

Draft Louth
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 Louth 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 interurban 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 Louth. For details of methodology, national policy and the overall aspirations for CycleConnects, please refer to the main report of which this technical note is an appendix of.

2. Louth Population and Settlements

County Louth is on the east coast of the country, in the province of Leinster. It is bordered by counties Armagh, Monaghan and Meath.

According to the CSO Census 2016, the county has a population of 128,884 inhabitants. Table 2.1 below shows the population of towns within Louth. Drogheda and Dundalk are the only settlements with at least 5,000 people with all other towns having a population of less than 5,000.

Table 2.1: Population Settlements in Louth

City/Town	Population (2016)
Drogheda	40,956
Dundalk	39,004
Ardee	4,928
Clogherhead	2,145
Dunleer	1,822
Termonfeckin	1,576
Tullyallen	1,547
Carlingford	1,445
Dromskin	1,195
Castelbellingham	1,126

3. Existing Louth Policies and Plans

Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Louth County Development Plan (LCDP) was published by Louth County Council to outline the overall strategy for the planning and development of the county. From the previous development plan, the major change has been the recognition now given to the towns of Dundalk and Drogheda. This County Development Plan will replace the Drogheda and Dundalk Development Plans, with Local/Urban Area Plans to be prepared for them.

The Strategic Vision for the county aims to promote the three principles of environmental, social, and economic sustainability. This includes protecting the county's resources, heritage and built environment.

The Vision is as follows:

“Promote County Louth, in particular the Regional Growth Centres of Drogheda and Dundalk, as uniquely attractive places in which to live, work, visit and do business and where the quality of employment and educational opportunities, natural and built environment, cultural experiences and provision of inclusive communities are all to the highest standards, while transitioning to a low carbon and climate resilient society.”

The Vision is to be achieved through Strategic Objectives. A number of these relate to the promotion of sustainability and transportation:

- **SO 5:** Ensure a more sustainable and integrated concept of development with regard to land use, transportation, water services, energy supply and waste management over the lifetime of the Plan.
- **SO 15:** Ensure the proper integration of transportation and land use planning through the increased use of sustainable transport modes and the minimisation of travel demand to achieve a sustainable, integrated and low carbon transport system with excellent connectivity both within and beyond the County.
- **SO 17:** Facilitate the development of infrastructural projects, which will underpin sustainable development throughout the County during the period of the Plan.

Transport

The Development Plan aims to create a functional and sustainable transport network that will allow people to move efficiently and contribute to an environment where both business and people can thrive. The county is located on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, providing transportation links to both cities.

These are summarised in Chapter 7: Movement, in the development plan. There are transport objectives that relate to cycling and sustainable transport:

- **MOV 1:** To work with national transport agencies in supporting the delivery of a high quality, climate resilient and sustainable transport network in the County.
- **MOV 3:** To facilitate the integration of land use with sustainable transportation infrastructure in accordance with the requirements of RPO 8.1 in the RSES by supporting the creation of a critical mass of population and employment related development that would maximise investment in public transport infrastructure and create compact, sustainable settlements.
- **MOV 7:** To support a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport, cycling and walking and the attainment of any national targets relating to modal change published during the life of this Plan.

- **MOV 9:** To support investment in sustainable transport infrastructure that will make walking, cycling or public transport more attractive and appealing, and facilitates accessibility for all, regardless of age, physical mobility, or social disadvantage.

Cycling

In Chapter 7 (Movement) of the LCDP, it notes that cycling and walking are efficient modes of transport, particularly in urban areas. These modes of transport also require less road space than private cars.

The Council supports the development of cycling facilities and infrastructure. It will continue its support of the provision of infrastructure that provides comfort and attraction to cyclists. The following are core planning objectives stated as part of Movement within County Louth:

- **MOV 1:** To work with national transport agencies in supporting the delivery of a high quality, climate resilient and sustainable transport network in the County.
- **MOV 2:** To support the implementation of the 'National Climate Action Plan' 2019, and any subsequent plans, and in particular the measures included that will assist in achieving the target of CO2 emissions reduction by 2030 in the transport section as set out in Section 10.2 of the '*Climate Action Plan*'.
- **MOV 3:** To facilitate the integration of land use with sustainable transportation infrastructure in accordance with the requirements of RPO 8.1 in the RSES by supporting the creation of a critical mass of population and employment related development that would maximise investment in public transport infrastructure and create compact, sustainable settlements.
- **MOV 5:** To prepare a Local Transport Plan in consultation with the National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and other relevant stakeholders for Drogheda and Dundalk as part of the preparation of the Urban Area Plans/Local Area Plans for these settlements. The preparation of these Plans will be based on the guidance note on Area Based Transport Assessments published by the NTA/TII in 2019 and these Plans will be subject to screening for SEA and AA and full assessments will be undertaken if appropriate.

The plan outlines the following objectives in relation to Cycling and Walking objectives with the following outlined for cycling:

- **MOV 25:** To support the retrospective provision of walking and cycling infrastructure in existing settlements, where feasible, to achieve growth in sustainable mobility and strengthen and improve the walking and cycling network.
- **MOV 26:** To improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity to schools, third level colleges, major employment areas, bus and rail stations, and other public transport hubs.
- **MOV 27:** To review the feasibility and implementation (where deemed necessary) of the 30km/h zones in Drogheda and Dundalk in creating attractive, low speed environments
- **MOV 28:** To promote walking and cycling as a safe, convenient, healthy, efficient, and environmentally friendly mode of transport for all age groups.
- **MOV 29:** To continue to work and engage with the National Transport Authority, the Department of Transport, any other agencies in developing a modern network of walking and cycling infrastructure in the County.

- **MOV 30:** To provide, where possible traffic free pedestrian and cyclist routes particularly where such routes would provide a more direct, safer, and more attractive alternative to the car.
- **MOV 32:** To plan and develop a Louth Coastal Way along the east coast subject to appropriate environmental considerations.

The Council will also support the development of greenways and the improvement of links between these, town centres and existing walking and cycling infrastructure. There are a number of greenway projects in planning and in existence in Louth. These are outlined in Section 4- Greenway Route Development. These greenways are as follows:

- Great Eastern Greenway
- Louth Coastal Way
- Dundalk-Sligo Greenway
- Boyne Greenway

There are a number of specific greenway policy objectives outlined in the Plan:

- **MOV 33:** To continue the development of a network of Greenways in the County in accordance with the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways.
- **MOV 34:** To continue to engage and work closely with Meath County Council and other stakeholders in the development and expansion of the Boyne Greenway.
- **MOV 35:** To continue to engage and work closely with Newry, Mourne, and Down District Council and other stakeholders in the development and expansion of the Great Eastern Greenway from Carlingford to Newry.
- **MOV 36:** To continue to engage and work closely with the OPW and other stakeholders in the development of the Coastal Greenway from Dundalk to Blackrock including the delivery of such infrastructure on both sides of the Castletown River, and Baltray to Drogheda through the Louth Coastal Defence Projects.
- **MOV 37:** To continue to engage and work closely with Monaghan County Council and other stakeholders in the development of the Dundalk to Castleblayney section of the Dundalk - Sligo Greenway.
- **MOV 38:** To engage in the Compulsory Purchase Order process when required in order to facilitate the timely delivery of the Greenway and Cycleway Projects in the County.

Future Local Transport Plans

Louth 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 Louth Cycle Network

Introduction

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

Prior to developing the Louth 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, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Department for Education and Louth 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 Louth that are available to as many people as possible. It has also allowed for the servicing of key destinations within County Louth.

Methodology

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

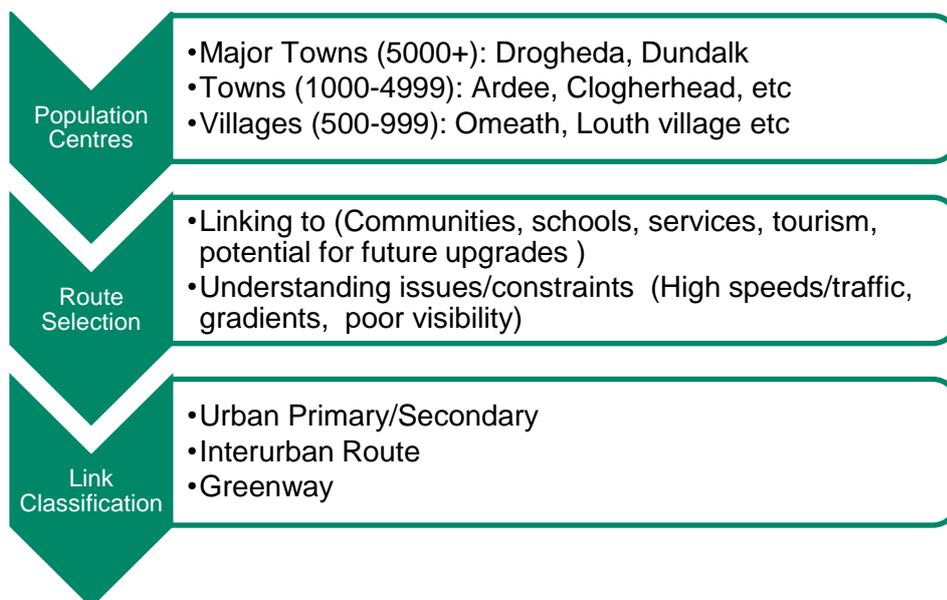


Figure 4.1: Cycle Network Development Methodology

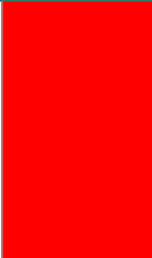
Population Centres: The Louth Cycle Network will look to link towns and villages together as part of a fully connected network. Thus, all towns were mapped with the larger such as Dundalk and Drogheda noted. By mapping all towns and villages, a profile emerged of where

most people in Louth 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 existing/proposed blueways (routes along rivers, lakes and canals) with cyclists sharing the route with pedestrians.

Proposed Louth County Network

Following the methodology outlined above, the Louth Cycle 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 Louth in the NTA consultation page.

Table 4.2: Louth Cycle Network – List of Maps

Cycle Map List
Louth Cycle Network
Dundalk Urban Cycle Network
Drogheda Urban Cycle Network

The Louth Cycle Network primarily extends the network beyond the key settlement areas of Drogheda and Dundalk. In summary, it will consist of an urban cycle network for Drogheda and Dundalk, with interurban connectors between towns such as Ardee, Carlingford, Clogherhead, Dunleer, and Termonfeckin. These then extend into adjoining counties forming a comprehensive and connecting 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 in order to create a more comprehensive cycle network. 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 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 TII National Cycle Network Corridors have also been used to overlap corridors. These include corridors and routes into counties Meath, Monaghan and the town Newry in Northern Ireland.

Greenway Route Integration

There are a number of greenways in Louth. These range from those open to the public, to those in the planning stage.

Great Eastern Greenway/ Carlingford to Omeath Greenway:

The Great Eastern Greenway also known as the Carlingford to Omeath connects these two towns along the shore of Carlingford Lough. It was primarily constructed along 7 km of the former railway line.

It is proposed to extend this greenway firstly to Newry and then to Dundalk incorporating Greenore and Templetown which would increase the length of the trail to approx. 55km and significantly improve the recreational infrastructure and cross border links along this unique coastline.

Louth Coastal Way:

As part of the Louth Coastal defence project, it is envisaged that elements of the Dundalk to Blackrock Greenway and Baltray to Drogheda Greenway will be incorporated into these defence schemes. These sections of Greenway will form part of the National Cycle Network (Corridor 5, Dundalk to Wexford).

Dundalk – Sligo Greenway:

As noted in the LCDP, the Dundalk – Sligo Greenway will form part of the National Cycle Network. The route will run westwards linking Dundalk to Sligo town, travelling 176km through five counties. The Council will work in cooperation with Monaghan County Council to progress the Dundalk to Castleblayney section of the Greenway.

Boyne Greenway:

Phase 1 of the Boyne Greenway runs from Dominic's Park on the south bank of the River Boyne to the Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre at Oldbridge via the existing ramparts. It is 1.9 km long.

Future phases include an extension from Drogheda to Mornington. This route will pass through Drogheda and follow the southern edge of the Boyne east of the town and out to Mornington. This Greenway will form part of the National Cycle Network (Corridor 5 and 15) linking from the East Coast Trail at Drogheda to the cross country EuroVelo Route 2.

Urban Network Development: Dundalk

With a population of over 5000 inhabitants, an urban cycle network has been developed for Dundalk. The urban network is comprised of an inner primary orbital route and a larger amalgamation of both primary and secondary routes that encompasses the town. This also includes the Dundalk to Carlingford to Dundalk Greenway and Dundalk to Carrickmacross Greenway discussed previously.

In the centre of the town, a primary orbital loop begins south of Dundalk Harbour and includes streets such as Quay Street, Red Barns Road, Avenue Road, Dublin Street and Seatown Place. This is then supplemented by various primary radial routes on streets such as Racecourse Road, Coes Road, St. Alphonsus Road, Carrickmacross Road, N52 Castletown Road and Castle Street/Road.

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

- Dundalk Town Centre
- Dundalk Train Station
- County Museum Dundalk
- St. Vincent's Secondary School
- Dundalk Shopping Centre
- Noel Gorman Park
- De La Salle College Dundalk
- St. Malachys Girls National School
- De La Salle Boys National School
- Scoil na mBraithre CBS Primary School
- Coláiste Rís
- Dundalk Rugby Club
- Sean O'Mahony's GAA Club
- St. Louis Secondary School
- Scoil Náisiúnta Eoin Baiste
- St Mary's College

To the south of the town, additional routes are also proposed to connect the town centre with Blackrock which forms a key settlement adjacent to Dundalk. This includes a primary route along the Dublin Road directly linking Blackrock with Dundalk Town Centre. An outer orbital route is also proposed along the Coast Road and continues north along Sandymount and Blackrock Road to link with Dundalk Town Centre and Harbour in the north. A primary route is also located along Seafield Road and is supplemented by various secondary routes linking onto the primary routes proposed.

Locations that are served by these primary routes in the south of Dundalk will include but are not limited to:

- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Louth County Hospital/St Oliver Plunket Hospital/Dundalk Hospital
- Na Piarasigh/Blackrock CLG (GAA Club)
- St. Furseys National School
- St. Oliver Plunkett National School
- St Francis NS

Throughout the town a number of secondary routes are also proposed along streets such as Armagh Road, Mill Road, Mount Avenue, Pearse Park, and Old Golf Links Road. 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: Drogheda

With a population of over 5,000 inhabitants, an urban cycle network has been developed for Drogheda. As the River Boyne acts as a natural divider between the north and south of the town, the network is comprised of both orbital and radial primary routes, secondary routes and existing/proposed greenway routes discussed previously. As County Meath is located directly south of Drogheda Town Centre, this network will also look to connect with the proposed cycle routes outlined in the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan.

Drogheda North

The north orbital primary route runs along streets such as Cement Road, Cross Lane, Crushrod Avenue, Bredin Street and North Strand. This is supplemented by various primary routes connecting the North Drogheda with the town centre. These primary routes are proposed along streets such as Trinity Street, R132 North Road, Windmill Road, R166 Shamrock Villas, Newfoundwell Road and King Street. The proposed Port Access Northern Cross Route is also shown in the north of the town forming an additional outer orbital primary route for cyclists.

Locations in the north of Drogheda that will served by these routes will include but are not limited to:

- Drogheda Town Centre
- Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda
- Drogheda Institute of Further Education
- Lourdes Stadium
- Drogheda United Football Club
- Presentation Sports Ground

- Our Lady's College
- St. Joseph's Secondary School
- St. Patricks's National School
- Presentation Primary School
- St. Oliver's National School

A number of secondary routes are also proposed along streets such as Aston Village, Termon Abbey, Cord Road, and Pearse Park. 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.

Drogheda South

The southern orbital route runs along Rathmullan Rd, parallel to the River Boyne and includes other streets such as Dublin Road, Martello Village, Donore Road, Matthew's Lane, and Marley's Lane. This will be supplemented by primary radial routes along streets such as Duleek Street, and New Grange Business Park. Locations that will be served by these proposed cycle routes in the south of the town will include but are not limited to:

- Scotch Hall Shopping Centre
- Drogheda Pitch and Putt Club
- Drogheda Train Station
- St Mary's Parish Primary School
- St Mary's Catholic Diocesan School
- Donore Industrial Estate
- St Johns Primary School
- St Paul's Primary School

A number of secondary routes are also proposed along streets such as Donore Avenue, Cromwell's Lane, Congress Avenue, St Mary's Villas. 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 Louth and the towns of Drogheda and Dundalk.

The network design for Louth 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: Louth Cycle Network – List of Maps

Cycle Map List
Louth Cycle Network
Dundalk Urban Cycle Network
Drogheda Urban Cycle Network

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