

Active Travel Scheme, LD/24/0003 Stone Park NS to Silver Birches Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme.

Public Consultation Report In Accordance with Section 38 Road Traffic Act 1994 and “Guidelines on Traffic Works Procedures” Issued by the Department of Transport In October 2023



Longford County Council

Nov. 2025

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To: John Brannigan, Director of Services for Corporate, Regeneration and Active Travel.

Following on from an earlier determination that Section 38 Road Traffic Act 1994 is the appropriate process for the assessment and implementation of the proposed works titled “Active Travel Scheme, LD/24/0003 Stone Park NS to Silver Birches Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme.”, a non-statutory public consultation process was undertaken to determine local attitudes and responses to the proposed works. This report outlines this consultation process and the decisions and actions that arise from it.

As mentioned, an earlier determination process was carried out to determine if Section 38 Road Traffic Act 1994 was the appropriate process for the assessment and implementation of the proposed works, a copy of this determination report is attached.

Being satisfied that the requirements of the Section 38 Guidelines (issued by the Department of Transport in Oct 2023, see attached) have been fully complied with in relation to the above proposed development, I have prepared the following report in accordance with the requirements of Section 8 of the above Guidelines and formally submit same to you for a Traffic Works Order to be signed off.

This report concludes by requesting a “Traffic Works Order” to be formally signed off in the form of a Chief Executive’s Order approving the proposed works outlined hereafter.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Brian Kelly'.

**Senior Executive Engineer,
Active Travel.**

1 INTRODUCTION

The Stonepark NS to Silver Birches Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme is required to cater for pedestrians and cyclist using the L-5213 road to commute between the School and Gratton Og GAA recreational facilities. Currently there is no footpath and the road is narrow along this section. The scheme will reduce traffic near the school during drop-off and pick-up times, posing less of a risk to those walking or cycling, in total the proposed scheme is 750m. The scheme will also consist of the realignment and upgrading of the existing Zebra Crossing to a raised Zebra Crossing and the provision of an uncontrolled raised crossing at the existing entrance to Gratton Og GAA facilities.

It is hoped that when the scheme is completed pedestrian and cyclist volumes will increase. The current Active Travel proposal seeks to proactively respond to existing and future pedestrian needs of the area, proving it worthwhile and timely. The proposed works are detailed on the attached drawings.

2 IS SECTION 38 OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC ACT 1994 APPROPRIATE

2.1 Determining the Applicability of Section 38

The Guidelines on Traffic Works Procedures, issued by the Department of Transport in October 2023 requires that a separate determination exercise is undertaken to determine the works described herein, which are proposed to be carried out by Active Travel Section, are appropriate for assessment and implementation in accordance with Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act 1994.

Based on the proposed project, the following works qualify as traffic calming under Section 38(9) of the Road Traffic Act 1994:

- The provision of a raised Zebra and uncontrolled Crossings – These will enhance pedestrian safety and encourage reduced vehicle speeds.

This determination was carried out in July 2025 and the conclusion was that this is indeed the correct procedure. A copy of this Determination Document is attached.

2.2 Planning Considerations

There are a number of exemptions from the Part 8 Procedure, with one of those exemptions relating to certain proposals under Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act 1994.

“works, other than works involving road widening, to enhance public bus services or improve facilities for cyclists provided under section 95 (as amended by section 37 of the Road Traffic Act 1994) of the Road Traffic Act 1961 or under section 38 of the Road Traffic Act 1994”. Accordingly, any works “to enhance public bus services or improve facilities for cyclists” which are delivered under Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act 1994, are exempted from the normal local authority Part VIII planning process.”

Stone Park NS to Silver Birches Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme promotes improvements to cycling facilities, the scheme is therefore exempt under the legislation, a Part 8 planning process is not required.

3 NON-STATUTORY PUBLIC CONSULTATION, SUBMISSIONS, ETC.

Once it was decided that Section 38 was the appropriate process, Section 8 of the Guidelines Document provided for a Non-Statutory Public Consultation process to be undertaken to get local feedback from the residents regarding the proposed works.

A notice of consultation was published in the Longford Leader. Plans and particulars of the proposed scheme were made available for inspection at the Planning Counter, Longford County Council, Aras An Chontae, and on Longford County web page, <https://www.longfordcoco.ie/services/roads/public-consultation->

Submissions and observations in relation to the proposed works could be emailed to activetravel@longfordcoco.ie. Alternatively, submissions and observations could be made in writing and posted to: Submissions, Active Travel Scheme, Longford County, Traffic Calming Measures and Pedestrian Crossings, Bundle, Longford County Council, 2 Church Street, Co. Longford, N39 W1 X7

All submissions and observations were to be received before 5pm on 30th August 2025. Seven submissions were received concerning various aspects of the proposals. Below is a brief description of the submissions and Active Travel proposed response to the submissions.

3.1 Submission 1: James Clancy, Resident.

As a resident living on the road on the opposite side of where the footpath/cycle lane is proposed I have a major concern. Which is it will force traffic even closer to our houses. This already is a big problem which is making exiting our properties difficult and dangerous. Whatever about a footpath but a cycle lane as well will force traffic closer to our gateways.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely.

James Clancy

Response: *Active Travel would like to acknowledge your concerns as a resident living on the opposite side of the road to the proposed foot/cycle shared path, particularly in relation to the proximity of vehicular traffic to residential gateways and the associated safety implications.*

Active Travel would like to clarify that the proposed shared path is designed to follow the alignment of the existing verge, thereby minimising any encroachment into the carriageway. This approach ensures that the overall road width remains unchanged, and the scheme does not result in traffic being pushed closer to residential boundaries than is currently the case.

Furthermore, the introduction of a dedicated shared path will remove vulnerable road users, pedestrians and cyclist, from the carriageway. This will reduce the need for vehicles to perform passing manoeuvres around them, which currently contributes to unpredictable traffic movements and increased risk near residential entrances.

Submission 2: Patrick Berry Resident:

I Patrick Berry am opposed to this development. There is not sufficient room to accommodate both road and foot and cycle path. A clearly marked hard shoulder would leave walkers and bicycles room to travel and allow big machinery or lorries access to more space when needed to get past each other safely. A hard shoulder works perfectly for walkers and cyclists on national roads like the N5 from Longford to the west. If a home owner exiting their property with a cycle path directly at their gate is involved in a collision with a bike or E scooter who will be liable? The path isn't needed as there is only a very small number of walkers and even fewer cyclists.

Response: *The proposed facility has been designed to follow the alignment of the existing verge and does not reduce the width of the existing carriageway. On a shared path, cyclists are expected to travel at low speeds appropriate to a mixed-use environment. This will allow residents exiting their properties sufficient opportunity to see and respond to approaching cyclists. The layout promotes safe interaction between all users. The proposed facility is a foot/cycling path and under Road Traffic Regulations e-scooters are prohibited from using a shared path.*

While hard shoulders may function adequately on national roads, they do not provide the same level of safety or comfort for pedestrians and cyclists. A dedicated path offers a safer, more accessible environment and removes vulnerable road users from the carriageway, reducing the need for vehicles to perform passing manoeuvres.

Although current pedestrian and cyclist volumes may be modest, the provision of safe infrastructure is a proactive measure to support active travel and improve road safety.

Submission 3: Mr. Adam Quinn, Resident.

My name is Adam Quinn and I am and have been resident of the Ballagh Road, Ballymacormack all my life (forty years).

I would like to begin my submission by stating that I am pleased that increased safety on this road is being discussed, as I believe certain works may be necessary to improve and facilitate pedestrians and motorists alike.

The R397 junction is very awkward to navigate for any motorist. Visibility towards Longford is somewhat hampered when approaching from Keenagh. Manoeuvrability is particularly difficult when turning up the Ballagh road whilst approaching from Longford. Entry onto the R397 from the Ballagh road can be tiresome with heavy traffic during the day, and subsequently, any vehicle waiting to enter onto the R397 is automatically creating an obstacle to traffic turning onto the Ballagh road, in particular those coming from Longford who have to navigate the tight corner. I believe a review of this junction should be incorporated into any proposed safety measures.

There is also a dangerous area where the access points to both Stonepark NS and Dunbeggan Park GAA grounds lie opposite each other. I welcome proposals to enhance safety here, as it can be a treacherous place for motorists and pedestrians, most notably at school drop off and collection times. It is well known to many locals who sometimes have to delay their journeys or take an alternative route to their destination as a result.

The proposal for a footpath/cycle path to extend towards Silver Birches raises a few questions. Having viewed the drawings in the Council offices, I could find no detailed measurements for the proposed width of these paths, and as a result, I would be fearful of the existing road width being reduced in any way to accommodate this. In addition to this concern, it should be pointed out that vehicles tend to keep further away from raised sidewalks, and consequently traffic may be pushed closer to the opposite side of the road. This may create an issue with homeowners leaving their properties, as a number of houses on the school side of the road have walls and hedges obstructing their view and need to drive their vehicles out a fair distance before they can see if it is safe to enter the road. Is the proposed footpath/cycle path destined to be created on the football pitch side or would the school side be considered?

I believe a footpath would be a great benefit if it encouraged all pedestrians to remain on it, but a cycle path may be overkill. Recent developments on the Battery Road and the Ballinalee Road to create cycle paths have been only partially successful, as plenty of cyclists still prefer the comfort of the unbroken road as opposed to the dedicated path which delays them. Perhaps a painted line on the road alongside a raised footpath would be a more appropriate option?

I hope that what I have written has been of interest and potentially some value to you. Once again, It should be noted that I am in favour of certain works being carried out to improve safety measures, and it is my belief that if done in the correct way, it will be a great benefit to all road users in the area.

I am a pedestrian, a cyclist and a motorist.

Response: *The junction between the R397 and L-52313 (Ballagh Road) does not form part of the current scheme. However, your observations regarding visibility and manoeuvrability have been noted and may inform future considerations for traffic safety improvements in the wider area.*

We would like to clarify that the alignment of the proposed foot/cycle shared path follows the existing verge, thereby minimising any encroachment into the carriageway. This approach ensures that the overall road width remains unchanged and does not result in vehicular traffic being pushed closer to residential boundaries than is currently the case.

The path will vary in width from 3m to 2m depending on the available verge width. This design provides a safe, combined alternative commuting route for pedestrians and cyclists, while maintaining the integrity of the existing road layout. The new infrastructure is intended to encourage walking and cycling, particularly for school journeys, which in turn helps reduce the number of cars on the road and alleviate congestion in the area.

In relation to the concern about vehicles keeping further away from raised kerbs compared to verges, there is no evidence to suggest that this results in a significant shift in traffic position. The introduction of a dedicated shared path is intended to remove vulnerable road users from the carriageway, thereby reducing the need for vehicles to perform passing manoeuvres and improving overall safety near residential entrances.

The location of the proposed path is currently planned for the football pitch side of the road. This decision was made to minimise disruption to residential properties and to take

advantage of available verge space. All feedback received during the consultation will be reviewed as part of the final design process.

Submission 4: Mr. John Quinn(Jr), Resident.

To whom it may concern,

As an agricultural and plant hire contractor living above the Silver Birches Housing Estate, I wish to object to the proposed footpath and cycle lane.

This proposal is going to push the traffic close to the dwelling houses on the opposite side leaving it very dangerous for people exiting their houses as there will be restricted view of oncoming traffic. This also makes it dangerous for other road users, particularly with tractors and heavy machinery, and leaves serious risk of accidents. The only place it is safe is near the third and fourth house up from the School where there is extra width already.

There is a very serious problem at the moment at Stonepark National School and has been since the new school was built. You cannot turn in off the R397 coming from the Longford direction without crossing the white line or hitting the existing footpath with tractors and heavy machinery. It is also difficult in a car or jeep and trailer.

At School times we have to avoid using the road because traffic is completely jammed on both sides and on the R397. There is a serious road safety issue here and a miracle that there have been no accidents.

This problem needs to be addressed as a priority. It would be advisable for the County Council to monitor this junction especially at School times. This is where improvements are needed.

A footpath and cycle lane are not necessary and will cause more problems than they will solve. In addition, we are living in an era where E-scooters are very popular and pose serious risk of injury, especially on footpaths and cycle lanes.

There are no exact specifications available regarding the project, and local residents and road users are entitled to accurate details, as they are the people affected by this. This doesn't display any consideration or respect for the local people. It would have been more appropriate to communicate properly instead of pushing this on people.

This is an outline of serious concerns and my reasons for objection

Response: *The proposed shared path is designed to follow the alignment of the existing verge, thereby minimising any encroachment into the carriageway. This approach ensures that the overall road width remains unchanged and does not result in traffic being pushed closer to residential boundaries than is currently the case.*

The shared path will vary in width from 3m to 2m, depending on the available verge width. This design provides a safe, combined alternative commuting route for pedestrians and cyclists, while maintaining the integrity of the existing road layout.

With regard to the junction at Stonepark National School, we acknowledge the difficulties experienced by larger vehicles, particularly agricultural machinery, when turning off the R397. However, this junction does not form part of the current scheme. Your observations have been noted and may inform future considerations for traffic management and safety improvements in the area. We also take note of your suggestion that this junction be monitored during peak school times. Importantly, one of the aims of this scheme is to encourage more students and local residents to walk or cycle, which may help reduce the number of cars contributing to congestion at school times.

The scheme aims to improve safety for vulnerable road users by removing them from the carriageway, thereby reducing the need for vehicles to perform passing manoeuvres. The proposed facility is a shared path and under Road Traffic Regulations e-scooters are forbidden to use footpaths.

We acknowledge your comments regarding the availability of detailed specifications. Please view the attached revised drawings of the scheme, showing cross sections and clearer dimensions of road and path widths, the drawings will be further developed as part of the final design process. All feedback received during the consultation will be considered in this context.

Submission 5: George Quinn, Resident.

As a farmer and agricultural contractor I use this road many times every day. I live and work from our farm just past the silver birches. Depending on type of work and time of year this can increase to several times each hour. Agricultural equipment has increased in size over the years so I have a few concerns/queries as the drawings in the council offices show no dimensions for road or path other than 6m pedestrian crossing at stonepark school. 1. How will this affect road width as 3m is almost a standard for modern machinery. 2. Will there be suitable passing points when meeting other local machinery operators or hgv's without having to drive alongside residents boundaries and entrances. 3. When turning off the r397 onto L5213 stonepark school there isn't enough room for large vehicles. This junction was significantly wider until the last upgrade and footpath was installed. 4. My personal belief is this development should be done like our european partners and create a hard shoulder on rural roads for pedestrians/cyclists. This would have either red tarmacadam (netherlands) and/or dividing lines providing a safe space for pedestrians and cyclists while also allowing vehicles to move over to pass safely and then rejoin the designated road. 5. Using my suggestion 4 above will also save interference with phone lines water mains and potentially be a much more cost effective option while achieving the same result. 6. I do acknowledge improvements are needed at stonepark school as it is almost impassable at school times but these improvements need to facilitate local residents and road users.

George Quinn.

Response: *The shared path is designed to follow the alignment of the existing verge and will vary in width from 3m to 2m, depending on the available verge space. This approach ensures that the overall carriageway width remains unchanged and does not encroach into the existing road surface. The scheme has been designed to maintain safe passage for all road users, including agricultural machinery and HGVs.*

Regarding passing points, the existing road geometry will remain unchanged, and the scheme does not involve narrowing the carriageway. As such, the ability for vehicles to pass safely including large agricultural equipment will be preserved. The introduction of a dedicated shared path will also remove vulnerable road users from the carriageway, reducing the need for vehicles to perform unpredictable passing manoeuvres and improving overall safety.

We acknowledge your concerns about the junction at Stonepark National School. While this junction does not form part of the current scheme, your observations have been noted. The difficulties experienced by larger vehicles, particularly since the previous upgrade, are recognised.

Your suggestion to consider a hard shoulder-style solution, similar to those used in other European countries, is appreciated. While this approach may offer benefits in terms of cost and reduced disruption to underground services, it also presents challenges in terms of pedestrian safety and compliance with current design standards.

Importantly, one of the aims of this scheme is to encourage more students and local residents to walk or cycle, which may help reduce the number of cars contributing to congestion at school times. By providing a safe and dedicated route for these users, the scheme seeks to alleviate pressure on the road network and improve safety for all.

Submission 6: Alison McNally, Resident.

Following on from our conversation about the Longford to Ballymahon Local Link bus stopping in Stonepark. There appears to be 2 opinions where the bus may be able to pick up and drop off the old filling station or the national school in Stonepark. There are a number of children from the area using this service to attend secondary school in Ballymahon that have to walk over 1km at present to and from current bus stop at Ballymacormack graveyard. A new stop closer to the national school should be considered to facilitate children/adults to use the local link to it's full potential in conjunction with the proposals for the new footpath that links the Silver Birches estate down to the national school. We would be grateful if you could forward our concerns with the relevant bodies.

Regards
Alison McNally

Response: *Active Travel recognises the challenges faced by both children and adults who currently walk over 1km to reach the existing Local Link bus stop at Ballymacormack graveyard. While the provision or relocation of bus stops is not included within the scope of this scheme, Active Travel has engaged with the relevant authority, the National Transport Authority (NTA) and as part of the Bus Stop Enhancement Programme (BSEP), the possibility of developing a new stop closer to Stonepark National School is being considered.*

The proposed shared path aims to improve pedestrian safety and connectivity between Silver Birches and Stonepark National School. In addition to enhancing safety for vulnerable road users, the shared path may also help facilitate easier and safer access to the existing bus stop, encouraging greater use of public transport options such as the Local Link service.

Submission 7: Michael & Mairéad Campbell, Resident.

When planning was first sought for Silver Birches over 30 signatures were provided in the form of an objection as this lower class road could not accommodate increased traffic and there were no services provided. This was ignored. Over the years several issues have arisen.

There is no doubt that traffic calming measures, such as raised speed bumps, are indeed required around the school and before / after Silver Birches.

We also wish to submit the following concerns regarding the proposals for the scheme above:

- * The road in its current state is just wide enough for two way traffic but there are narrower sections where traffic must yield to oncoming traffic for safety.
- * The map of proposed scheme works which was distributed did not have any measurements and was not to scale. While the intention may have been good, the drawing leaves a lot of unanswered questions.
- * The dimensions of the footpath and cycle path will very likely further negatively impact all of the home owners on the opposite side of the road as traffic will be forced closer to residential properties. This is already a problem which was created initially by Longford Co Council when they last resurfaced and raised the road and stoned the grass verges up to residential walls or fences. Drainage gulley's were installed in some cases, however, water accumulates and flows back into our property in particular.
- * This road is used as a link between the Ballymahon/Athlone Road and the Moydow Road and traffic pass through often at high speed.
- * The two households/properties on the same side as proposed works will be particularly affected. The owners who have lived there all of their lives have already very little distance from the edge of the Road to their front door and to reduce this further will negatively affect their quality of life, their privacy and enjoyment of their much loved and looked after properties. It may very well also increase their vulnerability as older people living alone by increasing the likelihood of anti-social behaviour towards them.
- * Clarity on the management of ESB poles/lines is required.
- * How will water mains be managed or will they be relocated?
- * Is there a proposal for lighting?

Trusting you will consider this submission and provide reassurances on your proposal.

Regards,

Michael & Mairéad Campbell

Response: *The proposed shared path is designed to follow the alignment of the existing verge and will vary in width from 3m to 2m, depending on available space. This approach ensures that the overall carriageway width remains unchanged and does not result in traffic being pushed closer to residential boundaries than is currently the case. The scheme is intended to improve safety for vulnerable road users by removing them from the carriageway, thereby reducing the need for vehicles to perform passing manoeuvres.*

We acknowledge your concerns regarding drainage and the impact of previous resurfacing works. The current scheme will include appropriate drainage measures to ensure surface water is managed effectively and does not negatively impact adjacent properties.

With regard to the two properties on the same side as the proposed works, we understand the importance of preserving privacy and quality of life. The design team will take these concerns into account during the detailed design phase to minimise disruption and visual impact.

In response to your queries:

- *ESB poles and lines: These services will be undergrounded as part of the scheme.*
- *Water mains: Any existing services will be identified and managed appropriately during construction to avoid disruption.*
- *Public lighting: New lighting will be provided as part of the scheme. Details are available in the drawings attached to the consultation documentation.*
- *Traffic calming: A raised pedestrian crossing is proposed near Stonepark National School, which will act as a traffic calming measure by encouraging vehicles to reduce speed in this area.*

4 Revised Drawings

Please see attached drawings.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Having regard to the above-mentioned public submissions and observations received, it is considered that the proposed development would provide a significant improvement to the safety of all road users and particularly children walking and cycling to school. It is therefore proposed that the development should proceed.

6 RECOMMENDATION

In accordance with Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act (1994) and the associated guidelines issued by the Department of Transport in Oct 2023, a decision to proceed with the proposed works is an Executive decision, to be recorded by way of a Chief Executive's Order (Traffic Works Order).

I therefore recommend that the proposals should proceed, with the minor alterations outlined in Section 4 above and that the decision to proceed be formally recorded as a Chief Executive's Order (Traffic Works Order) and should be published on the local authority's website.

Signed: 

Brian Kelly Senior Executive Engineer –
Active Travel Section,
Longford County Council.
18 November 2025

