
Greystones to wicklow greenway submission

From [REDACTED]
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To Wicklow Greenway <wicklowgreenway@wicklowcoco.ie>

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To whom it may concern.

I am a land owner bordering the proposed inland route of this greenway in Newcastle.

I am opposed to its location for multiple reasons as follows.

First and foremost you have portrayed and "sold" a coastal route to the general public, which is what people want.

There is an existing pathway from Geystones to Wicklow albeit this needs upgrading to make it suitable for bicycles etc. This pathway will have to be upgraded, as the recent storms have eroded many parts of the path, which now mean the railway is under threat.

It seems the most efficient use of public money would be the combining of forces with Tii, Cie and the County Council to achieve all objectives. Coastal and rail protection , and a scenic route from Greystones to Wicklow.

By choosing this internal route you are in contravention to the National policy for greenways, which states that they should be routed along public land where possible. In fact Minister [REDACTED] is on record saying that private land should not be cpod for greenways.

CPOing private land is going to vastly increase the cost of the project. Sligo Co Co 2025 review proved that private land routes cost at least 22% more to build and maintain.

In this case here, not only would you be crossing a flood plain it is also a highly sensitive natural habitat and environment for a number of protected birds and wildlife.

This route skirts two European funded and protected areas (SAC and SPA) these lands hold large numbers of swans, duck, geese, waders, herons, cormorants, lapwing, oyster catchers, snipe etc. There are at least 9 species of high conservation concern in this area.

The birds/ animals are not confined to these wetlands. Many feed/ nest on the neighbouring farm land on both sides of the route.

There are otters, badgers and other animals to be found in the areas also .

These will be unnecessarily threatened. First with the development and all associated works to drain/ divert water from these wetlands. Then there will be further disturbance from people and dogs if it comes to fruition.

The legal standard under the "EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE (92/43/EEC) and the BIRDS DIRECTIVE (2009/147/EC) state that the council must prove beyond "reasonable scientific doubt " that the project will not adversely affect the integrity of a European site. This greenway will without a doubt adversely affect this natural habitat and all that it contains.

The current route almost in its entirety from Kilcoole to Wicklow has been under water for most of the past few months. As we are told, with climate change, we are going to experience wetter winters from now on. The drainage and development of culverts/ diversion of water will adversely affect this natural habitat. And be extremely costly (unnecessarily wasting public money).

Add to this, the proposed roadway will remove soakaway for all the extra rain and water we now receive, making even more of a problem with flooding.

The Wicklow Co Co climate action plan calls for "climate resilience and biodiversity richness", by stripping land, removing trees and hedgerows, diverting waterways, you will be destroying the carbon sequestering ability of the land. The soils in the proposed land are of peat which are high density carbon stores.

If this route is chosen Wicklow Co Co are knowingly choosing a route with maximum environmental resistance and knowingly disturbing Annex 1 habitats protected by European law.

This climate action plan also calls for adaptation for future sea level rises and flooding. This proposed route is inside the flood zone. This will also be controversial with what the action plan states it will do.

An Bord Pleanála favours "modified" land over greenfield sites. Which is also another of the climate actions plans intentions, using existing "disturbed" land rather than greenfield sites.

Blessington greenway was refused as it was to cut through a "greenfield" site rather than using an existing pathway.

From an agricultural point of view, splitting farm land and CPO ing some of a farmers land reduces their already meagre incomes to provide an amenity for people's who's incomes will not be negatively impacted by such a development. Taking from one (many in this case) for others.

Gates will have to be installed for farmers to go from one side to the other of the greenway which leads to a security risk. Firstly for their animals to be interfered with (humans and dogs) litter issues (animals ingesting what people throw over the fences/ gates) risk of trespassing

onto farmland and what people may do as well as the potential for harm to the general public who encounter animals by trespassing.

Smaller fields become redundant for certain agricultural activities due to the size of modern machinery, so again reducing the capacity for income from the land.

There is not enough parking for the extra traffic that will be generated.

The park and ride in Greystones is already at capacity (and flooded badly this year) so no extra availability for people using the greenway. People who want to join at various other intersections to the south have limited or no parking and narrow access road to get there. Adding additional traffic to these narrow country lanes is not viable.

An inland isolated route makes people incredibly vulnerable to anti social behaviour. Once on the route there would be large sections of pathway where one could be extremely isolated for long periods. With a paved route there would be an increase in electric scooter use . These are dangerous and also allow potential culprits escape quickly.

I am extremely anxious about the route going directly past my boundary fence. I have already experienced anti social behaviour in the nature reserve down the road from where this route will pass and opening a further route has the capability of bringing this behaviour to my door. Not to mention the security risk to my property and family of young children.

I hope wicklow county Council will take on board all the above concerns and those of many others and revise their plans for the location of this greenway.

The idea is wonderful, the location is not.

Regards

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