

National Cycle Network Funding Scheme 2012/13 – Application Form

Section 1: Project Outline	
Name and Address of Local Authority	Limerick County Council, County Hall, Dooradoye, Limerick.
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Planned route start and end points. Detailed map included in appendix.	Abbeyfeale town to Rathoran on the Kerry County Boundary.
Proposed route distance (km)	3 Km
Estimated total project delivery costs (€)	€300,000
Total grant funding being sought (€)	€289,875
Planned duration of project/works (months)	14 weeks
Planned start date and completion date	July 2012 – October 2012
Brief outline of planned project	<p>This project proposal involves the development of an additional 3km section of the Great Southern Trail which runs along the old Limerick to Tralee rail line from Abbeyfeale town to Rathoran on the Kerry county boundary.</p> <p>The trail is a unique corridor through the county providing a continuous walk / cycleway from Rathkeale to Ardagh to Newcastle to Templeglantine to Abbeyfeale encompassing a continuous designated pathway that runs mainly parallel to the N21.</p> <p>To date approximately 38km of trail from Abbeyfeale to Newcastle West (County Town) and on to Rathkeale has been developed.</p>

Section 2: Project Detail

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>The proposed Abbeyfeale to Kerry County Boundary Scheme is part of the National Cycle Network; it forms part of Corridor 8 – Galway to Tralee. It runs parallel to the N21 and R555.</p> <p>(See attached report and maps)</p>
Is this project proposal for a standalone route, or is it a single phase of a longer proposed route (outline details).	<p>The route is not stand alone in that it is the first section of a new link between West Limerick and North Kerry. It is also an extension of the existing 38km section of the Great Southern Trail linking Abbeyfeale, Newcastle West and Rathkeale towns in County Limerick.</p> <p>(See attached report and maps)</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>The proposed route will be entirely off road utilising the old Limerick to Tralee rail line (Great Southern Trail) which is owned by CIE.</p> <p>(See attached report)</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?	<p>The land necessary to develop the proposed route currently in State ownership i.e. CIE.</p> <p>(See attached report)</p>
Are there any other outstanding issues which could impact on deliverability of the proposed route (e.g. statutory requirements)?	<p>There are no foreseeable issues which could impact on deliverability of the proposed route.</p> <p>(See attached report)</p>
What is the proposed width of the route? (metres)	<p>The proposed width of the route will be typically 3m, similar to the existing sections of the trail that are operating successfully.</p> <p>(See attached report and maps)</p>
What is the proposed surfacing type for the route?	<p>A rolled gravel surface path with appropriate drainage, similar to existing sections of the trail. (See attached report and maps)</p>

Section 3: Project Costs

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. Oct 2012)
No land purchase required	0	0	0
1. Remove vegetation and clear existing line	12,000	12,000	12,000
2. Repairs or replacement of 3no. bridges	65,000	65,000	65,000
3. Laying and compacting of surface material	180,000	180,000	180,000
4. Fencing, crossing barriers & signage	15,000	15,000	15,000
5. Design, topographical survey, construction supervision, statutory procedures.	28,000	17,875	17,875
Total	<u>300,000</u>	<u>289,875</u>	<u>289,875</u>

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.

The completion of the Abbeyfeale to Kerry Boundary Section of the Great Southern Trail will ensure that the main urban settlements in West Limerick will be linked by a dedicated cycle / walkway along the length of the old rail line into North Kerry.

Already many local residents and tourists utilise the trail and when works are undertaken on this additional 3km section it will link counties Limerick and Kerry on a designated corridor as part of the National Cycle Network.

The Limerick County Development Plan classifies Abbeyfeale as a 'Centre on a Transport Corridor' within the County acting as a main service core in West Limerick, serving a large rural catchment where the town is promoted as a secondary development hub.

In the context of the Mid West Regional Guidelines Abbeyfeale lies within Zone 5, which covers the West Limerick area as defined in the document. The current distribution of population within this zone is approximately 32,300. The strategy states that there is potential in Zone 5 for the development of a large-scale industrial centre as well as a high quality residential location for those working in the region.

Employment and Economic Activity

The Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan states that the development of Abbeyfeale as an industrial and employment centre is a priority as it is pivotal in the regeneration of the town. The role of Abbeyfeale as a service provider and employment centre and its location on the N21

Limerick – Killarney route provides an opportunity for inward investment.

Apart from the main commercial core, employment locations are scattered throughout the town. Main employment bases include the Kostal Manufacturing Plant on the north-eastern entrance to the town centre that has a significant role in terms of local economic activity. Other public sector services such as the schools, library, Fire and Garda Station are all important employment bases. Thus, it is vital to the long-term development of the town that economic activity becomes increasingly diversified with a strong emphasis on high value-added activity and high skilled employment. It is important that new uses are encouraged to enhance the town's role and image as a location for employment and economic development.

Policy LE3: Tourism Enhancement (Abbeyfeale LAP)

It is the policy of the County Council to enhance the role of Abbeyfeale as a tourism destination, being located on a major tourist route, and as a base for tourism for the wider West Limerick Area, by;

- (a) Enhancing the tourism potential of the town, including the promotion of new environmentally sustainable tourism products and visitor accommodation including co-operation with the relevant bodies in the marketing and promotion of tourism in the town;
- (b) Encouraging new development for the tourist industry to be located near existing services and infrastructure to support the general economic vitality of the settlement.

Transportation and Infrastructure Issues Identified in the LAP

- N21 Bypass is a major issue for the future development and prosperity of the town.
- Traffic congestion and related safety issues are a major concern.
- Desire to improve connectivity around town, upgrading existing roads to facilitate better distribution of traffic.

The provision of a dedicated cycling trail along the old rail line linking Limerick and Kerry will assist in addressing some of the issues outlined above and provide an alternative for tourist and locals in accessing and by-passing the town. It will provide opportunities for local businesses to develop cycling packages and tours and encourage tourists to spend more time in the area.

(See also attached report and extract from Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan)

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 directly aligns with this proposed cycle network scheme.

- (i) The provision of a cycle trail from Abbeyfeale to north Kerry would be a significant step towards joining up and connecting the two counties as part of the National Cycle Network.
- (ii) In addition the County Limerick Local Sports Partnership based within Limerick County Council operates a number of programmes and activities in the West Limerick area and use the existing sections of the GST for their programmes and activities. The completion of this section of the trail will complement the work of the LSP and programmes such as:
 - Primary School Safe Cycling Tour in Urban Areas
 - Fit4Life, Meet and Train in County Limerick
 - Bike Week Activities

There are also five Abbeyfeale schools participating in the Green Schools Programme.

- (iii) Limerick County Council along with the Great Southern Trail Group Ltd. has played a leading role in developing and extending the Great Southern Trail with support from various public bodies including Failte Ireland, Department of Transport, West Limerick Resources and CIE. The disused railway track traverses the county from west to east and it is currently completed and is open for use as a pedestrian and cycling trail from Abbeyfeale to Rathkeale. The trail is promoted and marketing by a number of different organisations locally and internationally. Maintenance of the existing trail is currently undertaken by workers from a Rural Social Scheme.
- (iv) A mobile pedestrian and cyclist counter will shortly be installed on the Great Southern Trail and will be relocated if further work is completed on this 3km section. Limerick County Council will work in conjunction with Kerry County Council regarding the extension of the trail as far as Listowel. Limerick County Council is also in talks with CIE regarding the extension of the Great Southern Train from Rathkeale to Adare.

(See attached report and maps)