

N63 Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme Longford Town

Part 8 Project Description and Overview



Longford County Council

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1 Introduction

Project Background

In 2013 Longford Co. Council commissioned a Consultant to undertake a cycle strategy for Longford town. The objective of the cycle strategy was to provide a clear and concise plan for future development of a cycle network in the Longford Town area. The Strategy identified the need for a cycle track on both sides of the N63 from the junction of the L-7011 Oakvale road to the roundabout on the N4 Bypass of Longford covering a distance of approximately 1.5km. Longford Co. Council obtained funding through a Tii Safety Scheme for the provision of footpath and cycle track on the Major's Well road section of the N63 from the Oakvale road to the TempleMichael terrace Junction, a distance of approximately 500m and construction works are underway since October 2021.

This proposed project looks at the continuation from where the cycle and pedestrian paths terminate under the Tii scheme, onwards along the N63 Ballinalee Road to the N4 junction indicated in red figure 1.1 below.



2 Scheme Context

2.1 Need for the scheme

At present along the proposed area under consideration there is no pedestrian footpath on the Northern side of the N63 and no cycling facilities at all on either side.

This road being a National secondary route forms an important arterial link to Longford Town centre connecting from the N4 National Primary route.

Contained within this 1 km section of the Ballinalee Road is a mixed variety of developments. Among the direct accesses along this arterial route to Longford town are 2 schools (Templemichael College secondary school and St. Eimers National School), numerous residential estates, industrial estates and factory entrances, and a large nursing home. Two other large employers in the town namely Abbot Pharmaceutical the Irish Prison Services HQ are also accessed along this route. All of these contribute to large numbers using this route daily whether they be school goers, commuters to work, residents, visitors, goods delivery, recreation, exercise, connection to bus and rail or tourists.

There is currently little incentive for any of the above mentioned user types to opt for cycling or walking on their daily travels of this route given the lack of pedestrian and cycle facilities.

2.2 Aims and Objectives

2.2.1 Promote Children walking and cycling to and from School

A key objective of this scheme is to address the need for children to incorporate physical activity into their daily routine and promote good health and well being at a young age. The scheme should provide a viable option for the children attending St. Eimers National School and Templemichael College to cycle or walk to school as an alternative to being transported by car allowing children to increase their daily physical activity.

Another objective of this scheme is to relieve congestion at school drop off and pick up times. Potentially every child or family that opts to walk or cycle to school will represent one less vehicle parked at the school gates at drop off and collection times.

2.2.2 Improve road safety for pedestrians and cyclists

Another key objective of this scheme is to improve the road safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Currently, with no dedicated cycling facilities on this route, both cyclists and pedestrians either share the single footpath on the South side of the N63 or the cyclists opt to share the carriageway with live traffic. The chosen option should aim to reduce conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and motorists and improve safety for all user groups.

2.2.3 To create an attractive alternative for commuters on their travels to and from work

Similar to school goers in the area as described in 2.2.1 above an objective of this scheme is to promote the incorporation of physical activity into the daily commutes for people working in the area thus promoting good health and well being among adults. Reducing congestion is also linked to this objective.

2.2.4 To cater for tourists visiting or holidaying in the area.

An objective of this scheme is to promote Longford town as a tourist destination and to encourage cyclist to visit an explore the town and its surrounds.

2.2.5 **To reduce the numbers of cars in use and lighten congestion on this route**

An objective to reduce congestion on the route and in Longford town in general to make it a more attractive place to visit and to reduce harmful emissions.

2.2.6 **To provide ease of connection to bus and rail**

Another objective of this scheme is to improve connectivity to Longford bus and rail stations for cyclists and pedestrians to further reduce dependence on cars for journeys in and out of the town and county

3 Main Project Elements

Cycle Tracks

The project proposals include the provision of a new 2 metre wide cycle track on either side of the N63 from the junction of Ard Michael estate to just past the entrance to the Laurels estate adjacent to the N4 junction. The cycle track will be located within the existing grass verge.

Footpaths

A new 2.0m wide footpath will be provided along the Northern side of the N63 where currently no footpath exists. On the Southern side of the N63 parts of the existing footpath will remain in place with the exception of areas where a new footpath alignment is required to facilitate the cycle track within the grass verge.

Junction Tightening and cycle and pedestrian priority

The proposals include junction tightening measures to all junctions/side roads accessing onto the N63. This consists of reducing the pedestrian and cycle crossing distance by reducing the corner radii and in some cases by reducing the road width.

Under the proposals pedestrians and cyclists will be given priority across a number of junctions by means of the provision of a raised crossing with colour demarcation.

Toucan Crossing

A new Toucan crossing will be provided adjacent to the entrance to the Laurels Estate nearest the N4 to facilitate pedestrians and cyclist crossing the road at this location.

Public Lighting

Where necessary, existing public lighting columns which are encroaching into proposed cycle or pedestrian paths will be relocated to the rear of the footpath. No additional public lighting poles are proposed with the existing lighting heads to be configured to provide adequate lighting to all parts of the proposed and existing footpath and cycle tracks on both side of the N63.

Hedge row cut back

Longford Co. Council engaged the services of a professional Arboriculturalist to determine the extents of hedgerows and trees that need removal to facilitate the proposed development. Please refer to the tree survey report contained within the appendices

4 Appendix A: Existing photos along proposed scheme



Image shows view towards Major Wells Road (Town Centre) from LHS with existing 2m path and Public Lighting columns.



Image shows View towards Major Wells Road (Town Centre) from RHS with existing verge and hedgerows.



View continuing towards junction for Oaklands Estate and traffic exit from St. Eimears N.S. It is proposed to move all Public Lighting Columns in this photo to the rear of Existing footpath.



Image shows View from Major Wells Road (Town Centre) with existing wide verge and hedgerows.



View continuing along N63 from town centre to N4 Roundabout showing existing path, hedge and Public Lighting columns.



View continuing along N63 from town centre to N4 Roundabout showing existing wide verge and Hedgerows.



View continuing along N63 from town centre to N4 Roundabout showing existing path, hedge and Public Lighting columns. It is proposed to reinstate the old kerbline when Junction Tightening.



View of junction at entry to St.Emers Estate and one way entry to St. Emers N.S. It is proposed to tighten this very wide junction to a 6m radius.



Another image showing this very wide junction at entry to St. Emers Estate and National School



Image shows View towards Major Wells Road (Town Centre) from RHS @junctions. It is proposed to reinstate the old kerbline when Junction Tightening in this location.



View at very wide junction at entrance to temporary Contractors compound. It is proposed to tighten this very wide junction to a 6m radius.



View continuing along N63 from town centre to N4 Roundabout showing existing wide verge , trees and ESB pole.



Image shows View towards Major Wells Road (Town Centre) from RHS @junctions. It is proposed to reinstate the old kerbline when Junction Tightening at this location.



Image shows Existing three phase ESB pole and proposed route of new footpath/cycle path. This will necessitate the removal of this tree in the foreground of this photo.



View continuing along N63 from town centre to N4 Roundabout and a proposed footpath and cycle track between the rows of trees.



Image shows the extent of hedgerow to be removed in this location for proposed footpath/cycle lane to be located on the inside of lighting column and row of trees .



Image shows view towards Main Business and Technology Park junction from N4 Roundabout. Existing footpath and verge is shown in the foreground.



View continuing from Main Business and Technology Park junction to N4 Roundabout. Existing footpath and verge is shown in the foreground.



View at wide junction at entrance to Longford Business and Technology Park. It is proposed to tighten this wide junction to a 9m radius.



View to The Laurels Junction looking out from the Business and Technology Industrial park entrance.



View to Business and Technology Park from the Laurels Road junction.

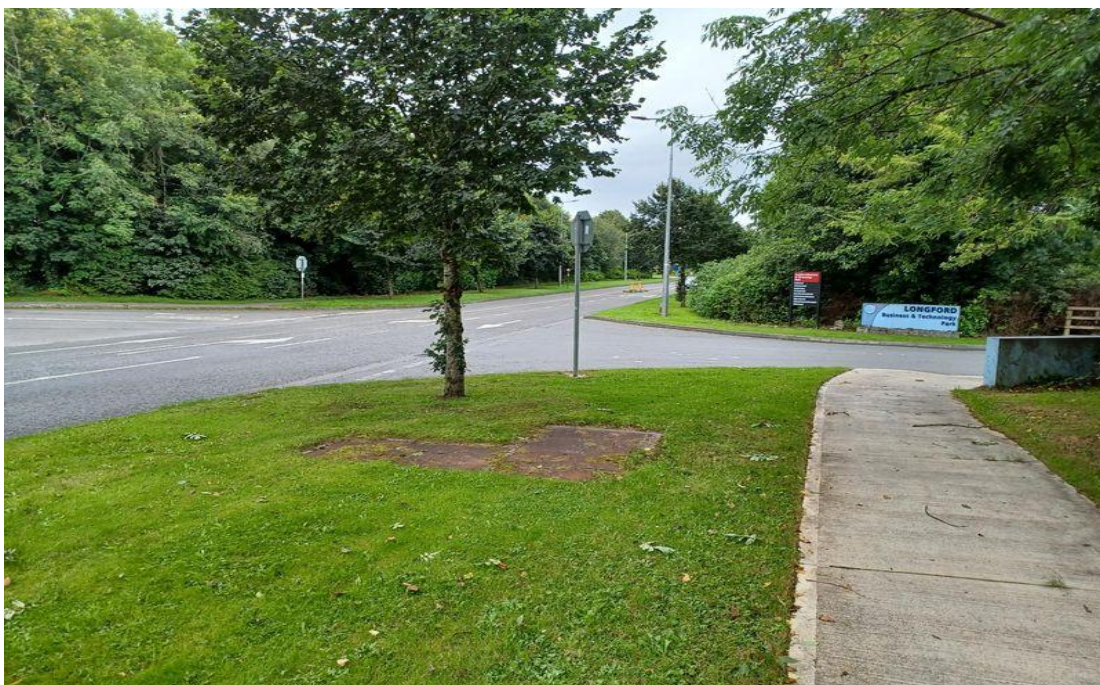


Image shows view from N4 Roundabout side of Business and Technology Park junction.



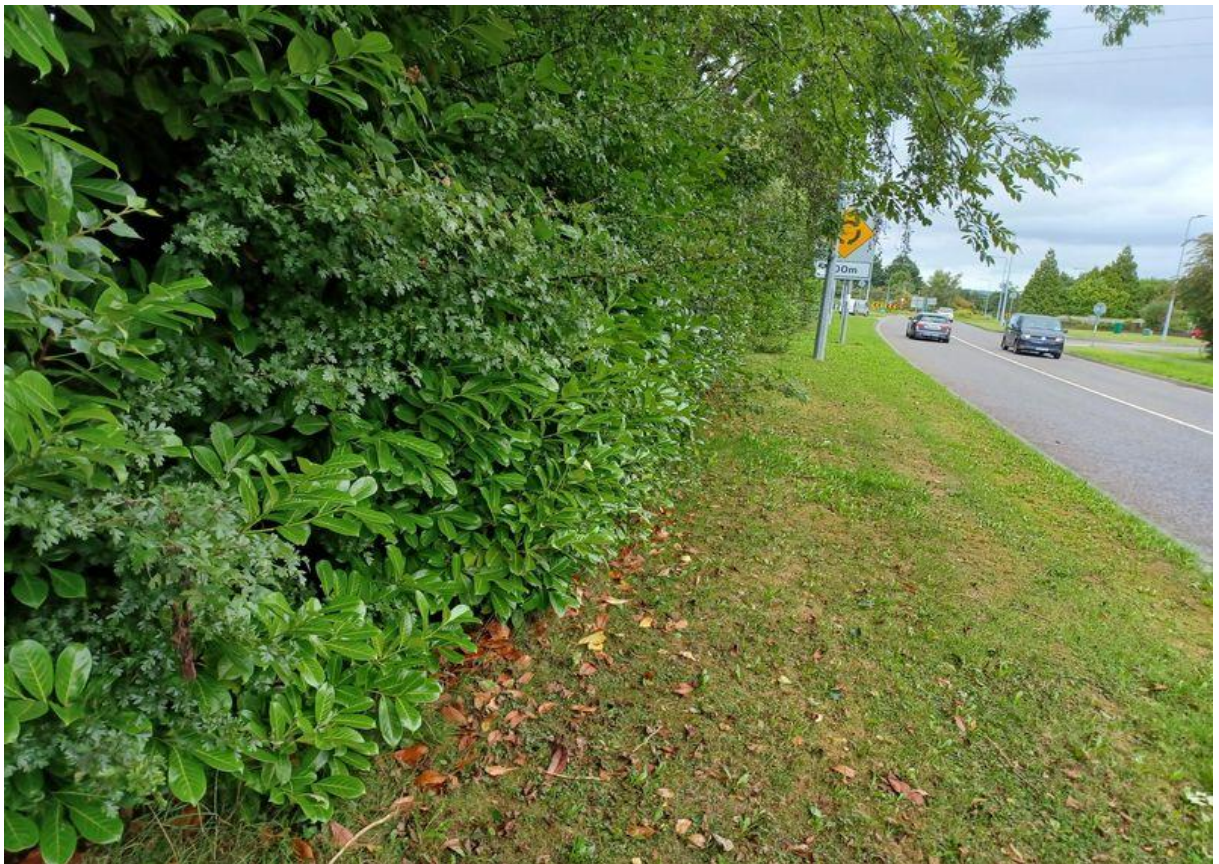
View of short length of existing path which serves the Business and Technology Park and crosses the N63 as shown.



Image shows junction at entrance for Green Isle Foods. It is proposed to tighten this wide junction to a 9m radius.



View from N4 Roundabout on RHS showing extent of Hedgerow and Trees to be removed for proposed Pedestrian and Cycle track route.



View towards N4 Roundabout on RHS showing extent of Hedgerow and Trees to be removed for proposed Pedestrian and Cycle track route.



View from N4 Roundabout on LHS showing existing 2m path and verge .



View from N4 Roundabout on LHS showing existing 2m path and verge .



View of junction at entrance to The Laurels Estate. It is proposed to tighten this junction to a 3m radius.