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds.

Lough Ree SPA is of high ornithological importance for both wintering and breeding birds. It supports nationally important populations of eleven wintering waterfowl species. The site has a range of breeding waterfowl species, notably nationally important populations of Common Scoter and Common Tern. Of particular note is the regular presence of three species, Whooper Swan, Golden Plover and Common Tern, which are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Parts of Lough Ree SPA are Wildfowl Sanctuaries.

5.3.4.1 Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives

The Lough Ree SPA was selected for the following qualifying interests: -

- Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) [A004]
- Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) [A038]
- Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) [A050]
- Teal (*Anas crecca*) [A052]
- Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) [A053]
- Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) [A056]
- Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) [A061]
- Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) [A065]
- Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) [A067]
- Coot (*Fulica atra*) [A125]
- Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140]
- Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) [A142]

¹⁵ <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/synopsis/SY004064.pdf>



- Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193]
- Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]

The conservation objectives for Lough Ree SPA¹⁶ are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interests.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when: -

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when: -

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

The conservation objectives for Lough Ree SPA are;

'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA'.

'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat at Lough Ree SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.'

5.3.4.2 Potential Threats and Pressures

The threats, pressures and activities with impacts on Lough Ree SPA¹⁷ are itemised in Table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4 - Threats and Pressures on the SPA.

Threats and pressures (type)	Rank
Sylviculture, forestry	Low
Invasive non-native species	Medium
Fertilisation	Medium
Nautical sports	High
Leisure fishing	Medium

¹⁶ https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004064.pdf

¹⁷ <https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/Natura2000/SDF.aspx?site=IE0004064>



Threats and pressures (type)	Rank
Damage caused by game (excess population density)	Medium
Walking, horse riding and non-motorised vehicles	Medium
Grazing	Medium



6. Likely Significant Effects

6.1 Identification of Likely Significant Effects

The identification of likely effects in this section follows the “source-pathway-receptor” model. According to this model, for an effect to exist, all three of the following criteria must be met: -

- Some aspect of the scheme must act as a source of an impact,
- There must be a pathway capable of conveying the impact to a receptor, and
- The receptor must be sensitive to the impact.

Types of impacts likely to arise from the proposed scheme and their sources are described in Section 5, potential pathways for those impacts are described and illustrated in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 and receptors are described in Section 5.3. The following subsections detail the specific effects on each receptor and evaluate their significance in view of the relevant conservation objectives.

6.1.1 River Shannon Callows SAC

Likely significant effects on the River Shannon Callows SAC are identified, in view of the conservation objectives of the site, in Table 6-1 below.

Table 6-1 - Identification of impacts and evaluation of effects on the River Shannon Callows SAC (LSE = likely significant effect).

Qualifying interest ¹⁸	Identification of likely significant effects	LSE
<i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410]	This habitat type does not occur within or near the proposed scheme. Conservation Objective documentation identifies the nearest area of SAC <i>Molinia</i> meadows is c. 5.8km south of Athlone. The nearest area of this habitat, as detailed within NPWS Article 17 ¹⁹ datasets (2019) is located c. 2.8km north near Coosnan Lough. There is no direct or indirect connectivity to this terrestrial habitat from the proposed scheme. Given a lack of any pathway to this habitat from the proposed scheme potential effects on this habitats are precluded. Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.	No
Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510]	This habitat type does not occur within or near the proposed scheme. Conservation Objective documentation identifies the nearest area of Lowland hay meadows is c. 5.5km south of Athlone. There is no direct or indirect connectivity to this terrestrial habitat from the proposed scheme. Given a lack of any pathway to this habitat from the proposed scheme potential effects on this habitats are precluded.	No

¹⁸ It is acknowledged that qualifying interest habitat mapping detailed within the Conservation Objective documentation may be incomplete.

¹⁹ <https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data/habitat-and-species-data/article-17>



Qualifying interest ¹⁸	Identification of likely significant effects	LSE
Alkaline fens [7230]	<p>Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.</p> <p>This habitat type does not occur within or near the proposed scheme. Conservation Objective documentation identifies the nearest area of Alkaline fen is c. 41km south of Athlone. The nearest area of this habitat, as detailed within NPWS Article 17 datasets (2019) is located c. 2.5km north of the proposed scheme. There is no direct or indirect connectivity to this habitat from the proposed scheme. Given a lack of any pathway to this habitat from the proposed scheme potential effects on this habitats are precluded.</p> <p>Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.</p>	No
Limestone pavements* [8240]	<p>This habitat type does not occur within or near the proposed scheme. Limestone pavement is not a habitat type that can be affected indirect pathways. There is no direct or indirect connectivity to this habitat from the proposed scheme. Given the nature of this habitat type and a lack of any pathway to this habitat from the proposed scheme potential effects on this habitats are precluded.</p> <p>Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.</p>	No
Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>)* [91E0]	<p>This habitat type does not occur within or near the proposed scheme. Conservation Objective documentation identifies the nearest area of Alluvial forest associated with this SAC is on islands within the River Shannon c. 25km south of Athlone. The nearest area of this habitat, as detailed within NPWS Article 17 datasets (2019) is located c. 4.9km north of the proposed scheme. Given the nature of the habitat type and the distance from the proposed scheme and taking account of the magnitude, extent and duration of the proposed construction phase of the scheme and considering the levels of potential contaminants the works could potential generate, there is not considered to be any risk of water quality impacts on this habitat.</p> <p>Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.</p>	No
<i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]	<p>Otters of the SAC are accommodated along the River Shannon downstream of the proposed scheme and in addition otters may range upstream through the river channel within Athlone town. Given the entirely urban location of the proposed scheme and given interaction with watercourses is not required, direct impacts on otters or otter habitat will not occur as a result of the proposed scheme. Taking account of the scale, extent and duration of the proposed construction works and considering the levels of potential contaminants the works could potential generate, impacts which could significantly affect the water quality of the River Shannon will not occur. As significant water quality impacts will not occur there is no potential for adverse effects on otters or their prey via this pathway.</p> <p>The usage of the cycle scheme will not result in an increase in noise levels relative to current levels and as such otter will not be affected from noise or disturbance-related impacts by cycleway usage. No increase in lighting is proposed within the design of the proposed scheme, as such otters will not</p>	No



Qualifying interest ¹⁸	Identification of likely significant effects	LSE
	<p>be affected from disturbance related impacts as a result of increased lighting.</p> <p>Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.</p>	

6.1.2 Lough Ree SAC

Likely significant effects on the Lough Ree SAC are identified, in view of the conservation objectives of the site, in Table 6-2 below.

Table 6-2 - Identification of impacts and evaluation of effects on the River Shannon Callows SAC (LSE = likely significant effect).

Qualifying interest	Identification of likely significant effects	LSE
Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> -type vegetation [3150]	<p>This habitat has the potential to occur throughout many areas of Lough Ree. This habitat type does not occur near the proposed scheme. This habitat is upstream of the proposed scheme and as such there is not considered to be any risk of water quality impacts on this habitat from the proposed scheme.</p> <p>Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.</p>	No
Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]	<p>NPWS Conservation Objectives documentation details this terrestrial habitat as occurring on lands to the south of Lough Ree.</p> <p>There is no direct or indirect connectivity to this terrestrial habitat from the proposed scheme. Given a lack of any pathway to this habitat from the proposed scheme potential effects on this habitat are precluded.</p> <p>Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.</p>	No
Active raised bogs* [7110]	<p>NPWS Conservation Objectives documentation details this terrestrial habitat as occurring on lands to the northwest of Lough Ree.</p> <p>There is no direct or indirect connectivity to this terrestrial habitat from the proposed scheme. Given a lack of any pathway to this habitat from the proposed scheme potential effects on this habitat are precluded.</p> <p>Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.</p>	No
Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]	<p>NPWS Conservation Objectives documentation details this terrestrial habitat as occurring in lands to the northwest of Lough Ree.</p> <p>There is no direct or indirect connectivity to this terrestrial habitat from the proposed scheme. Given a lack of any pathway to this habitat from the proposed scheme potential effects on this habitat are precluded.</p> <p>Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.</p>	No
Alkaline fens [7230]	<p>This habitat has the potential to occur throughout many areas of the shoreline of Lough Ree</p>	No



Qualifying interest	Identification of likely significant effects	LSE
Limestone pavements* [8240]	<p>There is no direct or indirect connectivity to this habitat from the proposed scheme. Given a lack of any pathway to this habitat from the proposed scheme potential effects on this habitat are precluded.</p> <p>Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.</p>	
Bog woodland* [91D0]	<p>NPWS Conservation Objectives documentation details this terrestrial habitat as occurring in lands to the northwest of Lough Ree.</p> <p>There is no direct or indirect connectivity to this terrestrial habitat from the proposed scheme. Given a lack of any pathway to this habitat from the proposed scheme potential effects on this habitat are precluded.</p> <p>Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.</p>	No
Alluvial forests* with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]	<p>NPWS Site Synopsis documentation details this terrestrial habitat as occurring in St. Johns Wood along Lough Ree western lakeshore.</p> <p>There is no direct or indirect connectivity to this habitat from the proposed scheme. Given a lack of any pathway to this habitat from the proposed scheme potential effects on this habitat are precluded.</p> <p>Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.</p>	No
<i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]	<p>Otters are likely widespread throughout Lough Ree, the River Shannon and associated tributaries and in addition otters may range downstream through the river channel within Athlone town. Given the entirely urban location of the proposed scheme and given interaction with watercourses is not required, direct impacts on otters or otter habitat will not occur as a result of the proposed scheme. Taking account of the scale, extent and duration of the proposed construction works and considering the levels of potential contaminants the works could potential generate, impacts which could significantly affect the water quality of the River Shannon will not occur. As significant water quality impacts will not occur there is no potential for adverse effects on otters or their prey via this pathway.</p> <p>The usage of the cycle scheme will not result in an increase in noise levels relative to current levels and as such otter will not be affected from noise or disturbance related impacts by cycleway usage. No increase in lighting is proposed within the design of the proposed scheme, as such otters will not be affected from disturbance related impacts as a result of increased lighting.</p> <p>Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.</p>	No



6.1.3 Middle Shannon Callows SPA

Likely significant effects on the Middle Shannon Callows SPA are identified, in view of the conservation objectives of the site, in Table 6-3 below.

Table 6-3 - Identification of impacts and evaluation of effects on the Middle Shannon Callows SPA (LSE = likely significant effect).

Qualifying interest	Identification of likely significant effects	LSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] • Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] • Corncrake (<i>Crex crex</i>) [A122] • Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] • Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] • Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] • Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] 	<p>Given the distance between the proposed development and the Middle Shannon Callows SPA, there will be no direct habitat loss or disturbance which could affect birds in the SPA. In addition, given the scale, extent and duration of any water quality impacts the proposed scheme could potentially generate there is not considered to be any risk of water quality impacts on foraging habitat for birds in the SPA.</p> <p>Given the footprint of the proposed scheme is entirely within urban hardstanding areas there are no habitats of importance to any of the bird species of special conservation interest in the SPA. Where the scheme is adjacent to the River Shannon it is largely screened from the river by walls, treelines and buildings, as such the construction phase and the usage of the scheme by cyclists will not result in disturbance to waterbirds that may range outside of the SPA and use the river channel within Athlone town.</p> <p>Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for these qualifying interests can be ruled out at this stage.</p>	No
Wetlands	<p>Wetland habitat for waterbirds does not occur within or within the immediate environs of the proposed scheme. Therefore, there will be no direct impacts through habitat loss. Wetland habitat is sensitive to changes in water quality with regard to foraging for waterbirds. However, given the scale, extent and duration of any water quality impacts the proposed scheme could potentially generate there is not considered to be any risk of water quality impacts on wetland habitat in the SPA.</p> <p>Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objective for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.</p>	No

6.1.4 Lough Ree SPA

Likely significant effects on the Lough Ree SPA are identified, in view of the conservation objectives of the site, in Table 6-4 below.



Table 6-4 - Identification of impacts and evaluation of effects on the Lough Ree SPA (LSE = likely significant effect).

Qualifying interest	Identification of likely significant effects	LSE
Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004] Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067] Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193]	Given the distance between the proposed development and the Lough Ree SPA, there will be no direct habitat loss or disturbance which could affect birds in the SPA. The SPA is upstream of the proposed scheme and as such there is no hydrological pathway to this SPA. Given the footprint of the proposed scheme is entirely within urban hardstanding areas there are no habitats of importance to any of the bird species of special conservation interest in the SPA. Where the scheme is adjacent to the River Shannon it is largely screened from the river by walls, treelines and buildings, as such the construction phase and the usage of the scheme by cyclists will not result in disturbance to waterbirds that may range outside of the SPA and use the river channel within Athlone town. Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives for these qualifying interests can be ruled out at this stage.	No
Wetlands	Wetland habitat for waterbirds does not occur within or within the immediate environs of the proposed scheme. Therefore, there will be no direct impacts through habitat loss. Wetland habitat is sensitive to changes in water quality with regard to foraging for waterbirds, however, given the SPA is upstream of the proposed scheme there is no pathway for effects on SPA wetland habitats. Therefore, likely significant effects on the conservation objective for this qualifying interest can be ruled out at this stage.	No

6.2 In-combination Effects

6.2.1 Requirement for Assessment

The requirement for AA arising out of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive covers plans and projects that, “*either individually or in combination with other plans or projects*”, are likely to have a significant effect on one or more Natura 2000 sites. This means that AA is required for any plan or project that, in combination with other plans or projects, would have a significant effect on one or more Natura 2000 sites, irrespective of the presence or absence of such effects from that plan or project on its own. Therefore, regardless of the significance of the effects of the plan or project individually, the potential for significant effects in combination with other plans and projects must be considered in all cases.



6.2.2 Approach and Methodology

The objective of this requirement is to capture significant effects potentially arising from the cumulation or other interaction of non-significant effects from multiple plans and projects. Consequently, the assessment of potential in-combination effects is not a pair-wise assessment, rather, it considers the totality of the effects arising from all plans and projects affecting the Natura 2000 site(s) in question. In identifying the plans and projects to be included in this assessment, it is important to define an appropriate geographical scope and timescale over which potential in-combination effects are to be considered and the sources of information to be consulted, as described below. It is also important to consider the nature of the interactions between effects, which may be additive, antagonistic, synergistic or complex.

6.2.3 Geographical Scope

In defining the geographical scope for identifying potential in-combination effects, it is important to remember that effects are evaluated in view of the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 site(s) concerned. As such, two or more effects relating to the same conservation objective for a given Natura 2000 site would combine even if their geographical extents did not overlap. For example, the loss of a small area of an Annex I habitat type listed as a qualifying interest of a Natura 2000 site would combine with the loss of an entirely unconnected area of the same habitat type from a remote part of the same site to produce an in-combination effect, the significance of which would need to be evaluated in view of the relevant conservation objective. On that basis, the scope of the assessment of in-combination effects extends to all plans and projects affecting the same conservation objectives as the plan or project under consideration, irrespective of whether those effects are significant or not.

In this case, however, given the scale of the proposed scheme and sensitivities of the Natura 2000 sites in its ZoI, it was deemed most appropriate to include areas in close proximity to the proposed scheme and its ZoI (as described in Section 5.1) within the geographical scope for identifying potential in-combination effects.

6.2.4 Timescale

The timescale over which potential in-combination effects were considered in this case covered plans and projects from 5 years ago (i.e. 2020) to the present and all reasonably foreseeable future plans and projects, i.e. published draft plans and projects which are already in the planning system or have received planning permission.

6.2.5 Sources of Information

The following sources of information were consulted to gather information on other plans and projects:

- Westmeath County Council Planning Data viewed through;
<https://westmeathcoco.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f114217b26f348ea95660cad27e42ef6>
- An Bord Pleanála Planning Applications viewed through;
<https://housinggovie.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d7d5a3d48f104ecbb206e7e5f84b71f1>
- Westmeath Development Plan 2021-2027²⁰

²⁰ <https://www.westmeathcoco.ie/en/ourservices/planning/developmentplans/countydevelopmentplan2021-2027/>



- Transport Infrastructure Ireland²¹
- Irish Water²²
- EirGrid²³

The threats, pressures and activities with negative impacts on the River Shannon Callows SAC, Middle Shannon Callows SPA, Lough Ree SAC and Lough Ree SPA were used to identify plans and projects which, by their nature, are likely to give rise to potential impacts on the sites concerned.

6.2.6 Assessment

Plans

Westmeath County Development Plan (CDP) sets out policies and objectives for the development of the county. The CDP aims to promote the sustainable development and improvement of the economic, environmental, cultural and social aspects of County Westmeath. The CDP also requires that any developments must be subject to AA process and that permitted developments comply with the requirements of the WFD, the relevant River Basin Management Plans and the Habitats Directive. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was prepared for the CDP and it went through the AA process. The findings of which were integrated into the objectives of the CDP resulting in a plan that affords high levels of protection to the environment and Natura 2000 sites.

Projects

The scheme subject to this assessment, i.e. Route F, is part of the larger Athlone Active Travel Schemes Bundle scheme with six entirely urban Routes planned for Athlone town as detailed in Section 1.1. None of the routes have any direct connectivity to any Natura 2000 site. Given their location, scale and extent it is considered that none of the proposed routes will give rise to adverse effects on the water quality of the River Shannon which could in turn affect the conservation of habitats or species of any SACs or SPAs. In addition, given their location the usage of the six cycle routes will not affect any SAC or SPA.

A review of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) publicly available planned projects²⁴ did not identify any major road projects within 10km of the proposed scheme.

A review of Uisce Éireann (Irish Water) projects²⁵ identified 1 no. water project in the vicinity of the proposed scheme development.

A review of EirGrid projects did not identify any major electricity projects within 10km of the proposed scheme.

A search of Westmeath County Council planning and An Bord Pleanála planning applications has been undertaken for applications submitted within the last 5 years in the vicinity the proposed scheme (last accessed 14/03/2025). Near the proposed works, projects that have been granted planning permission include retention of existing developments, typical extensions to domestic dwellings or the construction of new domestic dwellings. Regarding potential impacts to water quality, these projects will connect foul water and surface water outfalls to the local foul and storm water

²¹ <https://www.tii.ie/projects/>

²² <https://www.water.ie/projects/>

²³ <https://www.eirgrid.ie/community/projects-in-your-area>

²⁴ <https://www.tii.ie/public-transport/projects-and-improvements/>

²⁵ <https://www.water.ie/projects/?map=our-projects&id=627>



networks. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the developments that have been granted permission will have any hydrological connectivity to the proposed project nor significant effects in combination with the proposed scheme.

Key developments which shall be considered are large-scale developments in the region of the proposed scheme, there are none of these developments which have been further assessed in terms of in-combination effects with the proposed scheme and are presented in Table 6-5 below.

Table 6-5 - Planning applications near the proposed scheme.

Ref. No.	Date	Project / Applicant	Project Summary
22170	27/05/2022	Uisce Éireann	Tunnel sewer and associated shafts crossing under the River Shannon in Athlone Townland and Athlone and Bigmeadow Townland, Athlone Town Centre between The Quay Road on the western side of the river to The Strand Carpark south west of Strand St. on the eastern side of the river including works on The Quay Road and in the Strand Carpark.
2360447		IDA Ireland	The construction of a new access junction on the N55 Ballymahon Road, including road markings to facilitate a right turn lane, an internal access road (with a 7m wide carriageway) of approximately 465m length, internal roundabout and priority junctions, erection of totem signage at entrance, landscaped verges, 1.8m wide footpaths, 2m wide cycle lanes, site services and all associated site works

In the context of the existing land use and habitats within the footprint of and adjoining these projects and the sensitivities of the Lough Ree SAC, Lough Ree SPA, River Shannon Callows SAC and Middle Shannon Callow SPA and given the nature and scale of these projects, it is considered that they do not have any potential to give rise to adverse effects on any Natura 2000 sites in combination with the proposed development.

6.2.7 Conclusion

As detailed in the preceding sections, it can be concluded that, based on the small scale of the proposed works and the duration of the works themselves and any impacts arising from them, they will not give rise to adverse effects on any Natura 2000 site, in combination with other plans or projects.



7. Conclusion

The proposed scheme is not located within or adjacent to any Natura 2000 sites and as such there will be no direct impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.

During the construction phase surface water run-off from the proposed scheme site outfalls via the existing road drainage network to the River Shannon and the River Shannon Callows SAC and Middle Shannon Callows SPA are c. 725m downstream via the river from the proposed scheme. Taking account of the scale, extent and duration of the proposed construction works and considering the levels of potential contaminants the works could potential generate, impacts which could significantly affect the water quality of the River Shannon will not occur. As such there will be no likely significant effects to any qualifying interest habitats or species sites via this pathway.

The construction activities are occurring within the urban areas of Athlone town and are of relatively short duration. Given the works location in respect to the nearest Natura 2000 sites there will be no disturbance or displacement of any qualifying interest species accommodated within any Natura 2000 sites. The scheme site does not proffer any habitats that could be used by qualifying interest species otters or waterbirds. There is potential for qualifying interest species otter and waterbirds to utilise the River Shannon adjacent to the scheme site, however, the river channel is largely screened from the scheme site and construction near the river is of very short duration. As such there will be no significant disturbance to ex-situ otters or waterbirds. The usage of the cycle scheme will not result in an increase in noise levels or light levels and as such there will be no effects on any qualifying interest species when the cycle scheme is operational.

On the basis of objective information and in view of best scientific knowledge and applying a precautionary principle, it is concluded by the author of this report that with the absence of any mitigation measures the proposed Athlone Active Travel Schemes Bundle – Route F, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, will not result in likely significant effects on the River Shannon Callows SAC, Middle Shannon Callows SPA, Lough Ree SAC, Lough Ree SPA or any other Natura 2000 site. Thus, it is recommended that it is up to the competent authorities to make the final determination for the scheme to proceed to Appropriate Assessment.

Should the scope, nature or extent of the proposed scheme change, a new assessment (AA Screening Report or AA Screening Addendum Report) would be required.



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APPENDICES

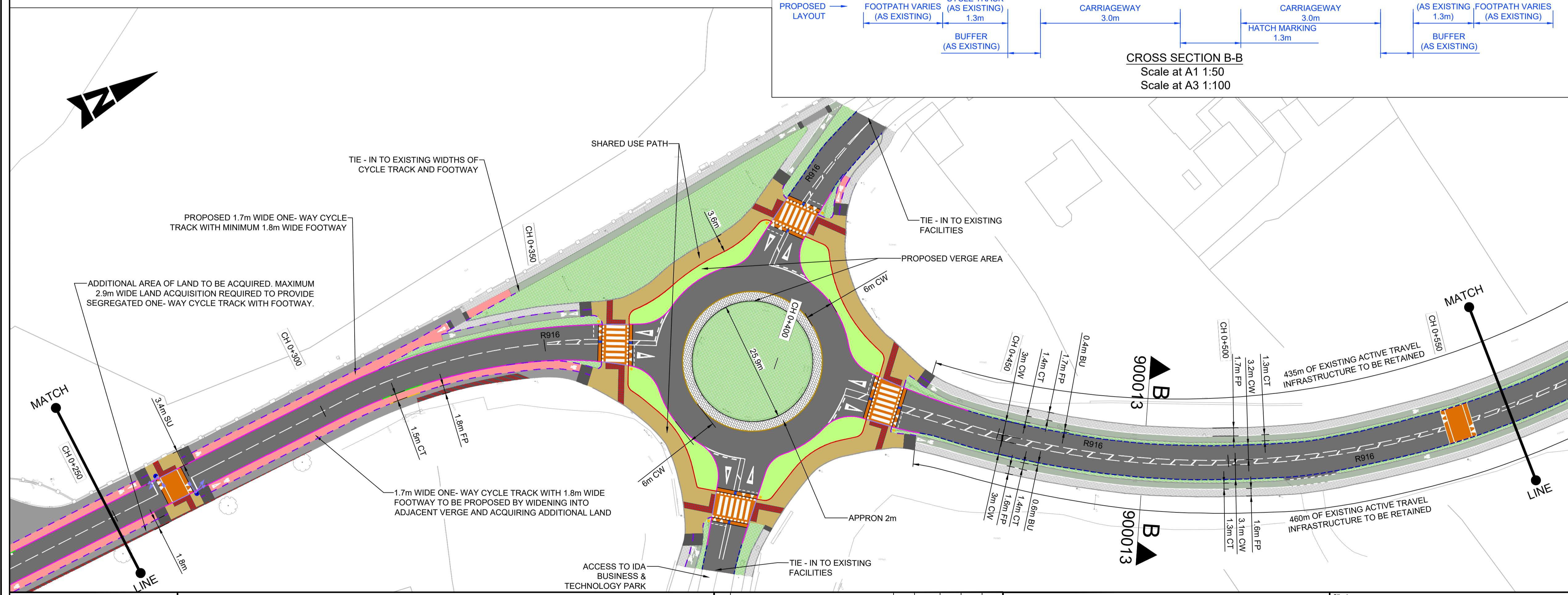
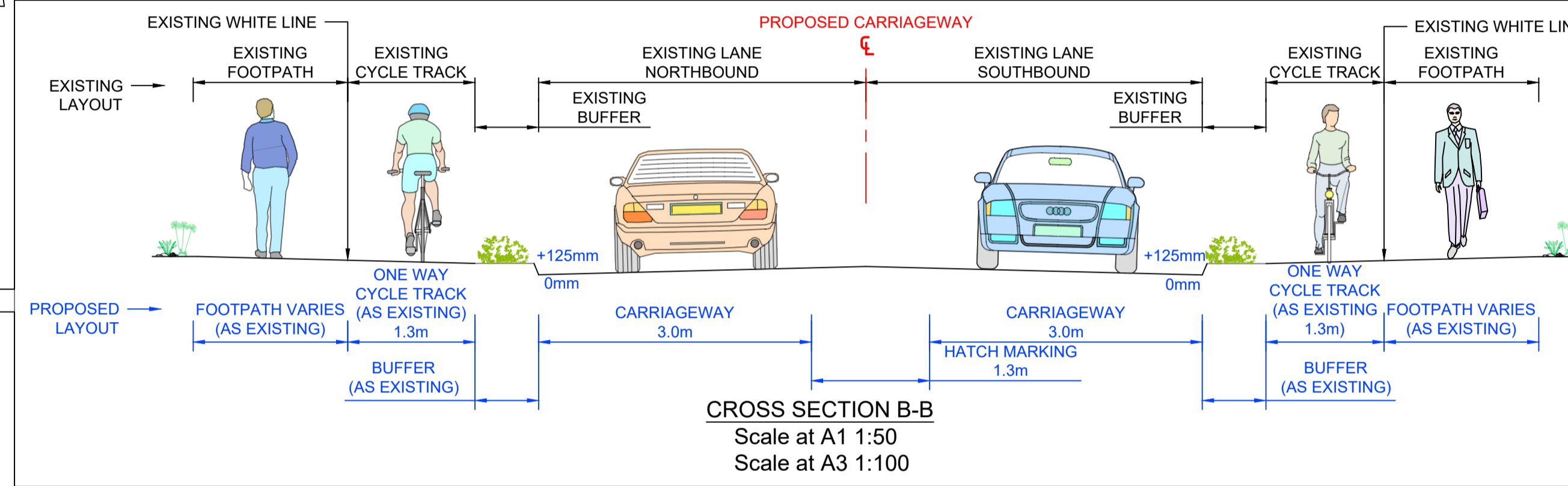
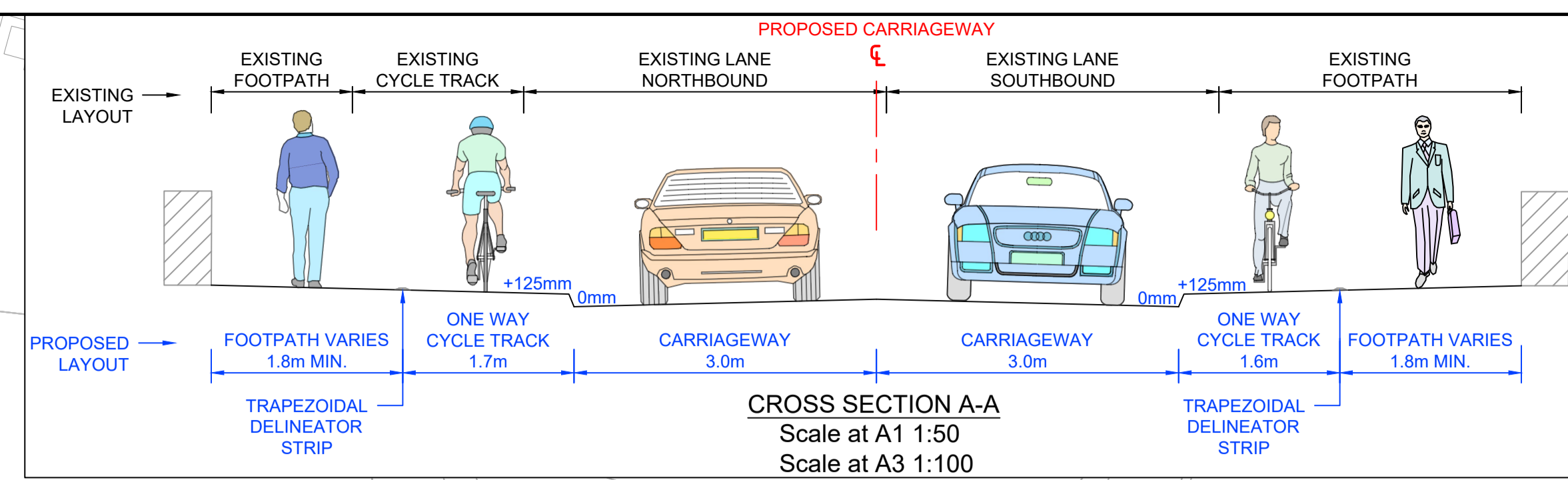
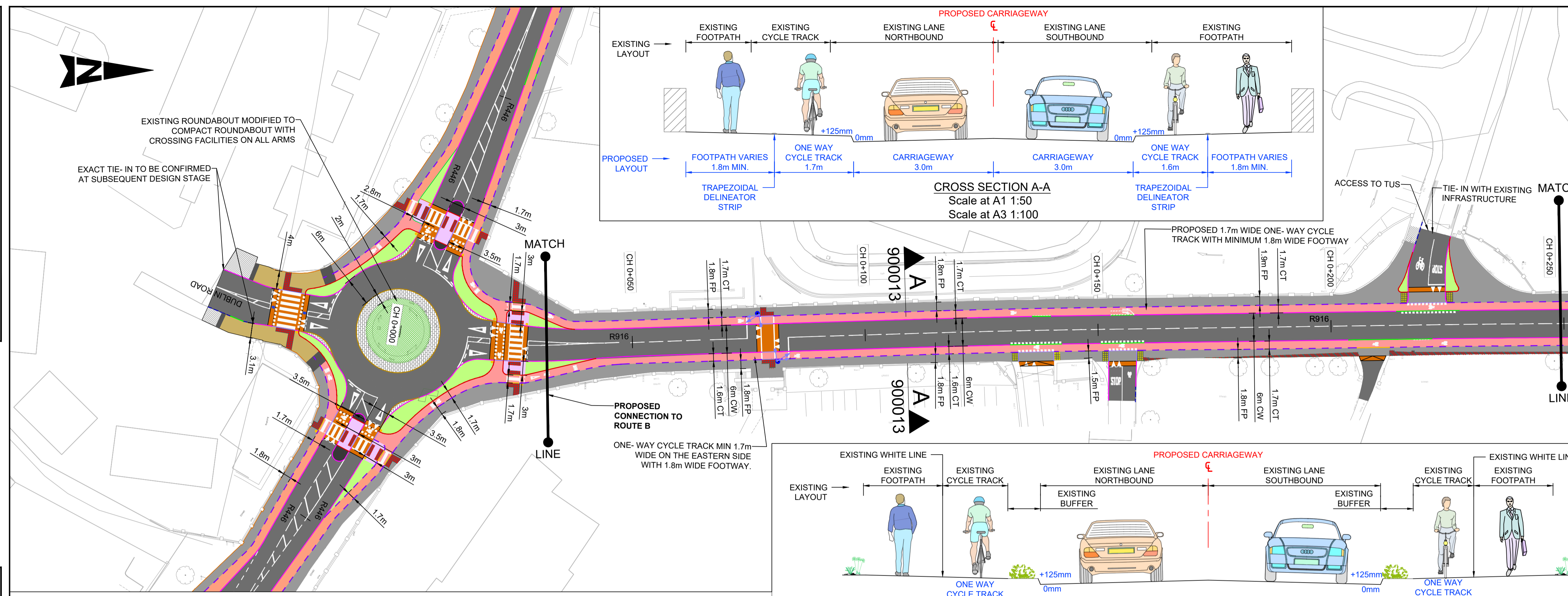
Appendix A. Preliminary Design Drawings



A1

DO NOT SCALE

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- GENERAL NOTES**
1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETRES UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE
 2. ONLY WRITTEN DIMENSIONS SHALL BE USED. NO DIMENSIONS SHALL BE SCALED FROM THE DRAWINGS
 3. ALL LEVELS ARE IN METRES AND ARE TO MALIN HEAD DATUM
 4. ALL COORDINATES ARE IN METRES AND ARE TO IRISH TRANSVERSE MERCATOR
 5. DRAWINGS ARE TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SPECIFICATION

- LEGEND**
- CARRIAGEWAY
 - PROPOSED SEGREGATION BUFFER/ HARD STANDING
 - PROPOSED CYCLE TRACK (STEPPED)
 - PROPOSED CYCLE TRACK (FOOTWAY LEVEL)
 - PROPOSED CYCLE LANE
 - PROPOSED SHARED USE FACILITY
 - PROPOSED NEW/ UPGRADED FOOTWAY
 - PROPOSED LANDSCAPING
 - PROPOSED REFUGE/ WAITING SPACE
 - PROPOSED RAISED TABLE/ RAMP
 - PROPOSED TRAFFIC ISLAND
 - PROPOSED RAMP
 - PROPOSED BUS SHELTER
 - LAND ACQUISITION REQUIRED
 - EXISTING LANDSCAPING TO BE RETAINED
 - EXISTING FOOTWAY TO BE RETAINED
 - EXISTING CYCLE TRACK TO BE RETAINED
 - EXISTING CYCLE LANE TO BE RETAINED
 - EXISTING SEGREGATION BUFFER/ HARD STANDING TO BE RETAINED
 - PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (CONTROLLED CROSSING - RED COLOUR)
 - PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (UNCONTROLLED CROSSING - BUFF COLOUR)
 - PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (CORDUROY)
 - PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (TRAMLINE AND LADDER)
 - PROPOSED FULL HEIGHT CONCRETE KERB (UPSTAND 100/125mm)
 - PROPOSED CONCRETE KERB (UPSTAND 60mm)
 - PROPOSED FLUSH KERB (UPSTAND 0-6mm)
 - PROPOSED FLUSH KERB AT RAISED CROSSING
 - PROPOSED BEVELLED ENTRANCE KERB
 - PROPOSED KASSEL KERB
 - PROPOSED TRAPEZOIDAL DELINEATOR STRIP
 - PROPOSED EDGING KERB
 - EXISTING KERB TO BE RETAINED
 - PROPOSED BULL NOSED KERB (UPSTAND 50mm)
 - PROPOSED BOLLARD
 - PROPOSED BELISHA BEACON
 - PRIMARY TRAFFIC SIGNAL ASPECT
 - SECONDARY TRAFFIC SIGNAL ASPECT
 - PEDESTRIAN THREE ASPECT SIGNAL
 - CYCLIST THREE ASPECT SIGNAL
 - PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN PUSH BUTTON UNIT
 - PROPOSED CYCLIST PUSH BUTTON UNIT

- NOTES:**
1. ROAD WIDTH TO BE MINIMUM 6.0m WIDE UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
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 ATHLONE ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEMES BUNDLE



Rialtas na hÉireann
 Government of Ireland
 Tionscadal Éireann
 Project Ireland
 2040

Rev	Description	By	Date	Chk'd	Rev'd	Auth
CO1	PART 8 SUBMISSION	RD	28.10.25	JT	AB	ST

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 Tel (+353) 091 786 050 Fax (+353) 091 779 830

Client: WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

Project: ATHLONE ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEMES BUNDLE

Purpose: FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION

Title: ROUTE F GENERAL ARRANGEMENT SHEET 1 OF 4

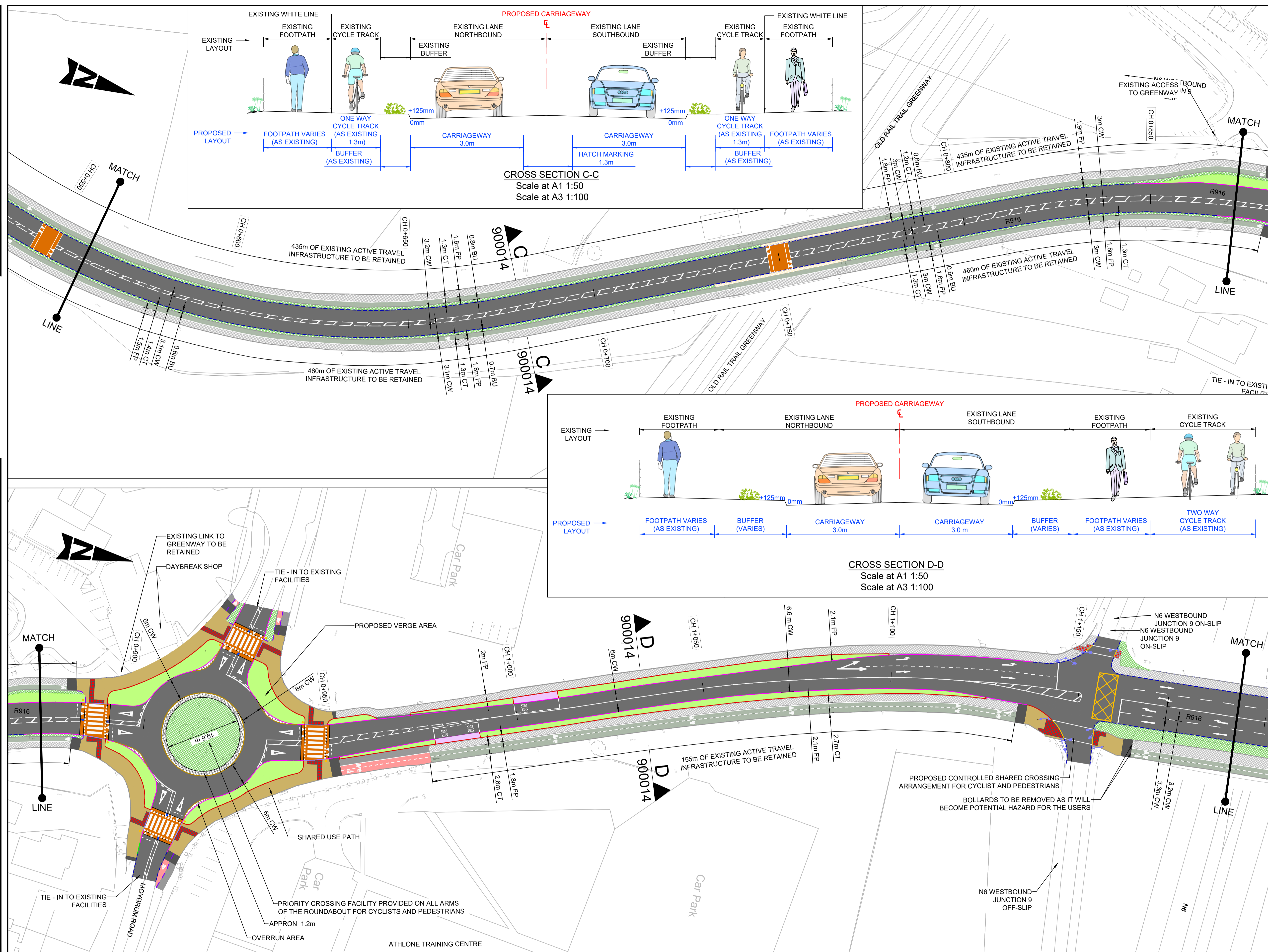
Original Scale	Drawn	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised
1:500 at A1 1:1000 at A3	RD	JT	AB	ST
Date	Date	Date	Date	Date
28.10.25	28.10.25	28.10.25	28.10.25	28.10.25

Status	Drawing Number	Rev
A2	0086381-ATK-F1-01-DR-CE-900100	CO1

A1

DO NOT SCALE

File: 0086381-ATK-F1-01-DR-CE-900101.dwg
Date: Oct 29, 2025 - 4:36pm
Plotted by: GREE093



- GENERAL NOTES**
1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETRES UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE
 2. ONLY WRITTEN DIMENSIONS SHALL BE USED. NO DIMENSIONS SHALL BE SCALED FROM THE DRAWINGS
 3. ALL LEVELS ARE IN METRES AND ARE TO MALIN HEAD DATUM
 4. ALL COORDINATES ARE IN METRES AND ARE TO IRISH TRANSVERSE MERCATOR
 5. DRAWINGS ARE TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SPECIFICATION

- LEGEND**
- CARRIAGEWAY
 - PROPOSED SEGREGATION BUFFER/ HARD STANDING
 - PROPOSED CYCLE TRACK (STEPPED)
 - PROPOSED CYCLE TRACK (FOOTWAY LEVEL)
 - PROPOSED CYCLE LANE
 - PROPOSED SHARED USE FACILITY
 - PROPOSED NEW/ UPGRADED FOOTWAY
 - PROPOSED LANDSCAPING
 - PROPOSED REFUGE/ WAITING SPACE
 - PROPOSED RAISED TABLE/ RAMP
 - PROPOSED TRAFFIC ISLAND
 - PROPOSED RAMP
 - PROPOSED BUS SHELTER
 - LAND ACQUISITION REQUIRED
 - EXISTING LANDSCAPING TO BE RETAINED
 - EXISTING FOOTWAY TO BE RETAINED
 - EXISTING CYCLE TRACK TO BE RETAINED
 - EXISTING CYCLE LANE TO BE RETAINED
 - EXISTING SEGREGATION BUFFER/ HARD STANDING TO BE RETAINED
 - PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (CONTROLLED CROSSING - RED COLOUR)
 - PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (UNCONTROLLED CROSSING - BUFF COLOUR)
 - PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (CORDUROY)
 - PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (TRAMLINE AND LADDER)
 - PROPOSED FULL HEIGHT CONCRETE KERB (UPSTAND 100/125mm)
 - PROPOSED CONCRETE KERB (UPSTAND 60mm)
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 - PROPOSED TRAPEZOIDAL DELINEATOR STRIP
 - PROPOSED EDGING KERB
 - EXISTING KERB TO BE RETAINED
 - PROPOSED BULL NOSED KERB (UPSTAND 50mm)
 - PROPOSED BOLLARD
 - PROPOSED BELISHA BEACON
 - PRIMARY TRAFFIC SIGNAL ASPECT
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 - PEDESTRIAN THREE ASPECT SIGNAL
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ATHLONE ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEMES BUNDLE

Risk Level	X	Atkins Base Line - Low Risk
		Atkins Sensitive - Medium Risk
		Atkins Private - High Risk
		Client Critical - Already Marked



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2040



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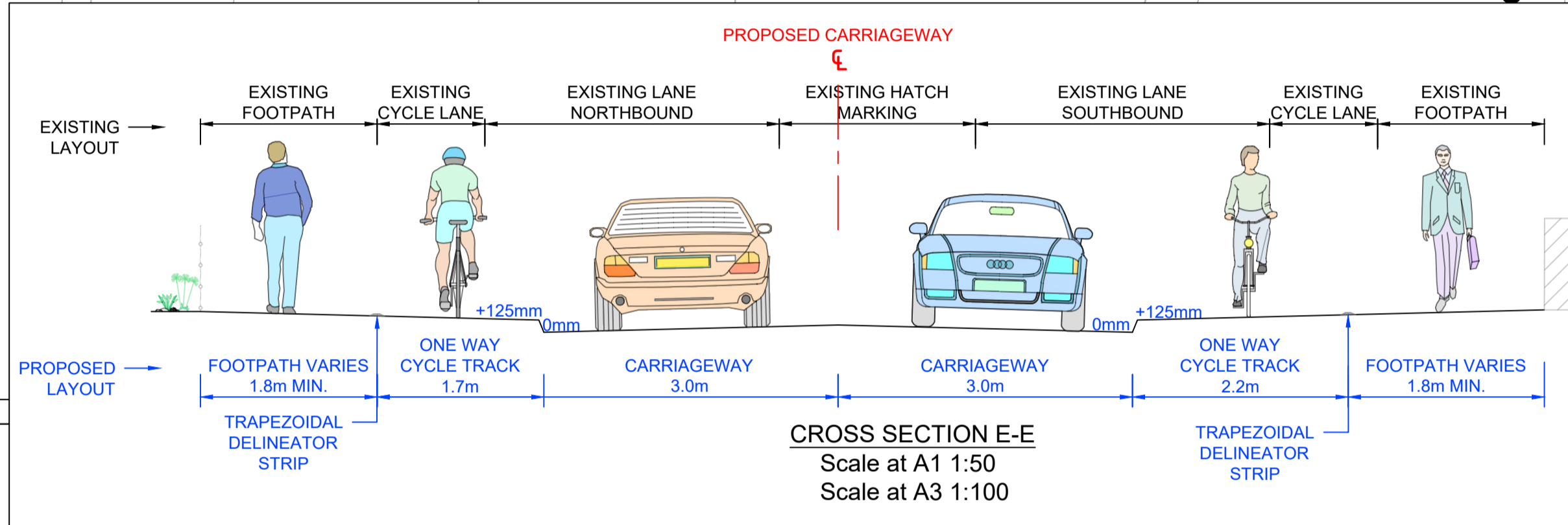
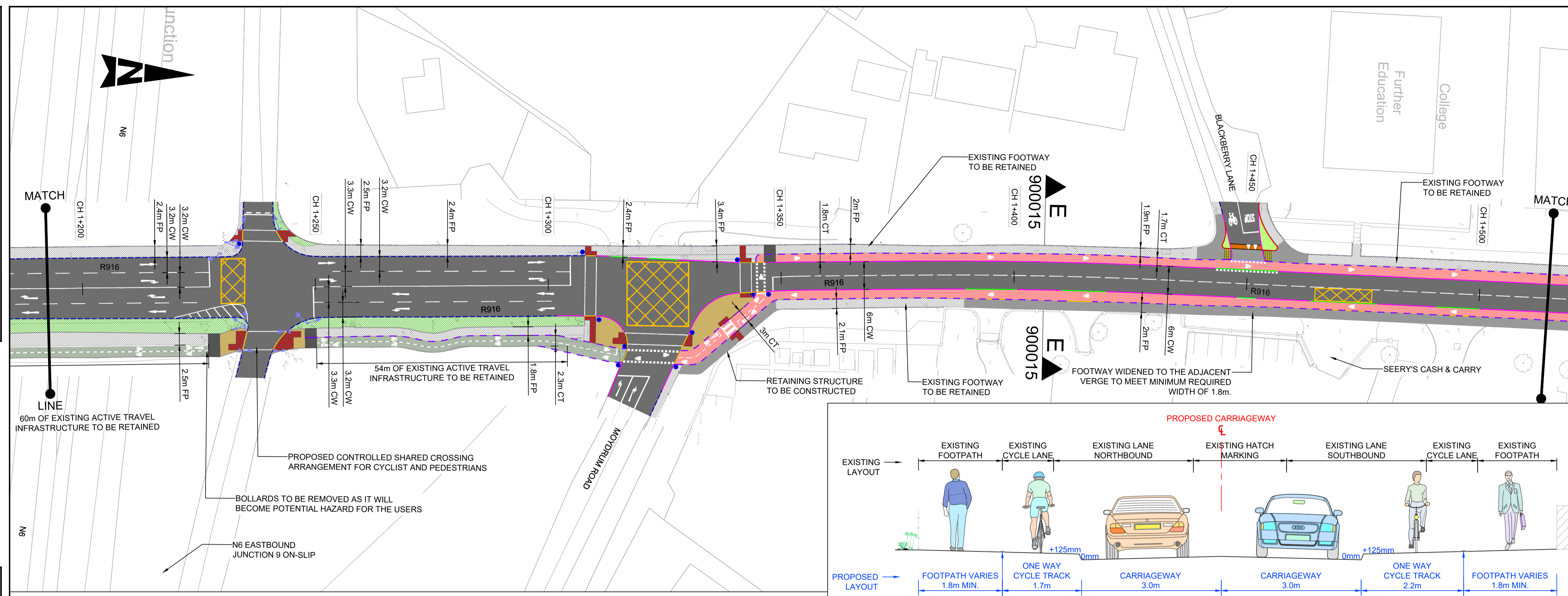
1st Floor Technology House Parkmore Technology Park, Galway
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Fax (+353) 091 779 830

Client: WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

Project: ATHLONE ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEMES BUNDLE

Purpose: FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION		Title: ROUTE F GENERAL ARRANGEMENT SHEET 2 of 4	
Original Scale: 1:500 at A1 1:1000 at A3	Drawn: RD Date: 28.10.25	Checked: JT Date: 28.10.25	Reviewed: AB Date: 28.10.25
Status: A2	Drawing Number: 0086381-ATK-F1-01-DR-CE-900101	Authorised: ST	Rev: C01

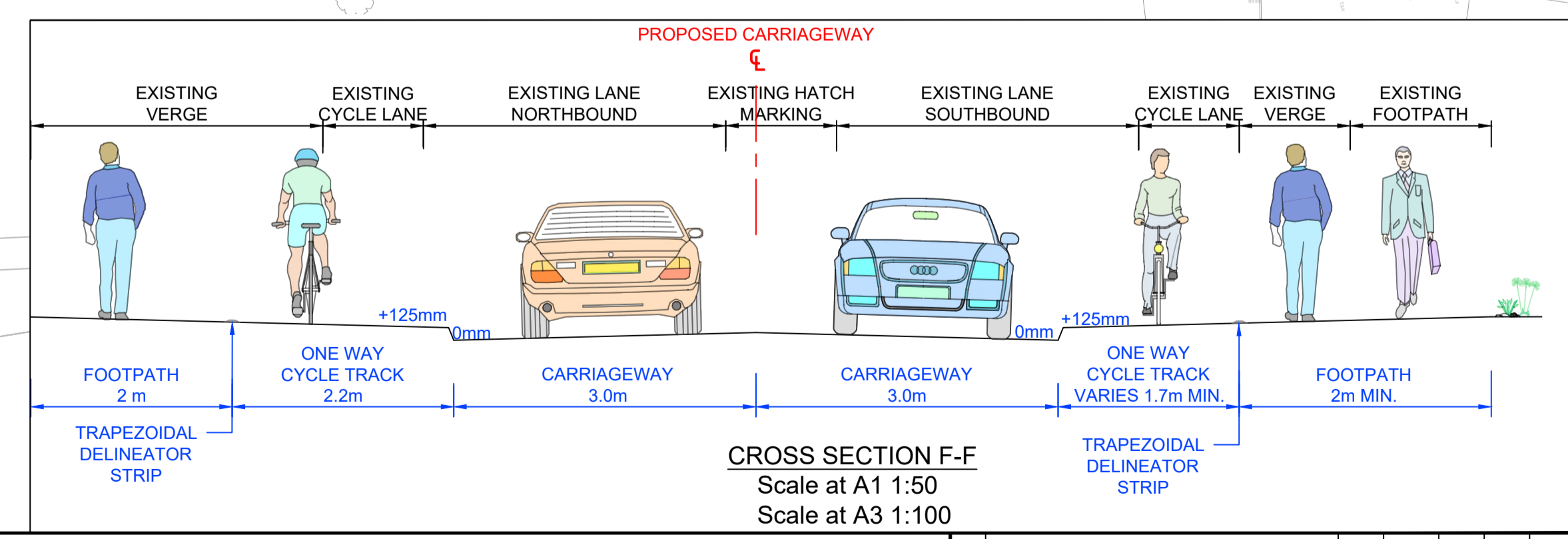
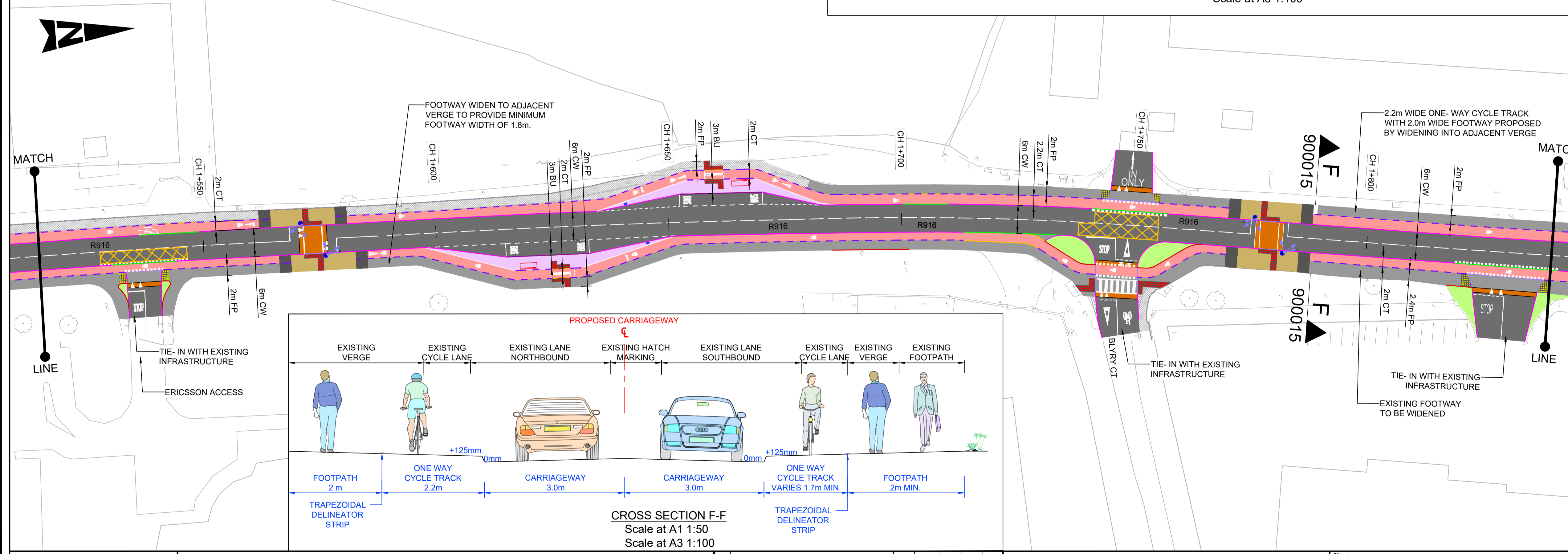
A1
DO NOT SCALE



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Purpose		FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION			
Title		ROUTE F GENERAL ARRANGEMENT SHEET 3 OF 4			
Original Scale	1:500 at A1	Drawn	RD	Checked	JT
1:1000 at A3		Date	28.10.25	Date	28.10.25
Status	Drawing Number	Reviewed	AB	Authorised	ST
A2	0086381-ATK-F1-01-DR-CE-900102	Date	28.10.25	Date	28.10.25
Rev		Rev		Rev	
C01		C01		C01	

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ATHLONE ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEMES BUNDLE
Risk Level: X Atkins Base Line - Low Risk, Atkins Sensitive - Medium Risk, Atkins Private - High Risk, Client Critical - Already Marked



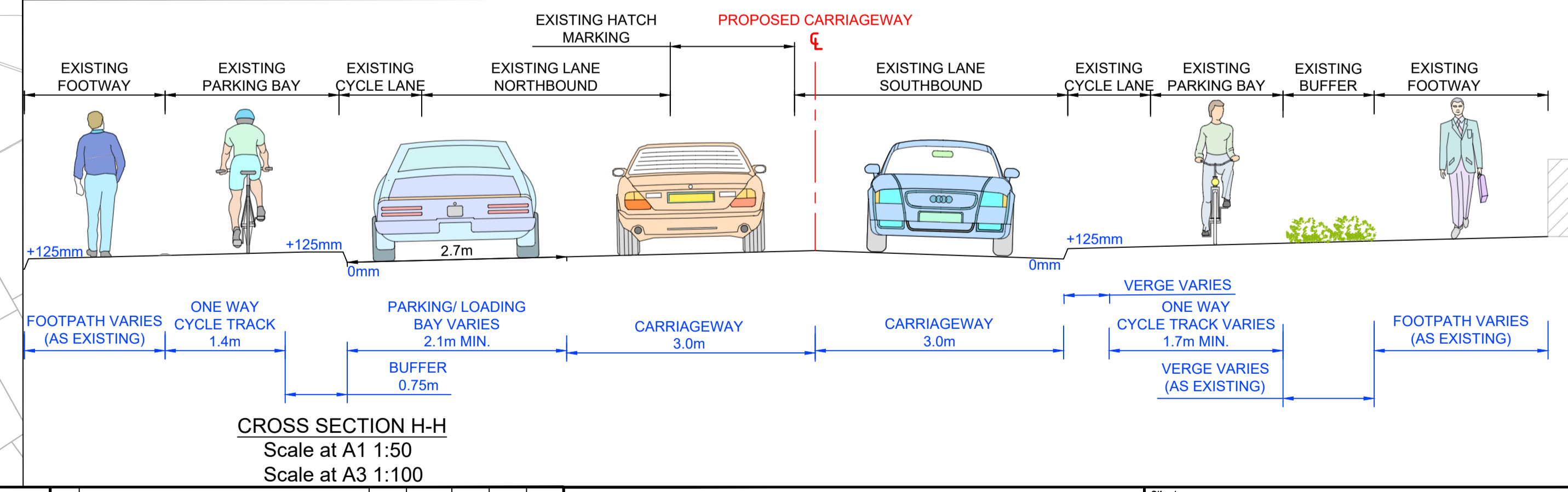
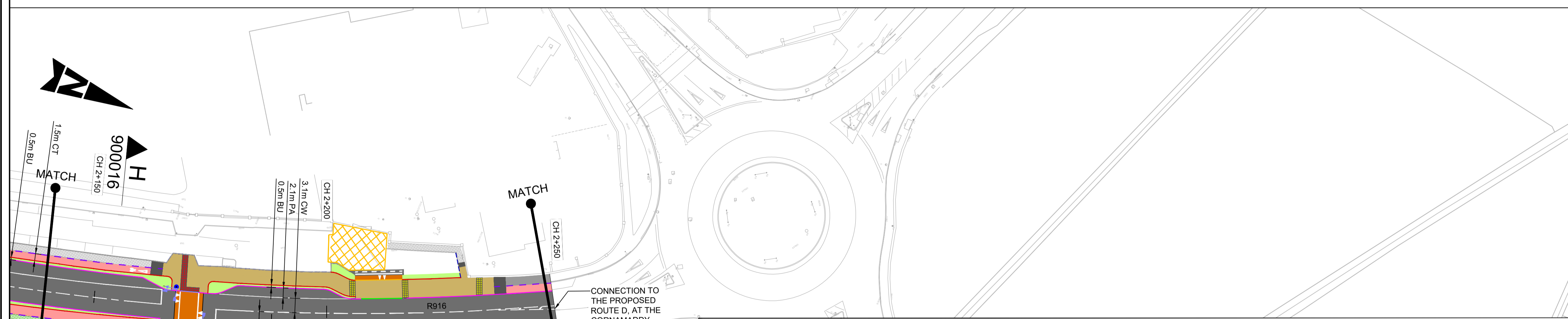
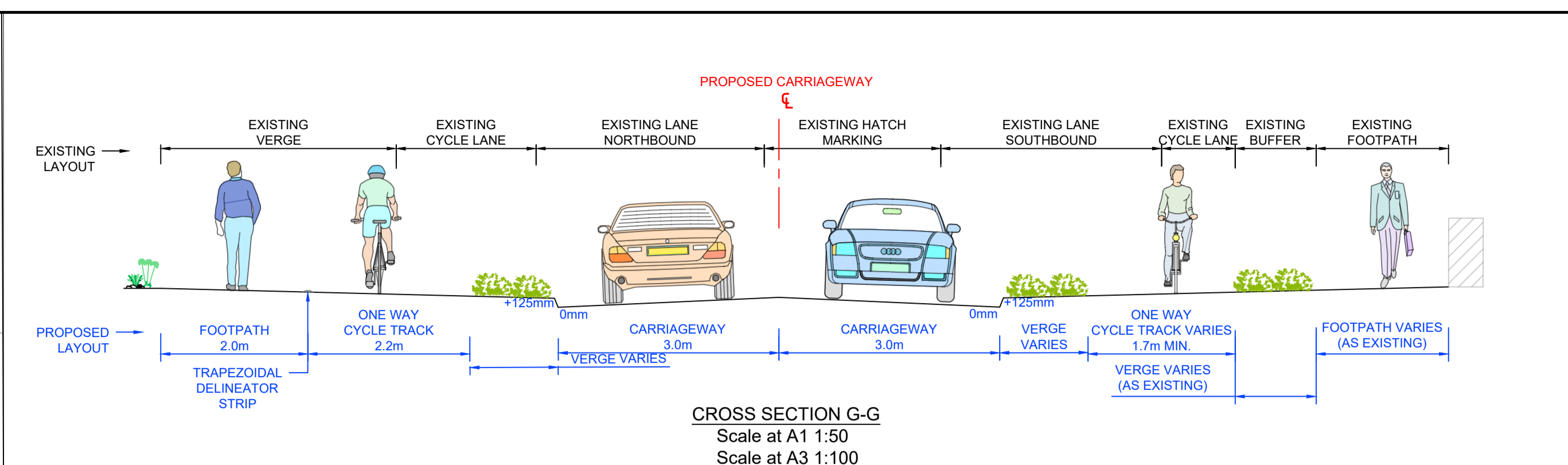
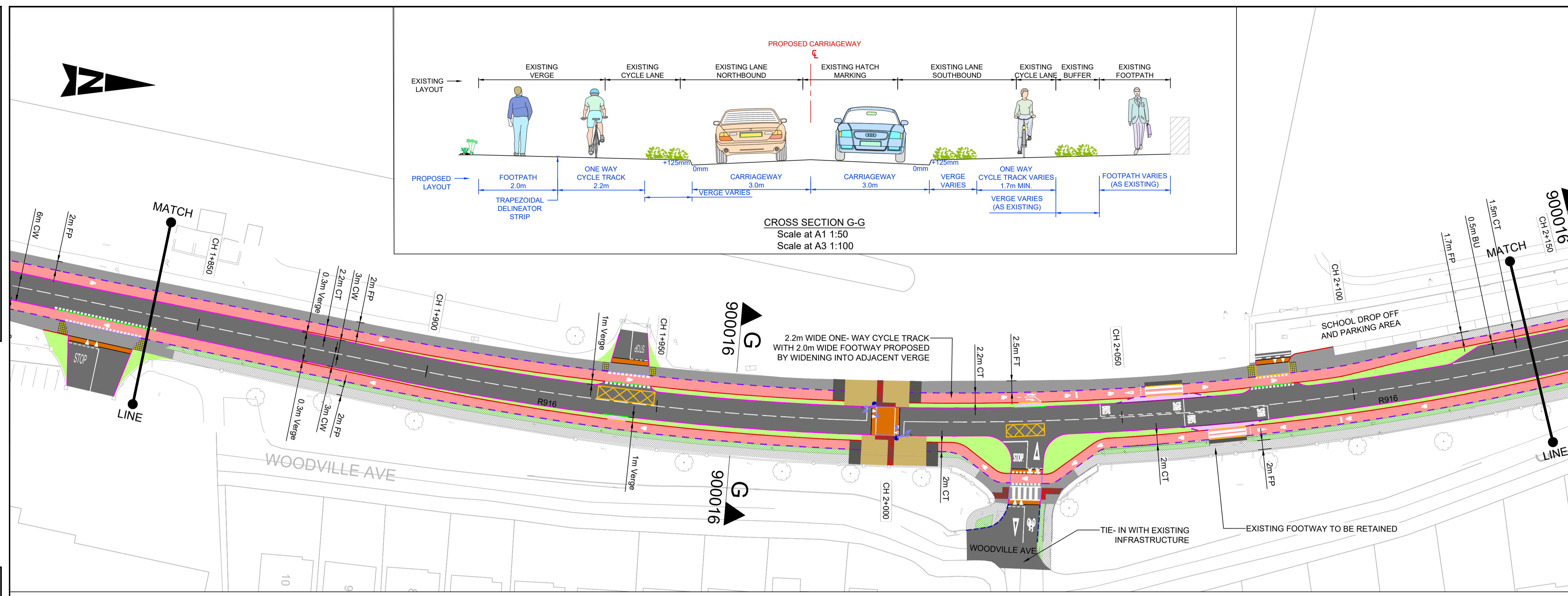
Atkins House, 150-155 Ainslie Road, Dublin
Unit 2B, 2200 Cork Airport Business Park, Cork
1st Floor Technology House, Parkmore Technology Park, Galway

Client: WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
Project: ATHLONE ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEMES BUNDLE

A1

DO NOT SCALE

File: 0086381-ATK-F1-01-DR-CE-900103.dwg
Date: Oct 29, 2025 - 4:39pm
Plotted by: GREG093



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Rev	Description	By	Date	Chk'd	Rev'd	Auth

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Client: WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

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Purpose: FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION

Title: ROUTE F GENERAL ARRANGEMENT SHEET 4 OF 4

Original Scale	1:500 at A1	Drawn	RD	Checked	JT	Reviewed	AB	Authorised	ST
Scale	1:1000 at A3	Date	28.10.25	Date	28.10.25	Date	28.10.25	Date	28.10.25
Status	A2	Drawing Number	0086381-ATK-XX-XX-DR-CE-900103	Rev					

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