



An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough St
Dublin 1
D01 V902

8 September 2020

**RE: CONSTRUCTION OF THE BOYNE GREENWAY DROGHEDA TO MORNINGTON,
CO MEATH & CO LOUTH**

To whom it concerns,

I wish to add my support to Meath County Council's application to An Bord Pleanála for this Greenway development. This project has much support locally and very little objections. The number of positive submissions for this project received by Meath Co Co was something of a record all the more remarkable when most planning submissions are typically objections

Much of the objection to this project centres on issues that can broadly be described as little more than nimbyism. The most reasonable objections are based on the Greenways potential effects on wildlife, specifically wintering birds. As the bulk of activity on any greenway occurs predominantly outside of the winter season I believe that these reasoned arguments should not be of such concern.

The benefits of greenways are well documented and don't need to be rehashed by me. When properly implemented they can have little in the way of adverse impact. Indeed the benefit to the Boyne Valley, Drogheda and East Meath and indeed the Greater Dublin Metropolitan Area (GDMA) should not be underestimated.

The conurbation of Laytown, Bettystown, Mornington and Donnacarne (LBM&D) is one of the fastest growing urban areas in the state, outside of Dublin and Cork. The population of this rapidly expanding area alone (approx. 14,000) is greater than that of many of Ireland's County towns. Coupled with the population of Drogheda, 42,000+ (CSO 2016) this leaves an area covered by this section of the Greenway with a combined population in excess of 56,000 people. Much of the development of this area in recent years has been predominantly housing, with little attention given to greenspace / leisure, this project will address this deficit. Drogheda is the local

Town for the population of (LBM&D) for both work, healthcare, leisure etc.and the provision of this link will reinforce these connections.

When one expands the catchment area by a radius of 15km this brings in approximately an additional 15 to 18k people. With East Meaths excellent transport links by both road and rail, the latter servicing both Drogheda and Laytown at either end of the Greenway, the potential to provide an excellent healthy outdoor activity to a much larger population, principally in the GDMA is inestimable. The potential to link up with similar projects, in Fingal, and in the other direction to Navan, offer a potentially unsurpassed experience, serving a massive population. These benefits apply not only to the health of any individual but also for hospitality employment opportunities in this area, in what has been a very hard hit sector of our society.

Concerns for the effect on wintering birds will be mitigated by screening barriers that eliminate the distraction and disturbance caused by existing motorised traffic and by future foot, cycle and and pet traffic. Most notably, the risk of fly tipping as occasionally occurs in this area, and as formerly happened on the Greenway to Oldbridge should be eliminated The Greenway, of itself, offers both a physical and supervisory barrier to those who wish to desecrate our environment.

Greater participation of the public in outdoor pursuits leads to greater appreciation of what we have, and what we may be at risk of losing. Outdoor classrooms may become the norm with such an expansive offering on the doorstep of some of Irelands newest and largest schools. Vehicular traffic commuting from LBM&D will be offset somewhat, with obvious environmental benefits, by the provision of this project. The beaches and leisure offerings of this area will now be easier to access by all ages from the town of Drogheda.

Finally the adoption of greenways is now part of Government policy in recognition of their many benefits. Hopefully this project will be added to the list of those already in existence or planned.

