

Draft Roscommon
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 County Roscommon. 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 plan does not specify any infrastructure types on any route and is focused on highlight 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 Roscommon. 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. Roscommon Population and Settlements

County Roscommon is in the west of the country in the province of Connacht. It is bordered to the east by the Shannon, with counties Leitrim, Longford, Westmeath and Offaly to the east, counties Mayo and Galway to the west, and Sligo in the north.

According to the CSO 2016, the county has a population of 64,544 inhabitants. Table 2.1 below shows the population of towns within Roscommon with at least 1,000 people. Roscommon Town is the only settlement with over 5,000 people with all other towns having a population of less than 5,000.

Table 2.1: Population Settlements in Roscommon

| City/Town | Population (2016) |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Roscommon | 5,876 |
| Carrick-on-Shannon | 4,062 |
| Boyle | 2,568 |
| Castlerea | 1,992 |
| Ballaghaderreen | 1,808 |

3. Existing Roscommon Policies and Plans

Roscommon County Development Plan 2022 - 2028

The Roscommon County Development Plan (RCDP) was published in 2022 and sets out the overall strategy and vision for the proper planning and sustainable development of the county over the six year plan period, and has been prepared in accordance with Part 2, Chapter 1 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The County Development Plan is a material consideration in making decision on future planning applications within Roscommon.

Chapter 7 of the RCDP documents the proposed plans for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications. This aims to encourage a shift to more sustainable modes of transport and low carbon transport system in order to achieve a more balanced and sustainable pattern of movement within the county.

The Transport objective policies listed in the RCDP relating to cycling networks within Roscommon are:

ITC 7.25: Promote walking and cycling as efficient, healthy and environmentally friendly modes of transport by securing the development of a network of direct, comfortable, convenient and safe cycle routes and footpaths, particularly in urban areas and in the vicinity of schools.

ITC 7.26: Identify and implement a strategic, coherent and high-quality cycling and walking network across the county that is integrated with public transport and interconnected with cultural, recreational, retail, educational and employment destinations and attractions.

ITC 7.27: Design pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in accordance with the principles, approaches and standards set out in the National Cycle Manual, the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, the TII publication 'The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads' and any subsequent revisions with a focus on a high level of service and encourage a modal shift from the private car to cycling and walking.

ITC 7.28: Improve the streetscape environment for pedestrians, cyclists and people with special mobility needs by providing facilities to enhance safety and convenience, including separation for pedestrian infrastructure from vehicular traffic.

ITC 7.29: Provide for safer routes to schools within the county and promote walking and cycling as sustainable modes of transport as part of the Green Schools Programme and other local traffic management improvements.

ITC 7.30: 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.

Section 7.7 discusses modal share and sustainable transport. Figure 3.1 below sets out the modal share for Roscommon based of the data collated from the 2016 census. Currently it identifies a high dependency on private vehicular use.

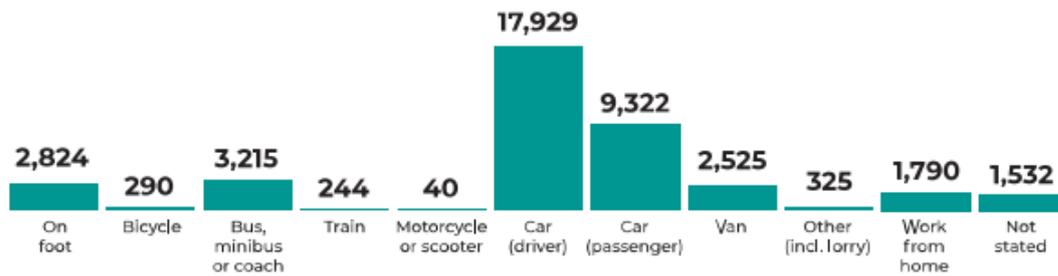


Figure 3.1 : Modal Share in Co. Roscommon (2016 Census Data)

Roscommon County Council (RCC) understand that a key aim of smarter travel is to ensure that walking and cycling become the mode of choice for local trips, and with this in mind the council have committed to working with the NTA to develop and prepare Local Transport Plans (LTPs) and Active Travel Plans to identify potential targets for modal shift to more sustainable transport.

LTPs are proposed based on the Area Based Transport Assessment for Roscommon Town, Carrick-on-Shannon and Boyle. As part of the LTP preparation, the '10 Minute Town' concept will be incorporated as a key tool in supporting permeability, accessibility, active travel and public transport.

In order to facilitate modal shift to a more sustainable transport mode, the following modal share and sustainable transport policy objectives listed in the RCDP are:

ITC 7.31: Prepare Local Transport Area Plans for Roscommon Town, Carrick-on-Shannon and Boyle based on the Area Based Transport Assessment guidance of the National Transport Authority and Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

ITC 7.32: Prepare Active Travel Plans for the towns of Ballaghaderreen, Castlerea, Elphin and Strokestown over the lifetime of the plan.

ITC 7.33: Re-examine the modal share data following the completion of the Census 2022 and identify targets to achieve a modal shift to sustainable transport on the foot of this.

In addition to the strategic and local aims to facilitate a modal shift towards active travel listed in the RCDP, it is also stated within the RCDP that the increased demand for activity lead tourism over the past 10 years has resulted in walking and cycling becoming increasingly popular activities.

In 2019 almost 25% of all tourists in Ireland partook in some form of walking or cycling. As such, RCC recognises the numerous benefits arising from further development of walking and cycling routes, in particular as part of a tourism product to attract economic growth and development within the county.

Figure 3.2 below, extracted from the RCDP details the existing walking and cycling routes within the county.

| Walk Name | Location | Length | Difficulty |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Kilronan Castle - Lake walk | Ballyfarnon | 2kms - 4.6km | Easy |
| Knockranny Wood loop | Keadue | 1km | Easy |
| Multi Access Trail | Corrigeenroe | 0.5km - 1km | Easy |
| Lough Key Forest Park Slí | Boyle | 3.8kms | Easy |
| Bockagh Hill Loop | Ballagherreen | 4.5km - 7km | Easy |
| Lough Errit Walking Trails | Gortnaganny | 4km - 8km | Easy |
| Lough O'Flynn - Bog loop | Ballinlough | 3.4km - 5km | Easy |
| Castlerea Trails | Castlerea | 6km | Easy to Moderate |
| Cloonfad Scenic Walks | Cloonfad | 7.8km | Easy |
| Sliabh Bawn - Trim Trail | Strokestown | 2.9km | Moderate |
| Ballintubber Rambling Loop | Ballintubber Village | 4km | Easy to Moderate |
| Cloonlarge Bog Walk | Kilteevan | 6.4km | Easy |
| Mote Park | Roscommon | 20km | Easy |
| Castlecoote Loop | Castlecoote Village | 5.2km | Easy |
| Rinn Duin - Castle Loop | Lecarrow | 3kms | Easy |
| Shannonbridge | Ballinasloe | 5.2km | Easy |
| Miner's Way & Historical Trail | Boyle/Arigna/Keadue | 118km | Easy to Moderate in places |
| Suck Valley Way | Castlerea/Castlecoote | 105km | Easy to Moderate in places |
| Monksland | Monksland | 3.7km - 6.9km | Easy |
| Lung Lough Gara | Castlerea to Ballagherreen | 57km | Easy |
| National Famine Way | Strokestown | 18km | Easy |
| Loughnaneane Sculpture Trail | Roscommon Town | Network of paths | Easy |
| Boyle to Lough Key Cycleway | Boyle | 7.9km | Easy to Moderate |
| Green Heartlands Cycle way | Mid and South Roscommon | 211km | Easy to Moderate |

Figure 3.2 : Walking and Cycling Routes in County Roscommon

Within the Development Plan it is stated that “it is Council policy to continue to expand and create an intergraded network of greenways across the County and maximise pedestrian and cycle access to same”. With this in mind the following economic development policy objectives have been noted with particular reference to cycling infrastructure development where documented in the RCDP:

ED 6.28: Encourage walking and cycling as sustainable transport modes and healthy recreational activities by ensuring that a network of safe, well-marked and maintained rights-of-way, walking and cycling routes, and footpaths are provided throughout the county.

ED 6.29: Facilitate the creation of network of cycling/walking routes (including existing footpaths and walking routes, off road routes, local walks, tourist walks, medium and long distance walking routes) within the county.

ED 6.30: Develop linkages between existing and new trails, particularly those with a historic association in adjoining counties, in co-operation with Inland Waterways, Fáilte Ireland, and with other relevant stakeholder to provide linages with trails in adjoining counties in partnership with their Councils.

ED 6.31: Ensure that development proposals in the vicinity of walking routes and cycleways, including those identified in Table 6.1 (See Figure 3.2 above), do not hinder the use and general amenity value of the routes.

Local Area Plans

Ensure as part of the revised development plan, updated Local Area Plans (LAPs) are also been prepared to reflect the 2022-2028 County Development Plan. Revised plans are currently being prepared for the towns of Roscommon and Boyle. Below are details of the previous LAPs for these towns. Local Transport Plans will also be produced for the towns of Carrick-on-Shannon and Athlone with cooperation with Leitrim and Westmeath County Councils.

Roscommon Town Local Area Plan 2014-2020

The Roscommon LAP recognises the “importance of increasing the number of journeys made by public transport, as well as considering the needs of pedestrians and cyclists in the area. In order to promote a change from reliance on use of the private car, and instead encourage walking and cycling, the Plan seeks to promote increased linkages between residential areas and the town centre. The provision of new footpaths and cycleways on appropriate roads is a key element of this.

In order to give effect to the vision and development of the plans listed in the LAP the following policies and objectives relating to the improvement of cycling infrastructure are as follows.

Policy 4: Require development proposals, where appropriate and necessary, to provide adequate pedestrian and cycle paths and facilities,

Objective 3: Provide a pedestrian and cycle friendly environment within the Roscommon Town LAP area, subject to resources.

Objective 4: Develop cycle lanes linking residential areas, town centre and other areas such as school and recreational area. Bicycle bays and racks to be allocated in areas around the town centre.

Objective 5: Revisit the proposals to introduce a pedestrian/cycle network along the River Jiggy within the LAP area.

Boyle Local Area Plan 2015-2021

Within the Boyle LAP, it is stated that the plan “recognises the importance of improving the pedestrian network in and around the town centre and also increasing cycle lanes, particularly between Boyle and Lough Key Forest Park”.

In order to give effect to the vision and development of the plans listed in the LAP the following policies and objectives relating to the improvement of cycling infrastructure are as follows.

Policy 3: Require development proposals, where appropriate and necessary, to provide adequate pedestrian and cycle paths and facilities.

Objective 1: Improve the condition and connectivity of the public footpath network throughout the plan area and provide a pedestrian and cycle friendly environment within Boyle, subject to resources.

Policy 45: Facilitate the development and expansion of existing and new walkways and cycleways in and around Boyle, particularly between the town and Lough Key Forest Park.

Objective 38: Investigate the potential for off-road walking and cycling trails surrounding the town as well as the development of linkages between existing trails and others in adjoining counties. In addition, support national policy on trails development including the Irish Trails Strategy.

Objective 38: Promote walking, rambling and cycling as appropriate recreational and tourism activities in the town.

Future Local Transport Plans

Roscommon 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 Roscommon Cycle Network

Introduction

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

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

Methodology

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

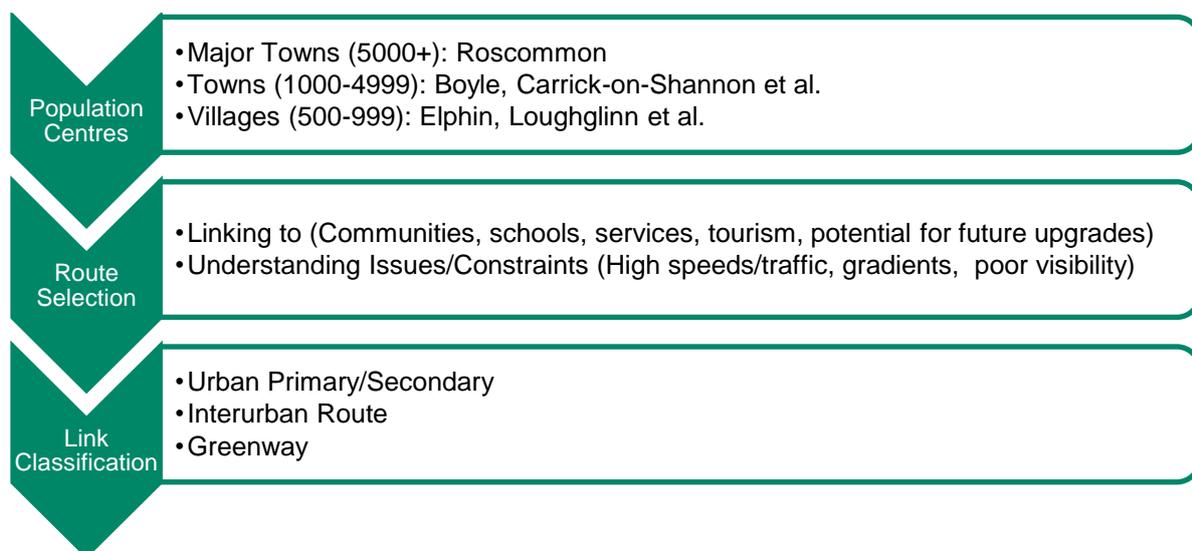


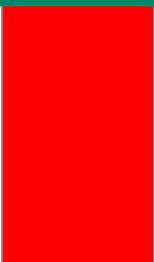
Figure 4.1: Cycle Network Development Methodology

Population Centres: The Roscommon 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 Roscommon Town noted. By mapping all towns and villages, it started to give a profile emerged of where most people in Roscommon 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 . 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 along rivers, lakes and canals) with cyclists sharing the route with pedestrians. |

Proposed Roscommon Cycle Network

Following the methodology outlined above, the Roscommon CycleConnects Network has been outlined in a series of maps shown in Table 4. below. These are also available to view as an individual PDF when selecting county Roscommon in the NTA consultation page.

Table 4.2: Roscommon CycleConnects Network – List of Maps

| Cycle Map List |
|--------------------------------|
| Roscommon County Cycle Network |
| Roscommon Urban Cycle Network |

Interurban Link Design

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/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 Sligo, Leitrim, Longford, Westmeath, Offaly, Galway and Mayo.

Greenway Route Integration

There are a number of proposed greenways within the Roscommon CycleConnects Network that have routes yet to be determined. These include:

- Athlone to Strokestown Blueway
- Boyle to Carrick-on-Shannon Greenway
- Ballaghaderreen to Drumlistna Greenway
- Mid-Shannon Greenway Loop

The finalised routes for these greenways are still unknown at this stage so it is shown as being indicative only on the relevant maps and may be subject to change at once the finalised route is known.

Boyle to Carrick-on-Shannon Greenway

The Boyle to Carrick-on-Shannon Greenway is currently being developed adjacent to the N4 between the two towns.

The finalised route for the greenway is still unknown at this stage so it is shown as being indicative only on the relevant maps and may be subject to change at once the finalised route is known.

National Galway to Dublin Greenway

This greenway is at various stages of development and is approximately 270km across the country. The route development is divided into six sections: Galway to Athlone Castle, Athlone Castle to Athlone Marina, Athlone Marina to Whitegates, Whitegates to Mullingar, Mullingar to

Maynooth and Maynooth to Dublin. For the Galway to Athlone sections, including sections through Roscommon, the route is shown as indicative only and may be subjective to change at later stages before proceeding to construction.

Urban Network Development: Roscommon

With a population of over 5,000, an urban cycle network has been developed for Roscommon Town. The urban network is comprised of a primary orbital loop that runs south-west along the N61/N63 Circular Road before continuing west along Convent Road and then north-east along St. Ciarans Road and Lanesborough Street.

Locations served by this route include but are not limited to:

- Centrepoint Retail Park
- Circular Road Industrial Estate
- Roscommon Retail Park
- Gold Links Road Industrial Estate
- Roscommon Community Library
- Roscommon Leisure Centre
- Roscommon GAA

In addition to the above mentioned, the following are also proposed primary routes which provide connectors with radial interurban routes in addition to serving locations that were not picked up on the orbital loop.

A proposed primary radial route transitions from its interurban connections to Strokestown in the north along the N61 Circular Road until it meets the orbital route at its junction with the N60, Castlerea interurban route. This then continues further south along Castle Street and another adjacent primary route continues south-east along the N61 Circular Road. There is another proposed primary radial route from Tuam/Ballinasloe interurban route along the R366 where it meets the orbital route and R366 Convent Road. Additional primary routes are also proposed in south side of the town along streets such as St. Theresa's Road, Ardnanagh and Abbeytown.

Locations served by this route include but are not limited to:

- Lanesborough Rd Industrial Estate
- Roscommon Train Station
- St Comán's Wood Primary School

A number of additional secondary and greenway routes are proposed to link and serve additional locations not located on the primary routes. Locations served by these routes include but are not limited to:

- CBS Roscommon
- Roscommon Community College
- Roscommon Gaels GAA Club
- Roscommon Community Sports Park
- ABC Pre-School
- Roscommon Golf Club
- Douglas Hyde Park
- Roscommon University Hospital

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 Roscommon and the town of Roscommon.

The network design for Roscommon 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: Roscommon CycleConnects Network – List of Maps

| Cycle Map List |
|--------------------------------|
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| Roscommon Urban Cycle Network |

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