

Draft Clare  
**CYCLE**  
Network



# 1. Introduction

AECOM, as part of the NTA Cycle Design Office, have been requested by the NTA to develop comprehensive cycle plans for counties outside the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), including Clare County Council. CycleConnects is intended to form a comprehensive cycle network for all cycle user types across each county in Ireland and to develop on from the cycle network proposed for the counties in the GDA.

This will include existing cycle networks such as urban cycle routes, greenways and on-road tourist routes. This will be supplemented by proposed cycle routes/links outlined in latest development and transport plans, and other networks required to maximise the connection of the network to communities. It should be noted that this network does not specify any infrastructure types on any route and is focused on highlighting the key links required to form a comprehensive cycle network connecting all major communities and destinations.

This note will briefly summarise the proposed cycle network for Clare. For details of methodology, national policy and the overall aspirations for the CycleConnects networks, please refer to the main report of which this technical note is an appendix of.

## 2. Clare Population and Settlements

County Clare is located in the west of Ireland in the province of Munster and is bordered to the south and east by the Shannon, with Kerry, Limerick and Tipperary located adjacent to this. Clare is bordered by Galway to the north.

According to the CSO Census 2016, the county has a population of 118,817 inhabitants. Table 2.1 below shows the population of towns within Clare. Ennis (which is an agglomeration) and Shannon are the only settlements with over 5,000 people with all other towns having a population of less than 5,000.

**Table 2.1: Population Settlements in Clare**

City/Town	Population (2016)
Ennis (agglomeration)	25,276
Shannon	9,729
Kilrush (agglomeration)	2,719
Sixmilebridge	2,625
Newmarket-on-Fergus	1,784
Killaloe	1,481
Ardnacrusha	1,383
Ennistymon	1,045

## 3. Existing Clare Policies and Plans

### Draft Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029

The draft Clare County Development Plan (CCDP) was developed by Clare County Council to span the years from 2023 to 2029. The plan was developed with the vision of Clare as the principal focus within the region, with the potential to generate and be the focus of significant employment and housing growth.

The Strategic Vision of the Plan is as follows:

*“That County Clare would develop as a place to be part of and proud of, where urban and rural communities enjoy a high quality of life, work practice choice, inclusivity and service access and so that the county is a dynamic, resilient, connected and internationally competitive location for innovation and investment and is a national leader in climate action, creativity, culture, heritage, tourism and environmental management.”*

The Development Plan’s Vision is supported by a number of strategic aims. The aims outline the potential to strengthen communities, built environment and natural heritage, infrastructure, and tourism. In relation to Smarter Travel, the CCDP outlines the following goals:

#### CDP11.2 Smarter Travel

- To support and facilitate:
  - a) Sustainable, multi-modal and integrated travel in County Clare, reduced car dependence and achievement of the National Smarter Travel Targets
  - b) Steady State Investment to maintain and upgrade the existing road, rail and bus networks to provide a quality service to transport users
  - c) Initiatives under the Department of Transport to reduce congestion in urban areas primarily by enhancing sustainable travel options through Smarter Travel projects that include traffic management, bus priority, urban cycling and urban walking routes;
  - g) The delivery of a comprehensive cycling and walking network with an emphasis on Ennis and the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area;
  - To adopt sustainable planning strategies through integrating land use and transportation and by facilitating mixed use developments as a means of supporting national targets of climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, and reducing our carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions.

Throughout the Plan, there are a number of policies that make note of the facilitation and provision of cycle infrastructure and greenways, which have been listed under the following headings:

#### CDP 11.4 Active Travel Towns

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To implement an Active Travel Towns Programme in the Ennis area during the lifetime of this Plan;

- b) To pursue opportunities for additional funding that may arise, for Ennis and other towns in the County; and
- c) To support and facilitate the National Transport Authority in the implementation of the Active Travel Programme in County Clare.

### **CDP11.5 Walking and Cycling**

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To require walkability and accessibility to be a central consideration in the planning and design of all new developments, transport infrastructure and public transport services;
- b) To facilitate and support the delivery of a safe, accessible and convenient cycle network and environment across the County and in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area as set out in the Cycle Network Plans;
- c) To support the development and enhancement of long-distance cycling routes in County Clare, in accordance with the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways;
- d) To safeguard, where feasible, the route of the old West Clare Railway which has not been affected by existing development and to encourage its use for recreational purposes and/or as part of a tourist attraction. Exceptions to this include short sections within the curtilage of residential or commercial property;
- e) To support the development of cycle-lanes in urban areas linking residential areas to town centres, employment centres and school locations;
- f) To support the development of new accessible walking routes and trails throughout the County;
- g) To support the enhancement of permeability, footpaths and the provision of safe crossing points in the towns and villages of the County;
- h) To support the creation of a safer environment for cyclists and signposted 'quiet routes' off the arterial roads which include speed limit reviews and junction redesigns where appropriate;
- i) To require significant walking and cycling route proposals to provide a Quality Audit, as referred to in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets; and
- j) To ensure the development, enhancement, safeguarding of all walking and cycling routes are in compliance with the environmental requirements of Objective CDP3.1.

## **Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040**

The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS) was developed by the NTA in collaboration with Limerick City and County Council, Clare County Council and TII.

The Vision of the Strategy is as follows: *“The Strategy will deliver a high-quality, accessible, integrated and more sustainable transport network that supports the role of the Clare-Shannon Metropolitan Area as the major growth engine of the Mid-West Region, an internationally competitive European city region and main international entry to the Atlantic Corridor.”*

The Strategy represents:

The transport sector’s response to the LSMA’s requirements in relation to climate change;

An integrated transport strategy for walking, cycling, bus, rail and road to support planned growth up to 2040;

A strategy to facilitate compact growth;

A framework for the planning, investment and delivery of transport infrastructure and services to guide the LSMA's development up to 2040 in line with the National Planning Framework 2040, National Development Plan 2018-2027 and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region;

A flexible strategy with the ability to scale up public transport capacity and frequencies as necessary in response to changing circumstances; and

A framework plan with which other agencies involved in land-use planning, environmental protection and the delivery of other infrastructure and services such as water, housing and community facilities can align their plans and investment priorities.

Objective CC1 of the LSMATS proposed develop high-quality cycling network. The LSMATS cycle network was informed by a cycle network study, with additional routes identified since the study was undertaken.

Shannon currently has the potential for high quality cycle routes, with 4km of existing routes. Shannon's LAP contains objectives to significantly improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity between the town centre, industrial areas, Shannon Airport, outlying suburban areas as well as longer-distance routes to Ennis and Sixmilebridge. The cycling objectives set out are:

- Install on- and off-road cycle routes emanating from an orbital route around the town centre;
- Carry out improvement works at junctions to promote the movement of cyclists including the installation of advanced stop lines at traffic signals;
- Increase provision of cycle parking;
- Implement a wayfinding strategy along routes to areas of strategic importance in the town;
- Install traffic calming where necessary to create a safer environment for cyclists;
- Encourage and promote the uptake of cycle training, bicycle maintenance classes and road safety education in schools and workplaces;
- Ensure proper maintenance of cycle infrastructure and facilities.

The Shannon Cycle Network is seen in Figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1: Proposed Shannon Cycle Network - LSMATS**

## Killaloe- Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Plan

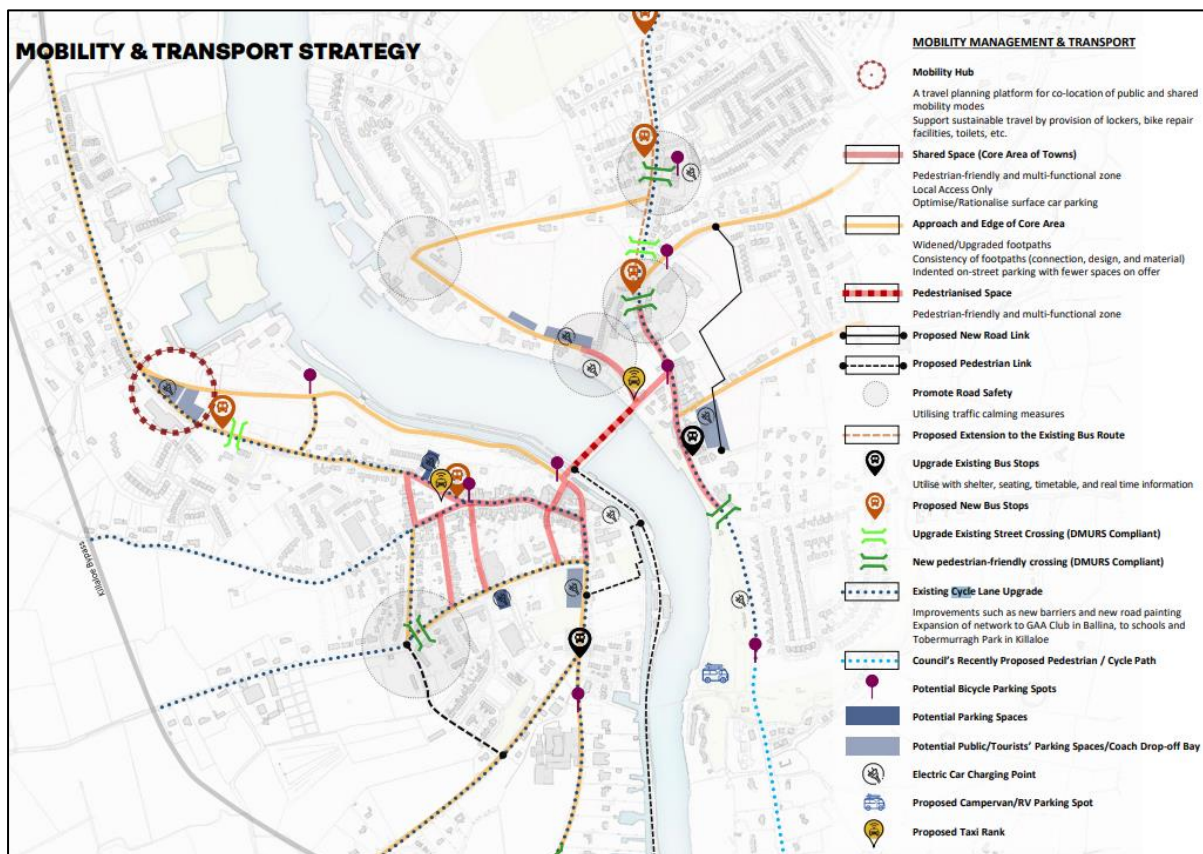
The Killaloe- Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Plan was developed by Clare County Council and Tipperary County Council. It came into effect in January 2022. It has the aim to provide guidance to improve transport and mobility management and stimulate sustainable development for both Killaloe and Ballina. The plan is a key action in the objectives and policies set out in the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 and North Tipperary Development Plan 2010-2016.

Key requirements of the Plan include;

- Provide traffic management of the towns to prioritise the pedestrians and cyclists and provide for a phasing plan post-Killaloe Bypass;
- Develop a public realm strategy integrated with Green Infrastructure, which is further supported by a network of pedestrian and cycling linkages.

As part of the Mobility Management Plan for the towns, there are proposed upgrades of existing cycle facilities and proposed new pedestrian and cycle facilities.





**Figure 3.2: Mobility and Transport Strategy for Killaloe and Ballina**

As part of the the objectives pot the construction of the Killaloe – Ballina Bypass, there is an emphasis on the encouragement of cycling as a mode of transport. The plan aims to deliver a highly accessible experience of pedestrians and cyclists. This includes improving the pedestrian and cycle links in the towns as well as the development of supporting infrastructure.

Objectives include:

- Provision and maintance of a network of continuous cycling routes throughout the towns interlinked with the river-walks and trails.
- Provision for Shared Surface at St. Flannan’s and Royal Parade.
- Integration of walking/cycling links to/from Clarisford Park and new bypass/bridge in Killaloe to provide for a looped amenity walk between the two bridges and improvements to the existing pedestrian access routes where necessary, e.g., beyond Willowcliff in Ballina to the new bridge.
- Improvement of connections to integrate Marine Village into Ballina and Killaloe.
- Investigation of the provision of shared surface or pedestrianisation of Royal Parade.

The construction of the Bypass new Riveer Shannon crossing will allow for priority to be given to pedestrians and cyclists on the Killaloe Bridge, which is to be pedestrianised. The Bypass will benefit from integrated pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure. This will consist of a 2.5m footpath on one side of the carriageway and a 2.5m cycleway on the other side. In the bridge section of the by-pass this adjusts to a 3m shared route on both sides of the carriageway. In addition, there are proposals to improve facilities on the R494 and on the link by St.Anne’s Community College.

## Killaloe Local Mobility Improvements

The following measures are proposed in order to improve the and cycling experience in Killaloe;

- Pedestrian priority of Bridge Street and closing vehicular access at Killaloe Bridge junction;
- Shared surface/pedestrian priority of John Street and Carrig's Lane, vehicular access for local residents /businesses only.
- Widen footpath and introduce cycle lanes on Abbey Street.
- Tie into proposed pedestrian/cyclist infrastructure for the new bypass and Shannon River crossing.
- Improve cycle parking provision.

There is also a proposed mobility hub to be incorporated into car/ coach parking on the northern side of Killaloe. It will aim to encourage visitors to get out of their vehicles and use bike hire to further travel within the town.

## Future Local Transport Plans

Clare County Council are required to develop Local Transport Plans as part of their Development Plan process. While the cycle network outlined in this plan has been created to reflect current transport arrangements, it may be subject to change based on the more detailed analysis and recommendations developed as part of the LTP process.



## 4. Proposed Clare Cycle Network

### Introduction

Following a review of existing data, policies and conducting workshops with Clare County Council to review the draft cycle network, the following summarises the methodology and proposed cycle network development for Clare. The full details of how all the CycleConnects networks were developed are available in the NTA Consultation website.

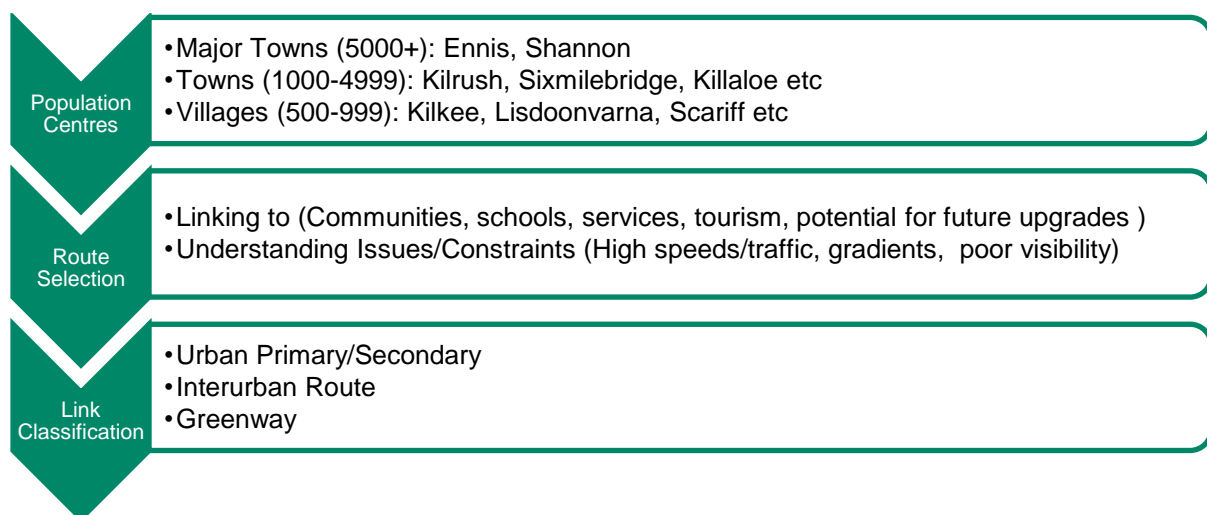
Prior to developing the Clare County Network, a GIS model was established for the County. This model mapped all existing information made available for the county, supplied by various bodies including the NTA, CSO, Department for Transport, TII, Department for Education and Clare County Council. The data collected includes;

- Locations of major employment and job density
- Existing cycle infrastructure and routes
- Existing bus stops, rail lines and other public transport
- Location of schools and education centres
- Shopping centres, hospitals and other destinations that may attract cyclists

The collation of this data has aided the selection of cycle routes in Clare that are available to as many people as possible. It has also allowed for the servicing of key destinations within County Clare.

### Methodology

Following the collation of existing data, the cycle network plan for Clare was developed. This was based on a three-tier system outlined in Figure 4.1 below.



**Figure 4.1: Cycle Network Development Methodology**

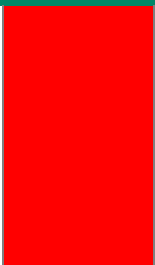
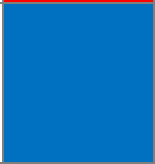
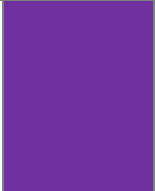
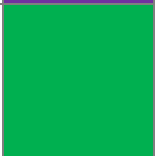
**Population Centres:** The Clare CycleConnects Network will look to link towns and villages together as part of a fully connected network. Thus, all towns were mapped with the larger

towns such as Shannon and Ennis noted. By mapping all towns and villages, a profile emerged of where most people in Clare were situated and where potential cycle routes should be provided. CSO Settlement data was also referenced to inform where people were located within the county.

**Route Selection:** Once the population areas were established, potential routes were then considered along strategic corridors. This allowed multiple communities to be linked along individual interurban routes both within the county and into adjacent counties. Where possible, these routes were also located within TII National Cycle Network Corridors. This avoided too many parallel cycle routes being developed and for an integrated cycle network to be developed within the county.

**Cycle Route Classification:** The route classification for each route has been summarised below in Table 4. . It should be noted that this link classification does not reflect the existing condition of roads for cycling but seeks to highlight their potential for various route classifications. For example, while there are many interurban routes that currently have no cycle infrastructure, the aspiration will be to target these over the next decade for appropriate upgrades.

**Table 4.1: CycleConnects Route Classification**

City/Town	Colour	Description
Urban Primary		High quality cycle route that can accommodate a high volume of cyclists typical in most urban areas. These will look to feature on major desire lines in town centres and form distinctive radial and orbital cycle routes in the major towns and cities. These primary routes should also form a cohesive and connected network within the urban area that will be simple for cyclists to navigate.
Urban Secondary		Second tier cycle route in major urban areas to link with urban primary network to add greater route density and options on the network. These will typically be passing through residential areas, school and employment areas.
Interurban		On-road cycle route to link all key settlements and destinations outside urban areas both within the county and into adjacent counties. These may have potential to provide off-road/segregated routes parallel to the existing road in later years.
Greenway		Off-road cycle route with no adjacent traffic for the majority of its route. These are typically located on old rail trails and blueways (routes alongside lakes, rivers and canals) with cyclists sharing the route with pedestrians.

## Proposed Clare County Network

Following the methodology outlined above, the Clare CycleConnects Network has been outlined in a series of maps shown in Table 4.2 below. These are also available to view as an individual PDF when selecting county Clare in the NTA consultation page.

**Table 4.2: Clare CycleConnects Network – List of Maps**

Cycle Map List
Clare County Cycle Network
Ennis Urban Cycle Network
Shannon Urban Cycle Network

The Clare CycleConnects Network primarily extends the network beyond the key settlement areas of Ennis and Shannon. In summary, it will consist of an urban cycle network for Ennis and Shannon, with interurban connectors between the towns such as Sixmilebridge, Kilrush, Newmarket-on-Fergus, and Killaloe. These then extend into adjoining counties forming a comprehensive and connected cycle network nationally.

### Interurban Link Development

The primary towns with a population of over 1,000 were connected via interurban links. Where possible, towns with a lower population that were located along the route were included in the routes. Connections were also made to larger cross border towns such as Loughrea, Nenagh and Limerick in order to create a comprehensive and connected cycle network nationwide. The selection of interurban routes was also influenced by the location of schools/sports grounds on various parallel routes.

As part of the development of the interurban network, the Google travel planning tool was utilised to assist in selecting the most appropriate route between the various settlements. This included avoiding routes with excessive gradients. In some cases, selecting a sufficiently flat route was not available. Thus, the the most available flattest route was selected. However, some routes were modified slightly to connect with adjacent towns/villages or key destinations such as schools, sports pitches or tourist attractions. The latest Eurovelo route was also referenced in Clare and if an equivalent interurban route could be provided along the same route, particularly if it helped to connect settlements.

The TII National Cycle Network Corridors have also been used to overlap corridors. These include corridors and routes into counties Galway, Tipperary, Limerick and Kerry.

### Greenway Route Integration

The primary greenway project under construction in Clare currently is the West Clare Railway Greenway.

#### West Clare Railway Greenway

The West Clare Railway Greenway is a proposed greenway route along the former West Clare Railway line. Following the former rail route, the main line will connect Ennis to Ennistymon via Lahinch, then continue south to Moyasta. There it will split to the east and west and connect to the towns of Kilrush and Kilkee.

Section 1 of the Greenway, from Kilrush to Kilkee, was open to public consultation from September to October 2021. The remainder of the greenway is still at early planning stages but it is still an aspiration of Clare County Development Plan to complete the remainder of the Greenway and link Ennis with settlements on the west and south-west of Clare.

### **Scariff to Limerick Greenway**

The Scariff to Limerick Greenway is intended to link the town of Scariff in the west of the River Shannon to Limerick City in the south. It is intended to follow the path of the River Shannon. Development of this greenway will create an accessible and high quality cycle route in the east of Clare and assist in forming a radial cycle corridor between Ennis, Shannon, Limerick and Scariff.

### **Shannon to Limerick Greenway**

A greenway linking Shannon in County Clare to Limerick Town in County Limerick is proposed for future development. The route will also include a linkage to Sixmilebridge

## **Urban Network Development: Ennis**

With a population of over 5,000 inhabitants, an urban cycle network has been developed for Ennis Town. The urban network is comprised of a primary orbital route and a larger amalgamation of both primary and secondary routes that traverse and encompasses the town.

In the centre of the town, the an inner orbital route is proposed along streets such as Gort Road, Lifford Road, Tulla Road, Clon Road, Station Road, Cornmarket Street, Sandfield Park, and Highfield Park. In addition, a radial route is proposed along O'Connell Street and Abbey Street in the centre of the town. This will be supplemented by additional primary routes linking other parts of Ennis with the centre of the town. This will includes streets such as R458 Gort Road, Tulla Road, Quin Road, Limerick Road, Kilrush Road, R474 Circular Road, and N85 Lahinch Road.

Locations that are served by the orbital route include, but are not limited to:

- Ennis Town Centre
- Ennis Bus station
- Ennis Train station
- Ennis General Hospital
- Holy Family junior school
- Ennis Tennis & Badminton Club
- Cusack Park
- Ennis Community College
- St. Flannan's College
- Ennis National School
- Ballyalla Lake
- Ennis Educate Together National School

A number of secondary routes are also proposed along streets such as New Road, Turnpike Road, Drumbiggle Road, College Grove etc. These are intended to act as interlinks to the orbital and radial routes in addition to serving locations that have not located on orbital or radial routes previously mentioned.

## **Urban Network Development: Shannon**

With a population of over 5,000 inhabitants, an urban cycle network has been developed for Shannon. This has been based on the cycle network outlined in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040 (see Figure 3.1). The urban network is comprised of a primary orbital route and a larger amalgamation of both primary and secondary routes that encompasses the town.

These primary routes feature along streets such as Airport Road, Shannon Town Centre, Cúl na Gréine, Cluain Donn, Smithstown, Ballycasey More, N19 Airport Road, and Corrib Drive. The network is also completed by the proposed Ennis to Limerick Greenway which features along the south side of the town.

Locations that are served by these primary routes include but are not limited to:

- Shannon Town Centre
- St Senans National Catholic School
- Shannon Airport
- Shannon Town United
- Shannon Athletics Club
- St Senans Rugby Club
- Shannon Business Park
- St. Patrick's Comprehensive School
- St. Senan's National School
- Tullyearraga Playschool
- Shannon Swimming & Leisure Centre
- Shannon Public Library
- St Caimin's Community School

A number of secondary routes are also proposed along streets such as the Gort Road, Tullyglass Crescent, Ballycasey, East Park etc. These are intended to act as interlinks to the orbital and radial routes in addition to serving locations that have not located on orbital or radial routes previously mentioned.

## 5. Next Steps

AECOM, as part of the NTA Cycle Design Office, have been requested by the NTA to develop comprehensive cycle routes for County Clare and the towns of Ennis and Shannon.

The network design for Clare has now been made available for public consultation. This will allow for members of the public to submit their feedback. Individual maps are available to view on the National Transport Authority website and are available in the links below:

**Table 5.1: Clare CycleConnects Network – List of Maps**

Cycle Map List
Clare County Cycle Network
Ennis Urban Cycle Network
Shannon Urban Cycle Network

Following the public consultation, submissions will be reviewed and the network maps updated as required.