

**Construction of the Boyne Greenway Drogheda to Mornington,
Co. Meath & Co. Louth**

An Bord Pleanála
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AN BORD PLEANÁLA
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Introduction

On behalf of the [REDACTED], I would like to extend my support of the Mornington to Drogheda planning application. The route is 5.9kms in length and provides a vital link to Drogheda to link up with the 1.8km Boyne Greenway from Drogheda to Oldbridge Estate entrance.

The route forms part of the National Cycle Network routes 5 and 13 and provides a link from Mornington to Drogheda allowing for increased visitor access to Drogheda town and to Mornington village. It will provide a sustainable route where visitors can access tourism and heritage sites via sustainable transport modes. It will link with the Boyne Greenway from Oldbridge Estate to route via The World Heritage site of Brú na Bóinne, and further renowned heritage sites including Oldbridge Estate, Slane Castle and Estate and Dowth Hall. Visitors will

be provided with a scenic route with viewing opportunities of the flora and fauna along the Estuary.

The Boyne Greenway linking Mornington to Drogheda, Slane, Navan and to Trim will open up unique access to attractive scenery, biodiversity and link world class heritage sites providing a significant tourism offering for the area.

The Boyne Valley, despite its richness of heritage is largely a transit area.

1. This project will attract and retain visitors by creating a unique visitor experience. This will be achieved by connecting Mornington to Drogheda and thus linking with the existing section of the Boyne Greenway from Drogheda to Oldbridge Estate of 1.8kms to the new 5.9km from Mornington to Drogheda. In this way, dwell time will be increased supporting the objective of moving from a transit to a touring area.
2. The project has the objective to deliver substantial economic benefit to the area by acting as a catalyst for private businesses to establish.
3. It will attract international and domestic visitors to the area and provide a link to a wider network of greenways along the coast and into the Boyne Valley.

Policy Context

Meath County Council County Development Plan 2013-2019 has as its objective to explore the development of sustainable medium and long term walking routes and specifically references the Boyne Greenway:

To provide for the development of the Trim – Navan – Slane – Drogheda cycle /greenway along the River Boyne subject to obtaining the necessary statutory planning consent, the carrying out of Appropriate Assessment, landowner cooperation and the securing of the necessary funding.

The Draft Meath County Development Plan 2020-2026

- *To continue the development of a network of Greenways in the County in accordance with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport Strategy for Future Development of Greenways.*

The Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy 2016-2020

The Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy 2016-2020 identifies the restoration of the Boyne Navigation and connected trail development as a principal objective in

retaining visitors in the area and a catalyst project with the potential to transform tourism in the Boyne Valley. The

Business Case

Evidence of the success of the initial phase of this project can be seen via the establishment of a new business, [REDACTED] which commenced new [REDACTED] [REDACTED] since completion of Phase 1 of the greenway and restoration of the locks. In 2017 and 2018, large scale visitor centres opened in the Boyne Valley including the €44mn investment in [REDACTED] and €20mn investment in [REDACTED]. The success of the Boyne Valley region must be noted and the enormous potential for tourism development in this part of Ireland's Ancient East is evident. However, we know due to the current pandemic that tourism businesses are very much affected and require much support.

This project fits with the key objectives of the Ireland's Ancient East programme to attract and most importantly retain visitors to the area. This greenway is unique and sets itself apart from other greenways as it will connect to significant heritage sites of Oldbridge and the World Heritage Site and the key visitor sites of Ireland's Ancient East. These sites collectively attract 700,000 visitors annually and include: The World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne (281,000), Battle of the Boyne Site (250,000), Trim Castle (102,000). The Greenway connects to the key population centres of Drogheda (42,000) and Navan (31,689). It will disperse visitors to other key sites such as Loughcrew (16,300), the Hill of Tara, Millmount Museum, Mellifont Abbey and Monasterboice.

As the [REDACTED] we would like to extend our support for this project and if you require further information, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

