

**Donegal County Council Application**

**National Cycle Network Local Authority Funding  
Scheme 2012/13**

**Route 1 - Donegal Town to Newtown Cunningham**

## **Introduction**

Please find attached a part-copy of the Sustrans document, North West Linear Park, which was produced to examine the delivery of cycle routes in County Donegal. This part-copy highlights the section of cycle route on which this proposal for funding is based.

Donegal County Council wishes to obtain funding for section 6 as described in pages A1.79 to A1.89 of Sustrans report (Donegal town to Burtonport), Section 1 as described in pages A1.5 to A1.21 (Burtonport to Letterkenny) and Section 2 as described in pages A1.23 to A1.27 (Letterkenny to Newtown Cunningham). This route is also selected by the National Cycle Network Scoping Study (Aug 2010) as a Failte Ireland Coastal Route.

The sections of the proposed cycle route that are on existing roads in the charge of Donegal County Council have been highlighted in blue. Some sections of the cycle route are proposed on unused railway track, Coillte land or commonage etc. (highlighted in yellow). As these are not yet accessible to the public, an alternative route has been proposed to circumvent these sections and these routes are highlighted in green. Future applications will be made for yellow sections once access has been agreed with the relevant landowners.

However, as can be seen from the attached maps, approximately 95% of the proposed Sustrans route is on the existing road network. The 5% required on alternative road network can be easily utilised in the interim.

The length of the proposed cycle route from Donegal to Newtown Cunningham as described above is 195.5 km.

Please ignore the estimated costings on the attached part copy as these refer to a number of work items including the rehabilitation of non-council roads. The costings in the application form below are accurate and up to date and form the Councils submission.

The proposed cycle route traverses three Electoral Areas, Donegal EA, Glenties EA & Letterkenny EA. Each of these Electoral Areas Roads offices are carrying out maintenance and repair work on a substantial number of the roads highlighted as proposed cycle routes. For example Glenties Electoral Area is spending €298,531 in 2012 on roads that coincide with the proposed cycle route, Donegal Electoral Area €87,920 and Letterkenny Area €88,410.

<b>Section 1: Project Outline</b>	
Name and Address of Local Authority	Donegal County Council, County House, Lifford, Co. Donegal
Contact person/proposed project manager	Eunan O Donnell, Glenties Electoral Area Engineer, Donegal County Council
Telephone	(074) 9561300 Ext 362
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Planned route start and end points (e.g. Newport to Mulranny). Detailed map to be included as appendix.	<p>Route 1 - Start point Donegal Town to end point Newtoncunningham.</p> <p>In line with the vision set out in the National Cycle Network Scoping study and the Governments National Cycle Strategy Donegal County Council, through this application, seeks funding to develop a cycling route following a designated Failte Ireland route that will both link to and enhance the NCN Route 6 Sligo - Letterkenny - Derry offer.</p> <p>The project will contribute to the overall long-term goal of having an integrated National Cycle Network by providing a coastal on road route, utilising safe and assessed roads as designated through dedicated consultant's reports that accompany this application</p> <p>Process:</p> <p>A report was carried out by Sustrans and Haley Sharpe Consultants to establish the route and provide necessary information.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Councils' roads programme will upgrade sections of the route as necessary in a systematic manner and in order of priority needs, see costings.</li> <li>2. Cycling infrastructure/signage will be delivered within the allowed timeframe should this application be successful.</li> <li>3. The route will be publicised and public awareness will be raised of sustainable transport, the Smarter Travel policy, cycling facilities and road user safety.</li> </ol> <p>The proposed route starts in Donegal Town and links Mount Charles, Inver, Ardara, Leitiracaward, Dungloe, Burtonport, Crolly, Dunlewey, Gortahork, Dunfanaghy, Creeslough, Glen, Milford, Ramelton, Letterkenny, Manor Cunningham and finishes to join Route 2, the Inis Eoighin Route in Newton Cunningham which will also apply for funding under the NCN scheme.</p>
Proposed route distance (km)	195.5km
Estimated total project delivery costs (€)	€497,000 to the Department. In 2012 Donegal County Council will be investing <b>€474,861 in pavement repair and surfacing of roads that coincide with the proposed cycle way in 2012.</b>
Total grant funding being sought (€)	€497,000 - Cost to Department per km: €2,542.20.
Planned duration of project/works (months)	5 months
Planned start date and completion date	June 2012 to November 2012
Brief outline of planned project	The route will deliver the Failte Donegal Coastal Cycle route and link hub towns where cyclists can avail of services with the NCN 92 route. It will deliver 195.5km of cycle access through the county's most attractive landscapes in line with National Cycling Scoping Report recommendations. It will form the basis for linkages to both local rural cycle routes and urban networks and align with tourism and economic development products and attractions.

**Section 2: Project Detail**

<p>Briefly outline how this route aligns with the corridors identified in the National Cycle Network scoping study, or links into or between the identified corridors.</p>	<p>The route has been chosen and will be developed in a planned and strategic manner in line with the National Cycle Policy Framework, the NCN Scoping Study and Failte Ireland designated routes.</p> <p>The route links to and enhances the product delivered through existing National Cycle Network Route 92, the NCN Ballyshannon to Ballycastle Route, the North West Trail to Derry, the Kingfisher Trail through counties of Fermanagh, Leitrim, Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan and to National Cycle Network Route 91. The Trail also links to the Inis Eoghain Cycle Way in counties Derry and Donegal and with twelve circular signed cycling routes in the Sperrins that range in length from 11 – 41 miles, the Sperrin Routes 3 and 6 can be accessed from the North West Trail at Sion Mills and Newtownstewart.</p> <p>The route is a 195.5 km on-road cycle route following the designated Failte Ireland Coastal route. It will link a significant number of settlements, including those on the NCN route such as the existing Failte hub town of Ballyshannon to potential Hub category 2 towns of Donegal Town and follow the coast to the NSS 10,000 population Gateway town of Letterkenny ending in connection with the NCN92 cycle network at Newtoncunningham. It will deliver a cycle link to a number of Donegal County Development Plan designated tourism towns.</p>
<p>Is this project proposal for a standalone route, or is it a single phase of a longer proposed route (outline details).</p>	<p>This route will link to Route 2 in order to deliver a longer proposed route. The Route 2 project will also be submitted to this NCN funding Call.</p> <p>Taken together both routes will result in most of the Coastline of County Donegal being cycle accessible.</p> <p>The route will, where possible, avail of existing routes and State-owned lands. These have been identified with safety standards to the forefront and by a dedicated report undertaken by consultants. It will, in large</p>

	<p>sections, share use with walking and form the basis for linkages to more comprehensive rural and urban local networks.</p>
<p>What type of route will be delivered (i.e. on road or off road, usage of existing infrastructure such as abandoned rail lines, canal tow paths, state lands etc.)</p>	<p>Donegal County Council realises that only a limited amount of funding is available in this instance. The route has been developed within the context of ambitious future plans for development of cycling routes in the county.</p> <p>The route will be on road for this phase and will require some minor pavement improvements. Minor drainage improvements will also be required on the remotest sections of the route, where normal local authority maintenance does not regularly occur. The signs will be designed (Face, foundations etc) in accordance with the Road Signs Manual 2011 by the Donegal County Council sign design team. An extensive route is planned, however capital investment is relatively low; the route follows on road consultant preferred routes for cyclists without at this stage engaging in more expensive off road interventions.</p> <p>The Council are currently engaged in a programme of works with the Local Development Companies DLDC &amp; IDP, LEADER funding personnel and local communities to secure off road cycleways /walkways and address land ownership and community engagement issues. The route will form an intrinsic part of future projects and will inform applications for funding to various bodies including Cross Border funding projects.</p> <p>The proposals represent value for money given project impact in absolute terms, relative to the cost of implementation and when taking into account the extent of route to be delivered. The project can be delivered within the timeframe and works undertaken will represent an invaluable tool for the development of cycling product in the County and the leveraging of funding for more costly interventions such as the development of greenways and dedicated cycleways that will form part of a longer term strategy for delivery.</p>

Is the land necessary to develop the proposed route currently in public ownership? Are there any land ownership issues along any section of the proposed route, and if yes how is it planned to address them?	All land for this phase is in public ownership and is available. There are no ownership issues.  Insofar as is possible, the routes will be suitable for use by users of all ages, with routes chosen based on preferred routes designated by the accompanying consultants reports and design will strive to achieve the highest standards of safety for route users as well as increasing driver and other road user awareness.
Are there any other outstanding issues which could impact on deliverability of the proposed route (e.g. statutory requirements)?	NO
What is the proposed width of the route? (metres)	An average 3 to 4m on the majority of rural sections with a 5 to 6m carriageway on the initial sections adjacent Donegal Town.
What is the proposed surfacing type for the route?	All sections of the route will be surface dressed macadam.

<b>Section 3: Project Costs</b>			
Key costs/works (e.g. land purchasing, clearance works, compacting and placing of surface material, bridges, crossing barriers, fencing)	Estimated cost (€)	Requested contribution (€)	Planned drawdown date (e.g. Sept 2012)
Signage (design)	10,000	0	
Signage (manufacture and installation) 400 number approx.	166,000	166,000	October 2012
Minor Route Repairs,	90,000	90,000	October 2012
Minor Drainage works	80,000	80,000	October 2012
Surfacing	110,000	110,000	October 2012
Counters for Monitoring	21,000	21,000	
Brochures, Mapping	20,000	20,000	November 2012
<b>Total</b>	<b>497,000</b>	<b>497,000</b>	

**Section 4: Demand and benefit assessment:** Provide an evidence based assessment of potential demand in terms of local users and potential visitor and tourist user numbers. Assessment should include evidence based estimate of annual user number, and impacts on local economy, including in terms of job creation.

There is a lack of dedicated statistical baseline information, even on user numbers of infrastructure provided for cyclists at present, however Donegal County Council will work with local communities, interest groups and utilise counters to gather information on usage should the route be funded. Hiking/Hillwalking/Cycling represents the third largest sector of activity within Irish tourism and play a major role in Donegal's Tourism offer. The growth of cycling is highly evident with a 40% increase nationally in membership to Cycling Ireland the sports national governing body over the last number of years. Approximately 550 cyclists have registered as members in Donegal, which is 9% of the all Ireland membership. With the establishment of new cycling clubs in the county for road and off road, that trend is likely to increase into the future.

Again with regard to jobs benefit, the figures available at local and county level for investment in infrastructure are not available. Comparable figures delivered through the Bike to Work Scheme show within bike shops alone each bicycle shop in Ireland has saved 1 job and increased 1 job leading to a total of 420 new jobs nationwide, furthermore 50 new shops opened with approx 3.3 staff per shop giving a new job development of 165 jobs nationwide. The Ring of Kerry after investing in cycle provision increased numbers by 66%, an Post released figures stating that cycle events such as the Tour de Burren generate €140 per cyclist in the local economy. Arguably developing the cycling facility proposed in this route, linking with major tourist products and attractions would deliver similar impacts within the county and region's economy.

Failte Ireland's Discover Ireland Centre in Donegal Town gets in excess of 50,000 visitors every year. They estimate that about 5% of enquiries are directly in relation to cycling routes, rental and facilities. There are bike hire and repair facilities in Donegal and Letterkenny towns however we would expect the private development of more such businesses in conjunction with the development of this cycle route and connection with NCN trails.

Statistics at local and county level are not generated however the Irish Bicycle Business Association IBBA figures, available at [www.ibba.ie](http://www.ibba.ie), state that in Ireland there is a national cycle economy of €260ml a year with a cost benefit analysis of 4:1 in terms of health and economic benefit. Investment in this route would see bike and accessory sales, servicing, training, insurance and construction increases within the local economy as well as associated business value added benefits for the county's accommodation providers, shops, restaurants, outdoor activity sectors etc. Given costs on this route a crude cost benefit analysis would be that the Department's investment of €497,000 should generate a return of €1,988,000 in terms of health and economic benefit.

Section 5: Outline (i) alignment with other transport, tourism and sport programmes/locations (e.g. other infrastructure, greenschools, work place travel plans, tourism visitor centres etc.) (ii) route management and promotion plans and (iii) planned route user monitoring

The proposed route will have the potential to be a world class cycling route and will enhance the offer of the NCN proposed route by delivering the designated Failte Ireland Cycle route and offering extensive coastal cycle facilities through linking coastal settlements. The proposed route encompasses and brings cyclists through landscapes of national importance and will link to established cycle routes and facilities that have been previously developed.

Donegal ranks among the six counties with the leading number of tourism products in the Country. Route 1 will enhance visit experience and increase numbers to Nationally important and cycle friendly tourism products such as Glenveagh National Park annual visitor numbers approx 115,000, Sliabh Liag annual visitor numbers approx 80–100,000 and Ards Forest Park annual visitor numbers approx 70,000. The route will provide for both longer distance cyclists who may cycle up to 100km per day, and visitors who can cycle sections of the route and generally cycle between 30 - 50km per day.

The route proposed will enhance infrastructure both for visitors and tourists by catering for local demand through delivering infrastructure within a necklace of settlements around Donegal to facilitate cycling in, around and between towns. The Route will link Donegal Town to Mount Charles, Inver, Ardara, Leitir macáward, Dungloe, Burtonport, Crolly, Dunlewey, Gortahork, Dunfanaghy, Creeslough, Glen, Milford, Ramelton, Letterkenny, Manor Cunningham and finish to join Route 2, the Inis Eoighin Route in Newton Cunningham. Donegal County Council's dedicated Road Safety Officer has developed cycling and cycle to school plans within towns with green schools from the list above, the development of this route will enhance and extend work already undertaken.

Donegal Town alone, where the route starts, is a major tourism centre with five large hotels, hostels and B&B accommodation. It is the location for the Fáilte Ireland North West Discover Ireland Centre with in excess of 50,000 visitors every year. The town and environs offer significant tourist attractions and amenities including Donegal Castle (OPW), Donegal Abbey, Donegal Bay Water Bus, Magee's Clothing factory and outlet, craft village, Railway Museum as well as numerous Blueflag beaches, lakes and river fishing. The Bluestack way offers a 47km-walking route from Donegal to Ardara. The Bluestack challenge is a nationally renowned charity walking event as is the week long Bluestack Walking festival based in Donegal Town.

The route will link to other routes within the county such as Sli Colmcille, Sli na Errigail, Bluestacks Trail, Ballyshannon Cycle Hub Loops 1 & 2, Slí Dhún na nGall, Sli na Rosann, Coillte and local community facilities and local routes recently announced such as those around Donegal Town and Donegal Airport see [www.irelandbybike.com](http://www.irelandbybike.com). Donegal County Council has engaged in promotion of cycling and safety awareness through their dedicated Roads Safety Officer, school travel plans and such events as "Lets Bike Cycling Development Weekend" held in partnership with Donegal Sports Partnership and cycling clubs. The project will be able to capitalise on National Bike Week and the significant uptake of bicycle provision through the Cycle to Work Scheme.

The NRA are currently realigning and reconstructing the National Secondary N56 from Dungloe to Glenties which will incorporate a cycle lane. This new road can easily tie in with the proposed cycle route giving an alternative route and adding another settlement focal point (Glenties Town) to the cycle network in West Donegal.

Other tourist amenities or destinations that are within easy reach of the proposed cycle route include, Errigal Mountain, Ionad Cois Locha / Dunlewey Visitor Centre, Doe Castle, Killydonnell Friary, Ardara Craft Centre, Maghery Sea Caves, Portnoo Blue Flag Beach, Killahoey Blue Flag Beach, Dunfanaghy, Marble Hill Blue Flag Beach, Horn Head sea cliff walk, Portnoo Dolmen Centre, Slieve League Sea Cliffs, An Grianan Aileach, Gartan Outdoor Centre, Letterkenny museum, Letterkenny Regional Cultural Centre, An Griannan Theatre.

If the project is successful Donegal County Council will install counters in phased sections, 1 on the Donegal to Burtonport section 1 on the Burtonport to Letterkenny section and 1 on the Letterkenny to Newtown Cunningham section in order to monitor usage, verify investment and direct future investment appropriately. The Council will work with local communities and interest groups to gather information on usage

Donegal County Council has considerable experience as a lead partner in managing projects, procedures and has a proven track record in achieving set targets. Dedicated staff have significant experience in ensuring for example INTERREG funded projects are properly managed and implemented, including financial, programming and risk management. DCC are experienced in undertaking all scales and types of procurement and in the detailing documentation, tender and management of a large range of site works.

The Council will be responsible for future maintenance of any funded route, and will ensure that the route quality, standard and integrity are fully maintained. All activities, publicity, and promotional events associated with the project make reference to the funding received from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and publicise the *SmarterTravel* logo.

The Council will also publicise the project and raise public awareness of sustainable transport and the Smarter Travel policy when and wherever possible.