



SEA Screening Report

Clones Urban Mobility Plan

Client: DBFL Consulting Engineers

Rev	Status	Date	Author(s)	Approved by
01	ISSUE	15/09/24	DMcC	BF

Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Background to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).....	4
2.1 Introduction	4
2.1 SEA Screening	5
2.2 Requirements for SEA Screening	6
3. Planning Context.....	7
3.1 Overview	7
3.2 National Policy	7
3.2.1 National Planning Framework (2040)	7
3.2.2 National Development Plan (2021-2030)	9
3.2.3 National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland	9
3.2.4 Climate Action Plan (2024)	10
3.3 Local Policy	11
3.3.1 Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025	11
3.3.2 Clones Settlement Plan 2019 -2025	12
3.3.3 Clones Heritage and Economic Plan 2021	13
3.3.4 Monaghan County Walking & Cycle Strategy 2021-2026	14
3.4 Emerging Active Travel and Infrastructure Schemes	14
4. Clones Urban Mobility Plan.....	15
4.1 Active Travel and Transport Options Development	15
4.1.1 Overview	15
4.1.2 Active Travel Network	16
4.1.3 Potential off-street car parking locations and bicycle parking locations	18
4.1.4 Proposed Bus Stop Enhancements	20
4.2 Proposed Urban Mobility Plan Implementation	22
4.2.1 Indicative Implementation Strategy	22
5. Receiving Environment	25
5.1 Overview	25
5.2 Natura 2000 Sites	26

5.3 Cultural Heritage	27
6. SEA Screening Assessment.....	28
6.1 Characteristics of the Plan or Programme	28
6.1.1 The degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions, or by allocating resources.	28
6.1.2 The degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy	29
6.1.3 The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	29
6.1.4 Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	29
6.1.5 The relevance of the plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste management or water protection)	29
6.2 Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected	29
6.2.1 The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	29
6.2.2 The cumulative nature of the effects	30
6.2.3 The trans-boundary nature of the effects	30
6.2.4 The risk to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	30
6.2.5 The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	30
6.2.6 The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected	30
6.2.6.2 Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values	31
6.2.6.3 Intensive land use	31
6.2.7 The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, EU or international protection status	31
7. Recommendation on the Requirements for SEA.....	31
8. References	32
Figure 1 Proposed AT and Infrastructure Schemes	15
Figure 2 High-level Active Travel Network	17
Figure 3 Key Land Use Zoning.....	18
Figure 4 Proposed off-street car parking and Park & Stride locations	19
Figure 5 Proposed cycle parking locations	20
Figure 6 Proposed Bus Stop infrastructure.....	21
Figure 7 Link ID's.....	22
Figure 8 Proposed Active Travel Network Implementation - Short-/Medium- and Long-term proposals.....	25

Figure 9 Designated Sites in the vicinity of the proposal.....	26
Figure 10 Built Heritage distribution in Clones Town	27
Table 1 Relevant policy background for the Urban Mobility Plan for Clones Town	7
Table 2 Proposed Active Travel Network Implementation - Short-/Medium-term proposals.....	23
Table 3 Proposed Active Travel Network Implementation - Long term proposals.....	24

1. Introduction

Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants have been commissioned by DBFL Consulting Engineers to carry out screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in respect of the Draft Urban Mobility Plan for Clones Town, Co. Monaghan.

The present report contains the screening exercise for SEA in respect of the above for the purposes of public consultation and notification of the competent authorities for SEA, in accordance with Article 9(7) of S.I. 435 of 2004 (The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011.

2. Background to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

2.1 Introduction

Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the assessment of certain plans and programmes on the environment (informally known as the “SEA Directive” requires EU Member States to assess the *likely significant environmental effects* of plans or programmes prior to their adoption. This provides for the assessment of strategic environmental considerations at an early stage in the decision-making process. See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042> for the full text of the Directive.

Article 1 of the SEA Directive states that:

The objective of this directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of t plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development by ensuring that, in accordance with

this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Directive 2001/42/EC was transposed into Irish law through the following instruments:

- Statutory Instrument (S.I.) No. 435 of 2004 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).
- S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, relates to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes prepared for “agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use. S.I. No. 436 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011, relates to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes where the context requires, “a development plan, a variation of a development plan, a local area plan (or an amendment thereto), regional planning guidelines or a planning scheme.

2.1 SEA Screening

In the Directive, Article 3(4) requires that *Member States shall determine whether plans and programmes, other than those referred to in Paragraph 2, which set the framework for future development consent of projects, are likely to have significant environmental effects.*

The process for deciding whether a particular plan, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects and, therefore, would require SEA, is known as “screening”.

Criteria for screening are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. These criteria are further set out in an Irish context in Schedule 1 of S.I. no. 435 of 2004 (as amended by S.I. no. 200 of 2011) and are considered under two main headings, each of which have a number of sub-criteria. The two main considerations during screening are a) the characteristics of the plan or programme and b) the characteristics of the likely effects, and the characteristics of the receiving environment.

Article 9(1) of the above Instrument states that:

Subject to sub-article (2), an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes:

- (a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or*
- (b) which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site*

Article 9(2) further states that:

A plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) which determines the use of a small area at local level or a minor modification to a plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) shall require an environmental assessment only where the competent authority determines that it is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, for this purpose, the competent authority shall make any necessary determination.

2.2 Requirements for SEA Screening

The Draft Urban Mobility Plan for Clones Town is a non-statutory land use plan, and is being screened for the requirement for SEA in accordance with the requirements of

- The SEA Directive, particularly Articles 3(3), 3(4) and 3(5) in relation to “screening”; and
- The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended, particularly Schedule 1, which sets out the criteria for whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment

3. Planning Context

3.1 Overview

The Urban Mobility Plan for Clones Town will inform the investment in and implementation of active travel infrastructure and sustainable mobility proposals within the area. In the context of transportation, the urban area of Clones is influenced by the following key national and local policies. A common theme throughout these policies is the emphasis placed upon the importance of travel demand management, with many identifying the need to implement mobility management plans with the objective of promoting sustainable travel patterns.

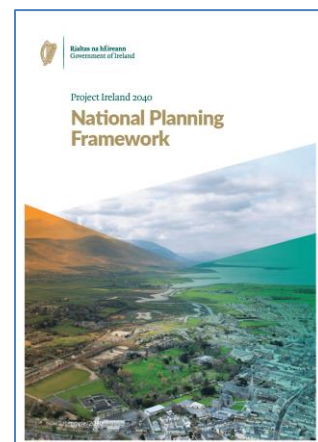
Table 1 Relevant policy background for the Urban Mobility Plan for Clones Town

Level	Policy
National Policy	National Planning Framework (2040) National Development Plan (2021-2030) National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (2040) Climate Action Plan (2024)
Local Policy	Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 Clones Settlement Plan 2019-2025 Clones Heritage and Economic Plan 2021 Monaghan County Walking and Cycling Strategy 2021-2026

3.2 National Policy

3.2.1 National Planning Framework (2040)

The National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF) was published in February 2018 and now sets the strategic vision for the spatial development of Ireland for the period from 2018-2040. On foot of the completion of the NPF the Northern and Western Regional Assembly has prepared their own strategy in accordance with the Framework set by the NPF. This was adopted in January 2020 and is known as a Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.



According to the NPF, the **National Strategic Outcomes** (including **Compact Growth** and **Sustainable Mobility**) are supported by Strategic Investment Priorities where Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and National Road Networks are the first and second priorities. These concepts are central to the proposed scheme. Section 1.3 of the National Planning Framework describes them as follows:

Compact Growth: *Carefully managing the sustainable growth of compact cities, towns and villages will add value and create more attractive places in which people can live and work. All our urban settlements contain many potential development areas, centrally located and frequently publicly owned, that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, jobs, amenities and services, but which need a streamlined and co-ordinated approach to their development, with investment in enabling infrastructure and supporting amenities, to realise their potential. Activating these strategic areas and achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than more sprawl of urban development, is a top priority.*

The NPF further explains **National Strategic Outcome 1 ‘Compact Growth’** at p. 139 of the document:

From an urban development perspective, we will need to deliver a greater proportion of residential development within existing built-up areas of our cities, towns and villages and ensuring that, when it comes to choosing a home, there are viable attractive alternatives available to people. Combined with a focus on infill development, integrated transport and promoting regeneration and revitalisation of urban areas, pursuing a compact growth policy at national, regional and local level will secure a more sustainable future for our settlements and for our communities.

Sustainable Mobility: *In line with Ireland’s Climate Change mitigation plan, we need to progressively electrify our mobility systems moving away from polluting and carbon intensive propulsion systems to new technologies such as electric vehicles and introduction of electric and hybrid traction systems for public transport fleets, such that by 2040 our cities and towns will enjoy a cleaner, quieter environment free of combustion engine driven transport systems.*

It is also pertinent to note the National Strategic Objective for **Enhanced Amenities and Heritage** which seeks to “ensure that our cities, towns and villages are attractive and can offer a good quality of life. It will require investment in well-designed public realm, which includes public spaces, parks and streets, as well as recreational infrastructure”.

Section 9.0 of the **National Planning Framework** highlights the commitment to **Environmental and Sustainability Goals**. National Policy Objective 52 encapsulates this stating:

The planning system will be responsive to our national environmental challenges and ensure that development occurs within environmental limits, having regard to the requirements of all relevant environmental legislation and the sustainable management of our natural capital.

National Policy Objective 75 seeks to “Ensure that all plans, projects and activities requiring consent arising from the National Planning Framework are subject to the relevant environmental assessment requirements including SEA, EIA and AA as appropriate”.

3.2.2 National Development Plan (2021-2030)

The National Development Plan 2021-2030 (NDP) sets out a significant level of investment, €165 billion, which will underpin the National Planning Framework and drive its implementation over the next ten years. From reviewing the document there are a number of key points made about transport which relate to the proposed scheme. In Chapter 7: ‘Enhanced Regional Accessibility’, Transport was identified as a priority area for future public capital investment stating the following: *“This National Strategic Outcome seeks to enhance intra-regional accessibility through improving transport links between key urban centres of population and their respective regions, as well as improving transport links between the regions themselves.”* (NDP, 2021)

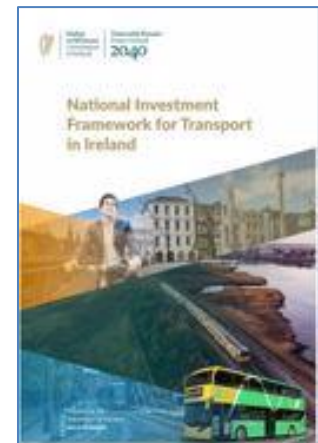


The NDP states that with over 50% of housing to be provided in our cities and 30% elsewhere to be provided within existing built-up areas, this urban compact growth, *“will be supported under this NDP through investment in high quality integrated active travel and public transport systems and supporting amenities.”* (NDP, 2021).

The NDP also states that *“This NDP provides for significant investment in active travel, bus and rail infrastructure over the next ten years in terms of expanding sustainable mobility options in our cities, towns and villages, supporting our ambition for compact growth and seeking to develop our regional cities as centres of scale in line with the NPF targets.”* and that *“Given the long term planning necessary to give effect to these plans the Government is committed to putting in place the necessary long-term funding to deliver on these requirements.”*

3.2.3 National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland

The National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) is the framework created by the Department of Transport for prioritising future investment in the land transport network. This is done to support the delivery of the National Strategic Outcomes. The Framework aims to contribute to Ireland’s decarbonisation effort, support vibrant and successful communities, deliver a high performing transport system, and promote a strong and balanced economy.



In an effort to cater for rising travel demand as well as decarbonising the transport sector, there will be a significant investment in sustainable mobility. This includes major public transport schemes, improved access to sustainable mobility in our towns and rural areas, and major investment in cycling and pedestrian infrastructure.

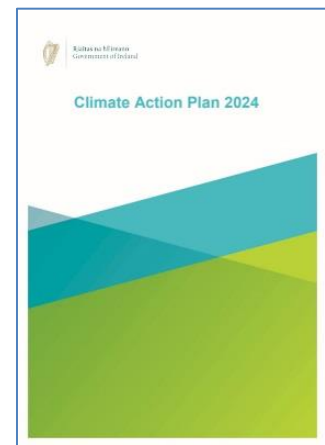
There are four Investment Priorities for the NIFTI:

- Mobility of People and Goods in Urban Areas
- Protection and Renewal
- Decarbonisation
- Enhanced Regional and Rural Connectivity

The Framework also includes a Modal Hierarchy and Intervention Hierarchy for the maintenance and implementation of physical infrastructure, on which the Maintenance of Active Travel infrastructure is given as a priority.

3.2.4 Climate Action Plan (2024)

The Climate Action Plan 2024 sets out a major programme for change in response to reducing Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions. The proposals outlined in the Plan are aimed at achieving a net zero carbon energy system within Ireland and it is envisaged that these proposals will also have associated positive economic and societal benefits, including cleaner air, warmer homes, and a more sustainable economy in the longer term.



Ireland's transport system plays a critical role in realising the ambitious targets of the Climate Action Plan. Consequently, to make growth less transport intensive a number of key policies are identified, including the expansion of walking, cycling and public transport to promote modal shift. The Climate Action Plan makes a commitment to reduce by 20% the total vehicle kilometres travelled and deliver an additional 125,000 sustainable journeys daily by 2030. Of relevance to the current proposal are the identified actions, particularly in relation to building supporting infrastructure, specifically:

Public authorities should work towards a reduction of on-street car parking spaces where it complements measures to prioritise active travel and public transport and to improve the public realm.

Measures addressing car parking provision and management, both on-street and off-street, are also being considered as part of the development of the National Demand Management Strategy.

The provision of safe and accessible walking and cycling infrastructure is key to encouraging modal shift away from private car use and towards walking and cycling. . . . Priority will be given to Safe Routes to School, CycleConnects routes, the National Cycle Network and scenic greenways. Annual budgetary constraints may mean that some projects will need to be prioritised based on determining criteria, including particular local needs and opportunities, especially safety needs. In addition, quality walking and cycling infrastructure will be incorporated in all public infrastructure projects.

The NTA’s Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Programme is a major national public transport initiative aimed at increasing connectivity, particularly for people living outside major cities and towns. The programme’s proposed implementation timeline spans five phases across 2022-2026. . . . Achieving the required level of behavioural shift and reduction in private car usage will require increased and expanded public transport services, supported under current funding through the PSO subsidy. The Department of Transport will continue its close engagement with the Department for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform to align current funding requirements for services.

and

Accelerate the implementation of smart and sustainable mobility projects through the Smart and Sustainable Mobility Accelerator project, launched under the Sustainable Mobility Policy Pathfinder Programme.

3.3 Local Policy

3.3.1 Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025

The Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 acknowledges that the “provision of quality cycling and walking facilities is key to an integrated transport system in towns and villages where the potential for short trips by foot or on bicycle can provide an economical, non-polluting and flexible form of transport which can deliver improvements to overall health and wellbeing. The provision of cycling infrastructure such as designated cycle paths, greenways, walking paths and trails also supports recreation and tourism”. In the context of the current proposal, the following are the relevant transport policies and objectives set out in the plan:



Transport and Infrastructure Objective

- **TISO 1** – To achieve a sustainable, efficient and integrated transport system and ease of movement throughout County Monaghan by enhancing the existing transport infrastructure in terms of the road, cycling and pedestrian facilities and by promoting more compact urban forms close to existing facilities to encourage more sustainable movement patterns.

Public Transport

- **PTP 1** – To support and co-operate, where possible, with the National Transport Authority and Cavan Monaghan Transport Co-ordination Unit to further the continued operation and expansion of the Local Link bus service and facilitate the planning, delivery and implementation of improvements to the transport network of the County.

Cycling and Walking

- **CWP 1** – To promote and facilitate the development of walkways, cycleways and recreational routes in appropriate locations throughout the County to deliver the objectives of the County Walking and Cycling Strategy and any subsequent strategy document.
- **CWP 2** – To promote and encourage the development of walks and cycleways in accordance with the Smarter Travel Policy and to protect established routes from development that would adversely impact upon them.
- **CWP 3** - To develop, in co-operation and consultation with adjoining local authorities and cross border bodies sections of the Ulster Canal Greenway Network to connect the main urban centres throughout central Ulster.
- **CWP 4** - To encourage the provision of bicycle infrastructure such as shelters and parking facilities in appropriate locations and make provisions for such infrastructure in new developments.

Objective **SHO 3** of the development plan refers directly to Clones & Ballybay and aims *“To promote and develop Tier 3 Service Towns in order to create self-sufficient sustainable and vibrant communities which will act as local development and service centres for the border catchment and the mid Monaghan hinterland whilst protecting the significant built heritage and archaeological heritage aspects of Clones town”*.

3.3.2 Clones Settlement Plan 2019 -2025

The Clones Settlement Plan is part of the aforementioned Monaghan County Development Plan. The purpose of the Clones settlement plan is to support the regeneration of Clones town centre and support facilitate the development of the town by way of supporting the expansion of services to meet the needs of its locality. Its strategic objective **CSSO 1** seeks to *“promote and develop Clones as a service town to create self-sufficient sustainable and vibrant community which will act as a local development and service centre for the border catchment and the west Monaghan hinterland.”*

Clones Town Centre Objectives:

- To prioritise development on brownfield lands and derelict sites and incentivise such development.
- To regenerate the town centre as a residential, retail and services centre, with particular emphasis on Fermanagh Street and the Diamond and to encourage the refurbishment, renewal and re-use of existing buildings and derelict sites.

The plan recognises the potential of the Ulster Canal to improve the economic development and tourism of the town and highlights that *“Complementary developments along the Ulster Canal which would benefit Clones include extending the proposed Ulster Canal Greenway network to connect Clones and enhancing*

the amenity of the Ulster Canal where feasible. Development of the amenity of the Ulster Canal will also promote Clones and its environs and encourage tourism. The local tourism product will also be strengthened by the development of a strategic network of greenways centred on the Ulster Canal and linking to other strategic greenway routes. Furthermore, the proposed Ulster Canal Greenway Network would see the town connected to the main urban centres throughout central Ulster.”

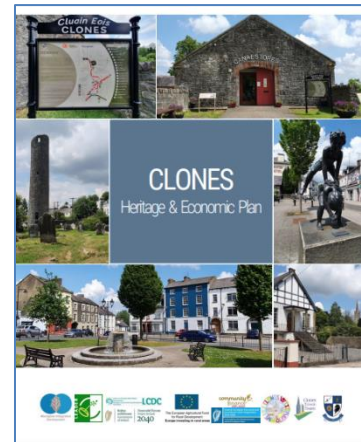
Objective CPO 7 of the settlement plan seeks to “*encourage and accommodate the reopening of the Ulster Canal and complementary developments along the route of the Ulster Canal including the development of the proposed Ulster Canal Greenway network, and the provision of a marina at an appropriate location within the town as it provides a vehicle for regeneration”.*

In terms of open space, the Settlement Plan notes that “*The Diamond area is the most important public space, and it is imperative that this space is preserved in a dignified and appropriate manner.” Furthermore, objective CPO 10 seeks “To protect and conserve the streetscape character, architectural quality, and heritage of the Diamond, Mac Curtain Street, Cara Street and Fermanagh Street.”*

3.3.3 Clones Heritage and Economic Plan 2021

Clones Heritage and Economic Plan was commissioned by Clones Tidy Towns in conjunction with Clones Town Team to develop a plan for the most effective presentation, management and development of Clones’ heritage, economic assets and opportunities and for the protection of the historic sites and artefacts of the town. The document includes an Action Plan which has been developed to be delivered over a 10–15-year period by a range of local interest groups bringing forward projects as funding opportunities arise. Some of the actions listed include:

- Improved greenway connectivity.
- Investing in peace link and surroundings. Introducing safe pedestrian and cycle linkages to increase connectivity with the wider town and Ulster Canal.
- Public realm enhancement
- Improved street furniture
- Creating high quality public space



The document outlines the impact of through traffic and the vehicular dominance in the town as one of the weaknesses to address. It also recognises the impact of the N54 and secondary routes on the perceived walkability of the town. Whilst radial roads spur out of the town cater to commuters and car users, interconnectivity of pedestrian routes and street level permeability is poor.

3.3.4 Monaghan County Walking & Cycle Strategy 2021-2026

The Monaghan Walking and Cycling Strategy 2021-2026 sets out a high-level strategy which considers how Monaghan Council will “develop walking and cycling infrastructure” and “promote walking and cycling as activities which support the economic, cultural and social wellbeing of the people of Co. Monaghan”. The Strategy comprises 5 broad themes which each comprise a series of objectives. The themes include:

- Theme 1 – Governance & Resources
- Theme 2 – Plan for a Sustainable Future
- Theme 3 – Removing the barriers to walking and cycling.
- Theme 4 – Embed walking & cycling into everyday life in Co. Monaghan
- Theme 5 – Continue to innovate and collaborate.

In terms of proposals directly relevant to the subject study area, the Strategy states that preliminary route investigation work has commenced on the section of Ulster Canal Greenway between Smithborough and Clones. The Strategy further states that funding has been announced for the re-watering of the Ulster Canal Section between Lough Erne to Clones. As such, the local authority aims to pursue funding opportunities for the development of improved active travel infrastructure to the local surrounding countryside.

3.4 Emerging Active Travel and Infrastructure Schemes

A number of schemes of relevance to the current proposal are either planned or underway within the town (Fig. 1). These are listed below (for full details see Chapter 4, *Urban Mobility Plan, Clones Town* (DBFL, 2024).

1. St. Tiernach’s Park, Clones Plaza
2. Clones Car Parking and Traffic Configurations Scheme
3. Ball Alley / Abbey Street Improvements
4. St. Tiernach’s Primary School Safe Routes to School
5. 98TH Avenue Bus Stop Enhancements and Pedestrian Crossing
6. Pedestrian enhancements related to the N54 Clones East Drainage System Scheme
7. Ulster Canal Greenway
8. CycleConnects Network

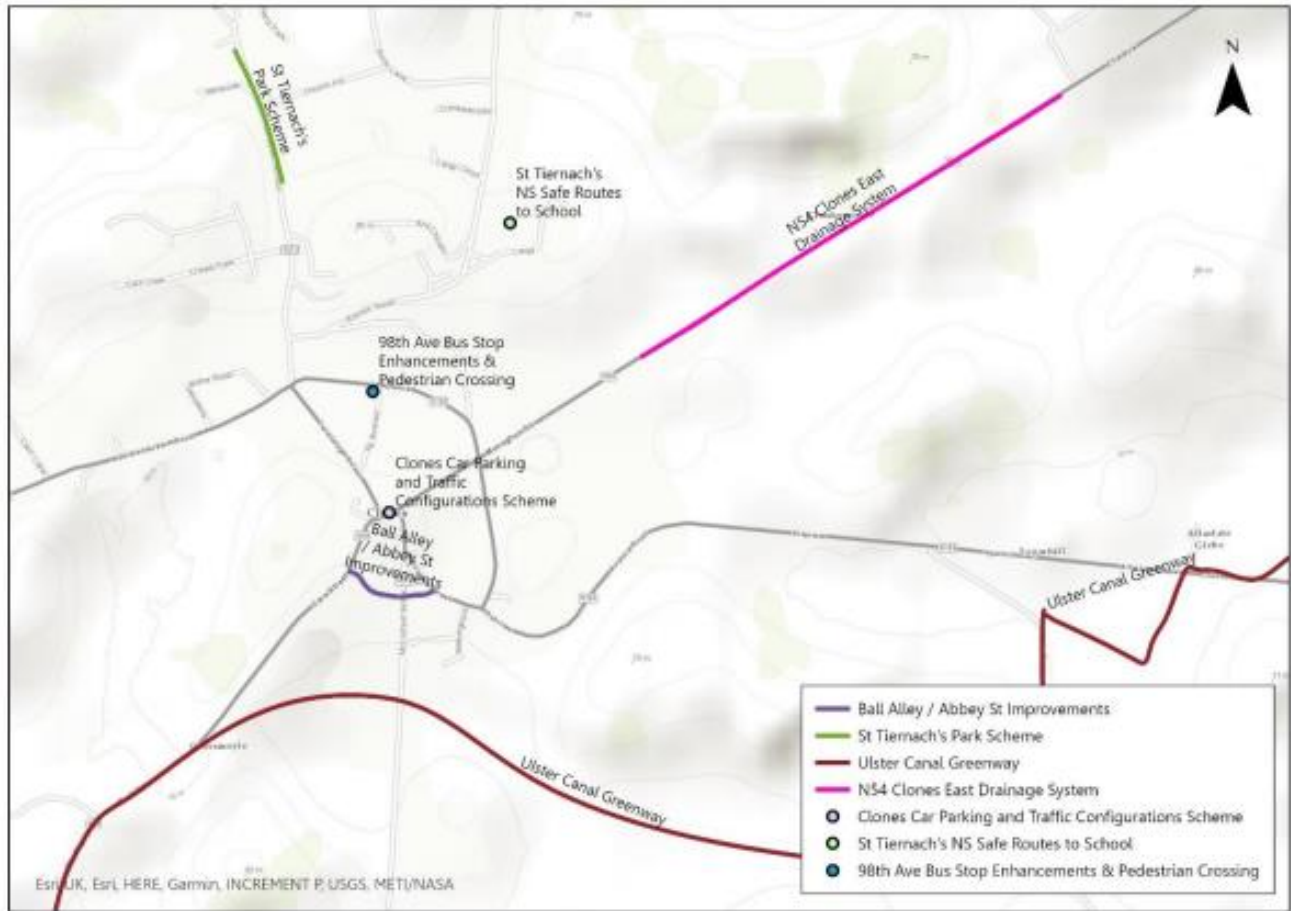


Figure 1 Proposed AT and Infrastructure Schemes

4. Clones Urban Mobility Plan

4.1 Active Travel and Transport Options Development

4.1.1 Overview

During the preparation of the Urban Mobility Plan for Clones Town, the existing active travel network within the study area was assessed, revealing that overall pedestrians are adequately served with footpaths along the majority of streets in urban areas, but that there was a lack of designated cycling infrastructure in the town. Chapter 12 of the Plan presents a Development Plan incorporating the consideration of a number of key components, namely:

- The key origins and destinations within the town (outlined in **Chapter 3.3** of the Plan)
- Existing transport infrastructure (outlined in **Chapter 3.4**)
- The already proposed or underway active travel and infrastructure schemes within the town (listed in **Chapter 3.4** above, and outlined in **Chapter 4** of the Plan)

- SWOT Analysis (**Chapter 11** of the Plan)

The Development Plan comprises three main areas:

- **The Active Travel Network:** It focuses on identifying key areas and routes where establishing a high-quality active travel network is deemed essential.
- **Potential Off-street Car Parking Locations:** This part presents a range of potential locations identified for off-street car parking facilities. These facilities aim to alleviate on-road space and facilitate the implementation of new or improved active travel infrastructure.
- **Proposed Bus Stop Enhancements:** This section proposes enhancements to the bus stop infrastructure that is currently lacking, aiming to improve public transport accessibility.

4.1.2 Active Travel Network

Based on the information discussed within the Urban Mobility Plan, a high-level Active Travel Network has been identified. It comprises a network hierarchy based upon estimated demand and end user demographic.

It considers the implementation of improved active travel infrastructure across the existing transport network but also considers the utilisation of zoned lands to achieve a comprehensive active travel network introducing improved linkages. The proposed high level active travel network is presented in **Figure 2** below. This proposed network aims to prioritise dedicated infrastructure at those locations where there are expected to be more vulnerable road users (i.e. school children) via the primary routes. While the Plan is a high level, it provides a preferred infrastructure arrangement to guide future active travel schemes where more detailed design can be undertaken.

The high-level infrastructure arrangement comprises the following:

- **Primary Route:** Dedicated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure segregated from vehicular traffic – these are generally proposed along key school routes.
- **Secondary Route:** Lower grade infrastructure (e.g. shared/lower width) pedestrian and cycle facilities segregated from vehicular traffic. These routes are proposed along routes where it is envisioned to be less demand and fewer vulnerable users.
- **Traffic Calming Routes:** Dedicated pedestrian facilities with cyclists sharing the carriageway with vehicular traffic with the introduction of traffic calming measures. These routes are proposed where there is predicted to be little demand and/or no physical potential for the incorporation of improved active travel infrastructure.
- **Retain existing arrangement:** This is for locations where negligible demand is envisioned or where infrastructure cannot be implemented.

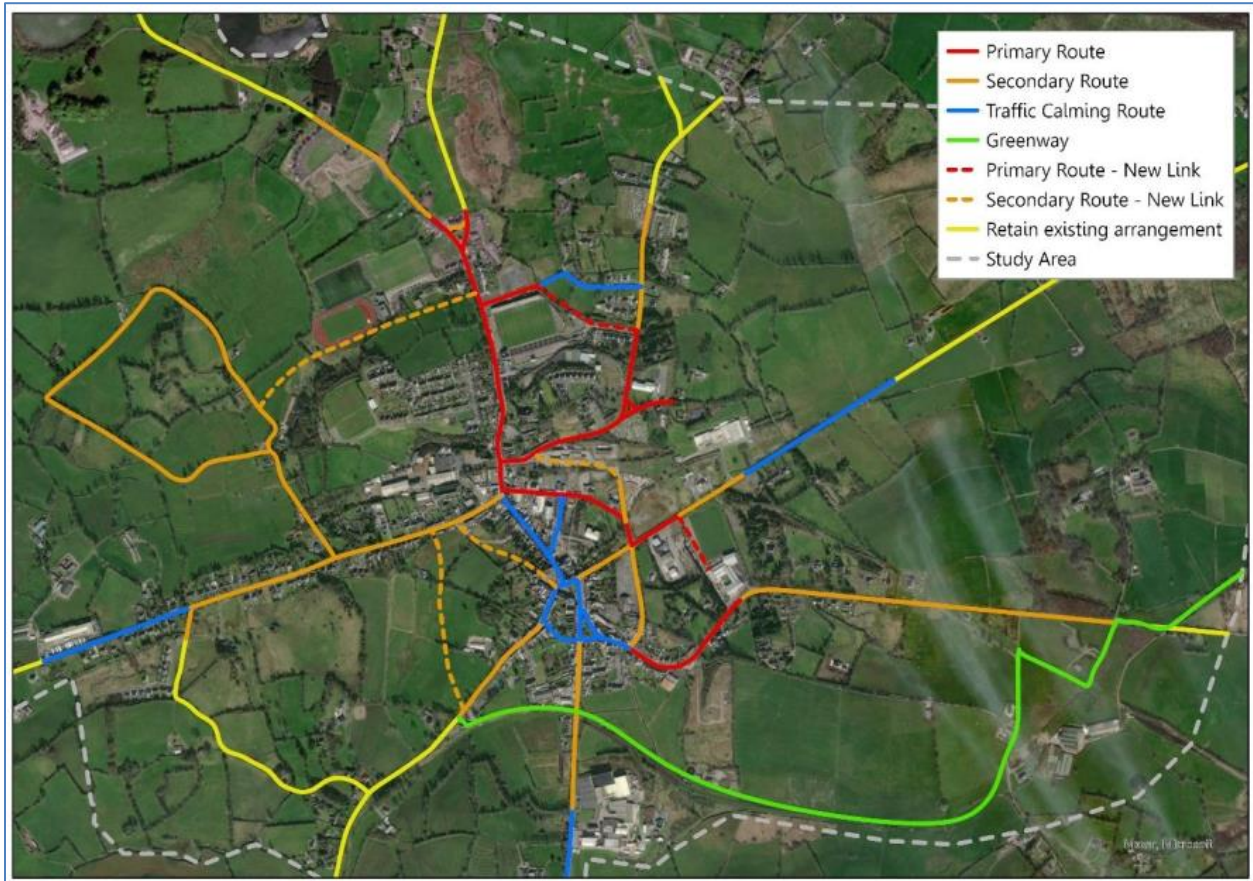


Figure 2 High-level Active Travel Network

The active travel network is very much aimed at serving the existing population and key origins and destinations within Clones Town. Significant lands within the study area boundary are zoned for development, encompassing residential, industry/enterprise/employment, community services and recreation, as illustrated in **Figure 3**.

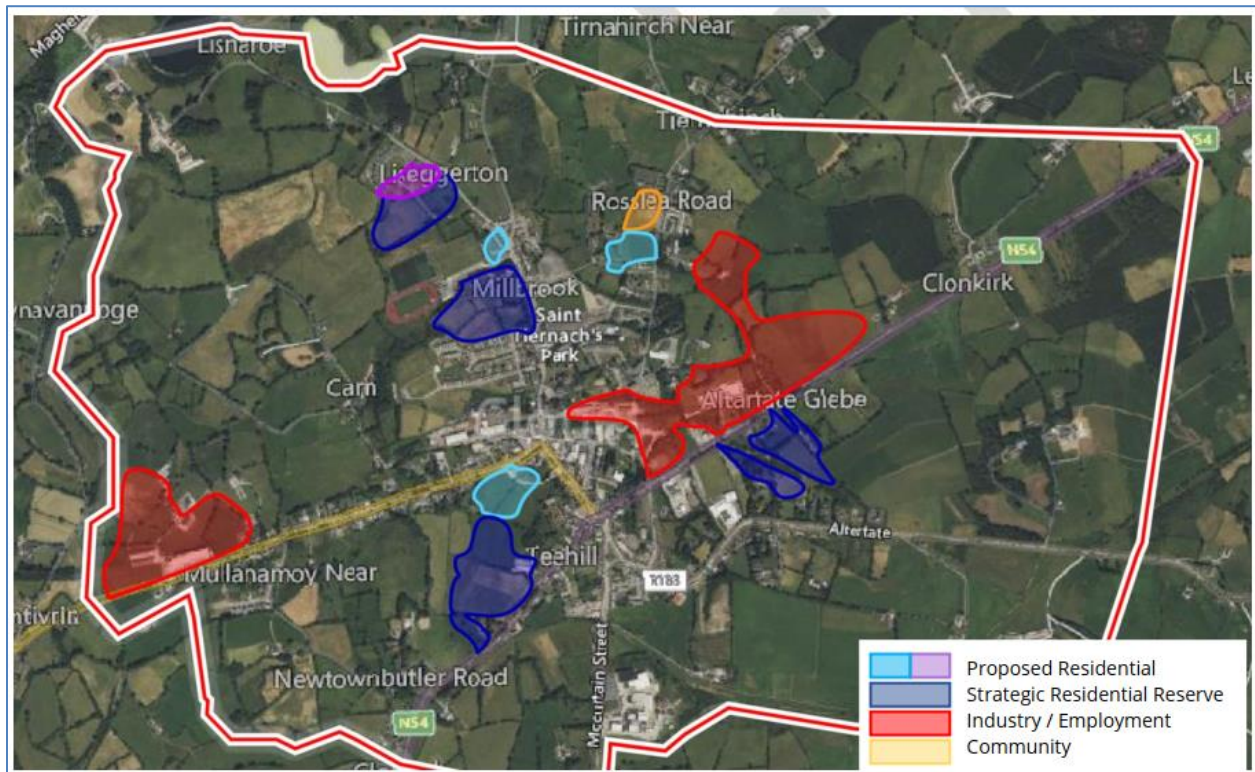


Figure 3 Key Land Use Zoning

4.1.3 Potential off-street car parking locations and bicycle parking locations

Chapter 3.4 of the Plan identified several locations where informal parking is present, with cars often obstructing footpaths. The SWOT Analysis identified potential locations for the introduction of off-street car parking facilities to alleviate inappropriate parking practices and create space for the implementation of new or improved active travel infrastructure. The proposed streets where on-street parking could be banned, and the locations of these off-street parking facilities is depicted in **Figure 4**.

This figure also distinguishes those locations that could serve as Park & Stride for the schools. These areas would allow parents to drop off/collect children at a location away from the school grounds thereby minimising vehicular traffic in the vicinity of the school entry points.

The existing Roslea Road Car Park could serve St. Tiernach's Primary School and Gaelscoil Eois, while a portion of lands within a site on Analore Street could serve Largy College and act as a parking facility for residential properties along here.



Figure 4 Proposed off-street car parking and Park & Stride locations

Regarding cycle parking, the Plan identified the current car parking locations within Clones. The following locations are proposed to incorporate cycle parking facilities, as outlined in Figure 5.

1. O'Neill Park/Carn View/Carron Heights residential estate
2. St. Tiernach's Park
3. Scoil Eois
4. Fitzpatrick Square, as a cycle facility for the north side of Fermanagh Street
5. Diamond south, near the Clones Credit Union Car Park
6. Largy College
7. Ulster Canal Visitor Centre



Figure 5 Proposed cycle parking locations

4.1.4 Proposed Bus Stop Enhancements

There are four bus stops in Clones Town Centre of which only one, located on 98th Avenue, has adequate bus stop infrastructure. It is proposed to improve the infrastructure of the other three bus stops in the Town Centre (**Figure 6**). This enhancement would include installing bus stop poles with flags and carousels as well as a designated hardstanding area for passengers to wait safely. Such improvements would bring several benefits to the community, including:

- Improved visibility: Bus stop poles act as visual markers, making it easier for both bus drivers and passengers to identify designated stops.
- Enhanced safety: Clearly marked bus stops with poles can help improve safety for passengers waiting for buses, as it reduces the likelihood of confusion or accidental waiting in unsafe locations.
- Increased accessibility: Bus stop poles can include signage indicating the bus route numbers and destinations, making it easier for passengers to navigate the transit system, particularly for newcomers or visitors to the area.

- Promotion of public transit usage: Clearly marked bus stops can serve as a visual reminder of the availability of public transportation, potentially encouraging more people to use buses instead of personal vehicles, thus reducing traffic congestion and environmental impact.
- Tourism and visitor experience: For towns with tourist attractions or visitors, clearly marked bus stops can enhance the overall experience for tourists, making it easier for them to navigate the area and access popular destinations.



Figure 6 Proposed Bus Stop infrastructure

4.2 Proposed Urban Mobility Plan Implementation

4.2.1 Indicative Implementation Strategy

A phased implementation of the subject Urban Mobility Plan is proposed. It is recommended that the identified primary routes and traffic calming routes are progressed in the early phases and the secondary routes later. For the purposes of this high-level strategy, the identified proposals have been categorised into short-, medium- and long-term delivery.

With the aim of identifying sections of the network to be implemented within each phase, the network has been broken up into sections with each section given a unique ID as presented in **Figure 7** below.

Whilst this study is at a high level and therefore does not comprise detailed design of active travel infrastructure, a description of the nature of infrastructure that is recommended on each section of the network has been summarised in **Table 2** and **Table 3** for the short-, medium- and long-term proposals respectively and depicted in **Figure 8** below.

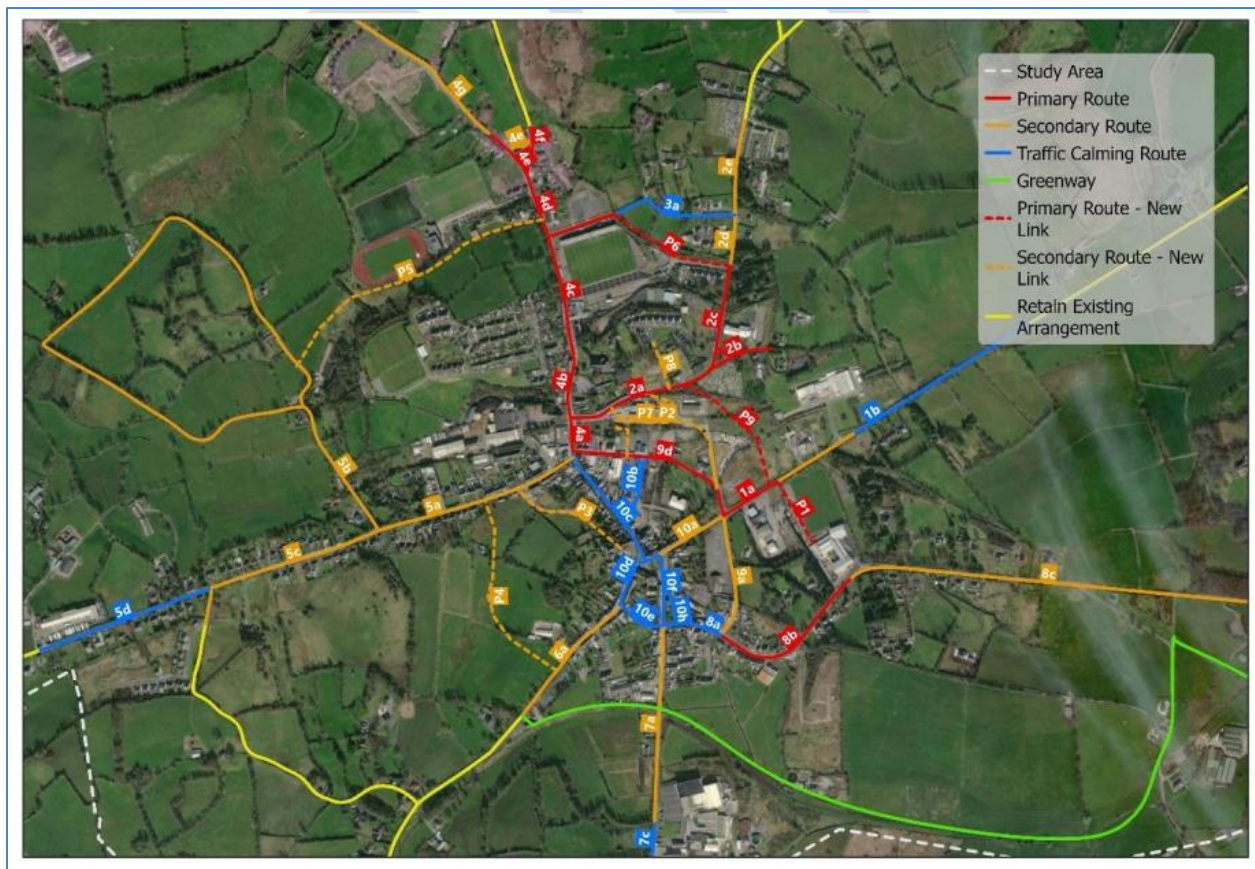


Figure 7 Link ID's

Table 2 Proposed Active Travel Network Implementation - Short-/Medium-term proposals

Link ID / Location	Description
1a	Dedicated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure between the N54 / 98 th Ave junction and a proposed new non-vehicular access to Largy College
P1	New non-vehicular access to Largy College from the N54
9d	Dedicated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure along 98 th Avenue
4a	Dedicated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure between Creighton's Hotel junction and Roslea Road junction
2a, 2b	Dedicated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure along Roslea Road between Church Hill junction and St. Tiernach's Primary School and Gaelscoil Eois. This includes a park and ride facility along this section.
4b	Dedicated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure along Church Hill between the Roslea Road junction and O'Neill Park.
Ped Infrastructure improvements	This includes improved pedestrian infrastructure and crossing points at the locations identified in Section 9.4.2. Analore Street, Roslea Rd / Church Hill junction and Town Centre junctions.
4c	Dedicated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure along Church Hill between O'Neill Park and St. Tiernach's Park. This includes the section in the vicinity of St. Tiernach's Park that is included in a Part VIII planning application for improved pedestrian facilities. The proposals could be built upon to incorporate dedicated cycle infrastructure.
10c,10d,10e,10f, 10h	Improvements in the Town Centre area comprising proposals included in two Part VIII schemes in the Diamond and Ball Alley/Abbey Street. These include improved pedestrian infrastructure including crossings, new/improved footpaths and traffic calming measures.
8a	Traffic calming along Analore Street
8b	Dedicated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure along Newbliss Road between the O'Duffy Street junction and Largy College
P6	Dedicated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure along the northern boundary of St. Tiernach's Park and a new non-vehicular link to Roslea Road at a location immediately to the north of Largy Court
2c	Dedicated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure along Roslea Road between the new P6 link and St. Tiernach's Primary School and Gaelscoil Eois
4d, 4e, 4f	Dedicated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure to the Peace Link and residential settlements Eanaigh Ealta, Cherry Park and An Tuachtariann.
9a	Shared ped / cycle facilities along O'Duffy Street.
P9	Segregated pedestrian / cycle facilities between Roslea Road and the N54. Includes a traffic calming feature on the N54
Bus Stops	Bus Stop Enhancements identified
P7,P8	Pedestrian / cycle facilities providing permeable links.

Table 3 Proposed Active Travel Network Implementation - Long term proposals

Link ID / Location	Description
3a	Traffic calming measures along River Lane.
2d, 2e	Pedestrian / cycle facilities along Roslea Road as far north as Clonkeencole.
4g	Pedestrian / cycle facilities along Roslea Road as far as the Lios A Ghoirtin residential settlement.
P2	New pedestrian /cycle connectivity between 98 th Avenue and the Roslea Road
P5	A new non-vehicular link between the Carn Lane walk to Millbrook Upper via (adjacent to) The Peace Link
10a	Pedestrian / cycle facilities along N54 between 98 th Avenue junction and The Diamond
10b	Traffic calmed link between 98 th Avenue and Fermanagh Street
Ulster Canal Greenway	Section between Newbliss Road and the N54
8c	Pedestrian / cycle facilities along the Newbliss Road between Largy College and the proposed Ulster Canal Greenway.
7a	Pedestrian / cycle facilities along the Scotshouse Road between the Ball Alley junction and ABP Foods.
7c	Traffic calming measures along Scotshouse Road.
6a	Pedestrian / cycle facilities along the N54 between the Ball Alley junction and the Ulster Canal Greenway tie-in on the N54.
P4	A new non-vehicular link between the N54 to Newtownbutler Road via zoned residential lands
5a, 5c	Pedestrian / cycle facilities along the Newtownbutler Road
1b	Pedestrian / cycle facilities along the N54 between the proposed new non-vehicular link to Largy College and Feldhues and then traffic calming measures as far as the 50kph demarcation.
5d	Traffic calming measures along Scotshouse Road.
5b	Upgrade section of Carn Lane between Newtownbutler Road the proposed new non-vehicular link to Millbrook Upper (P5).
P3	A new non-vehicular link between the N54 to Newtownbutler Road via zoned part residential lands / part Landscape Protection/Conservation.

5.2 Natura 2000 Sites

Just to the northwest of Clones lies the major conservation feature in the area; three separate areas which contain calcium-rich, clean water (oligo-mesotrophic) lakes and their marginal fen vegetation that make up *Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC 001786* and the former *Magharaveely Marl Loughs SAC* across the border in Northern Ireland. The site is a Special Area of Conservation selected for the following habitats and species on Annex I/II of the EU Habitats Directive (Table 4).

Code	Qualifying Interest
3140	Hard Water Lakes
7210	<i>Cladium</i> Fens*
7230	Alkaline Fens
1092	White-clawed Crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>

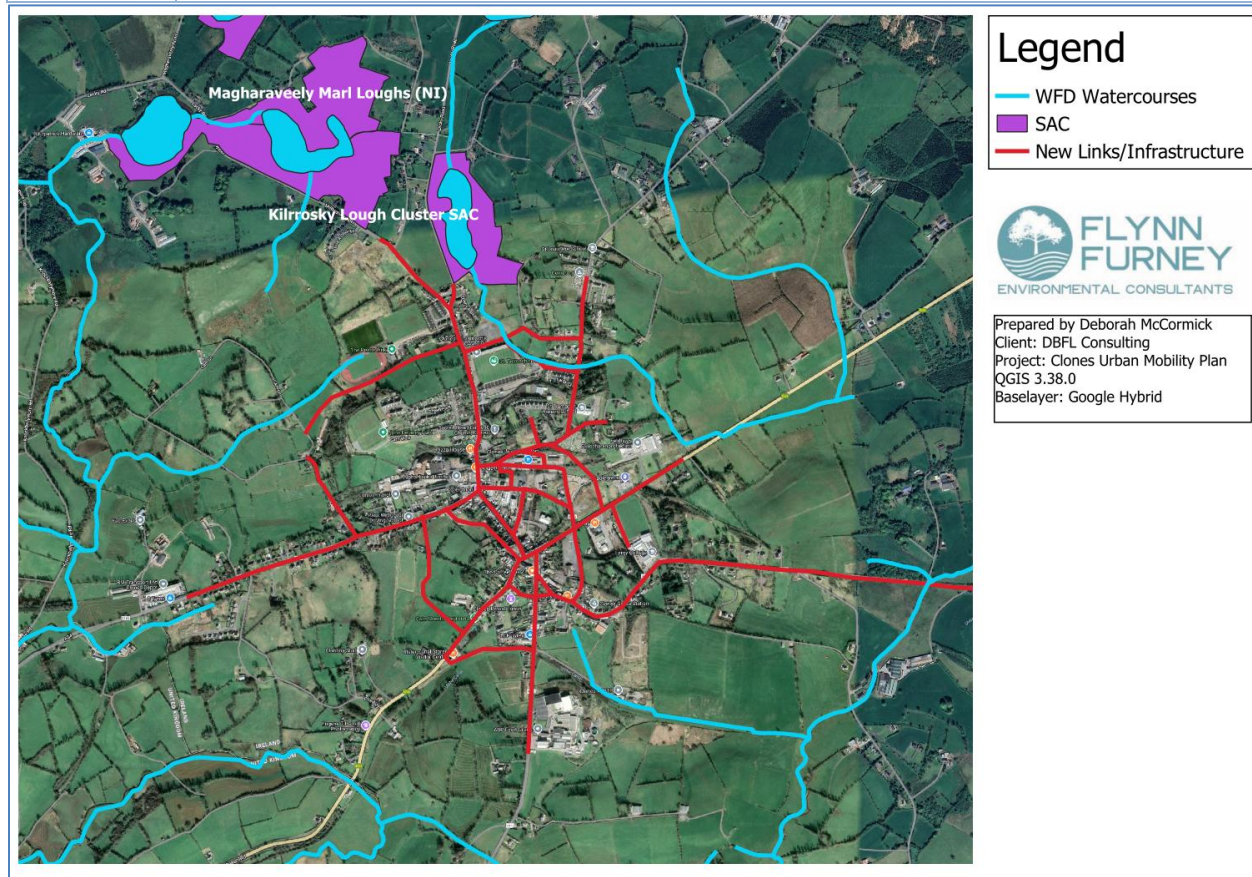


Figure 9 Designated Sites in the vicinity of the proposal

A part of the proposal includes plans for the extension of cycle facilities to Cherry Park at the north end of Millbrook Upper. This is just to the south of a part of the SAC, an area of wetland (marked as Ramage Lough) on some maps, that is currently in succession having been almost completely overgrown with

Phragmites and *Salix* spp. This area holds none of the qualifying habitats for which the SAC is designated, due to its overgrowth, and additionally the proposal lies entirely downstream from the connecting watercourse, the Tirganach stream, which drains the wetland area and runs through the town a short distance to the southeast. Additionally, the proposed works in this area are likely to be small of scale, constrained within the existing road/drainage footprint and are well buffered from the wetland area by urban infrastructure.

5.3 Cultural Heritage

The majority of built heritage features (Protected Structures and Scheduled Monuments) within Clones are clustered around the Diamond and along Fermanagh Street to the northwest.

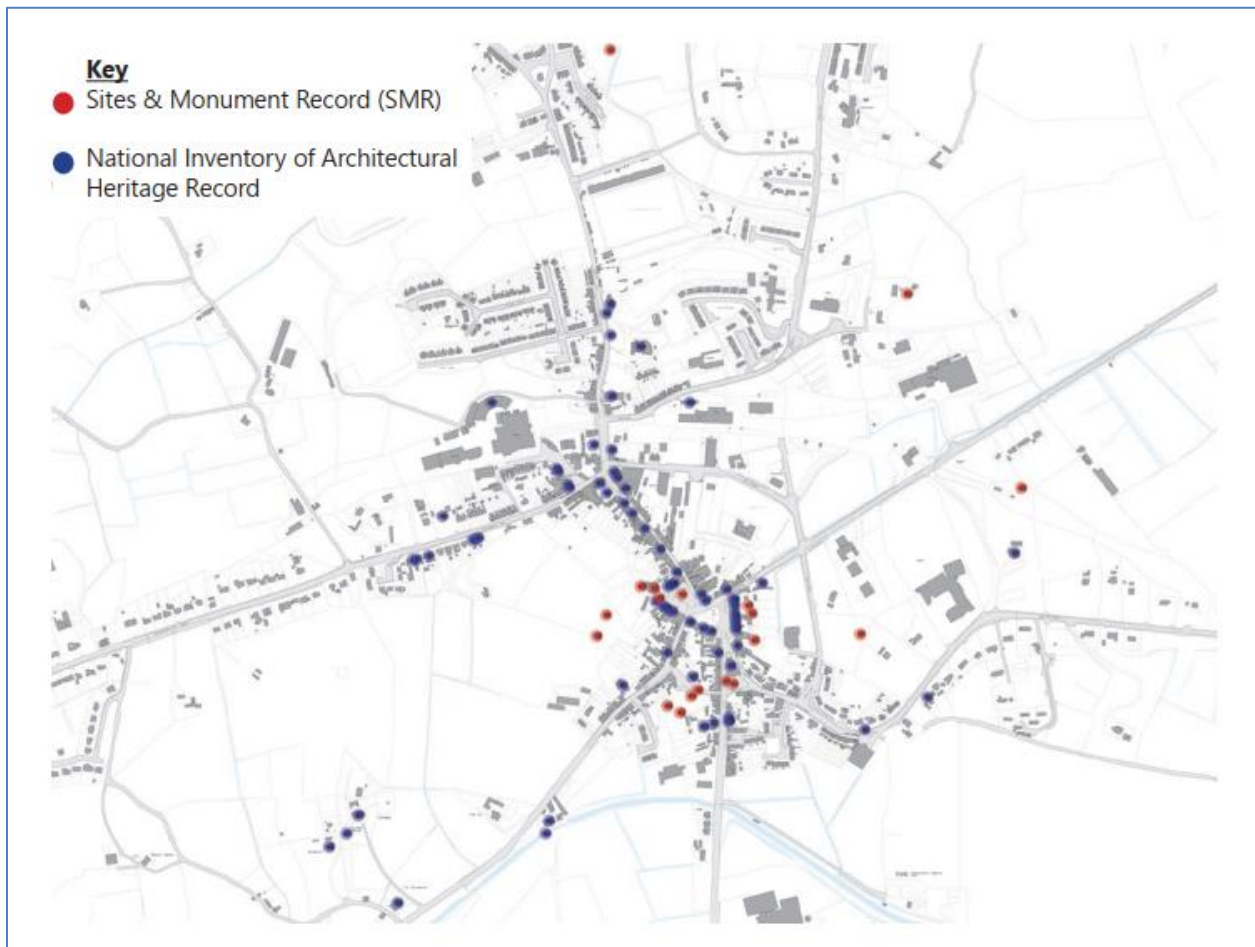


Figure 10 Built Heritage distribution in Clones Town

The elements of the Mobility Plan in this area of the town involve changes to pedestrian and road layouts (changing of crosswalk locations and bus stop enhancements), rather than major civil works, and are therefore unlikely to have any impact on any built heritage features within the town.

6. SEA Screening Assessment

This screening assessment for the requirements of SEA follows the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of S.I. 435 of 2004 as amended, which are as follows:

- The characteristics of the Plan or Programme.
- The characteristics of the likely effects and the of the area likely to be affected.

Each of the two main criteria have a number of sub-criteria which are set out in the above instrument and are considered in more detail below.

6.1 Characteristics of the Plan or Programme

6.1.1 The degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions, or by allocating resources.

The Urban Mobility Plan for Clones is non-statutory and does not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent. The plan arises from goals and requirements set out in the National Planning Framework 2040, the National Development Plan 2021-2030 and the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland, among others.

The Plan has identified areas for action within the town of Clones in three main areas:

- Improvement of the Active Travel Network, largely via improvements to the existing travel network, with a few new connections proposed.
- Improved Off-street Parking to remove cars parked on pavements.
- Bus-stop Enhancements to improve the public transport experience.

All of the developments proposed under the Mobility Plan are small civil construction projects, almost all of which are modifications to the existing road/pedestrian structures, with the remainder the creation of new walk/cycle links on existing informal trails or across farmland adjacent to the town. The Plan allocates resources in that it identifies priority actions for delivery by Monaghan County Council as resources become available.

6.1.2 The degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy

The Urban Mobility Plan for Clones is at a low level in a hierarchy of plans, given that it makes recommendations for action at an extremely local level relative to the European and National plans which inform it. The identification of actions and proposals are largely the result of goals set out in other plans further up the hierarchy rather than informing others.

6.1.3 The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development

The actions proposed within the Urban Mobility Plan are of relevance to the integration of environmental consideration and the promotion of sustainable development, in that the main action areas – improvement of the active travel network, reduction in the amount of on-street parking and the improvement of public transport infrastructure all target the reduction of the number of cars within the urban centre, the reduction of short car journeys within the town and an increase in the use of non-car forms of transport.

6.1.4 Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme

The environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme are those linked with large numbers of cars on the road in Ireland – namely Climate Change and Air Quality. By proposing actions that aim to reduce the car usage within the urban centre and promote non-vehicular forms of transport, the Mobility Plan addresses some of the drivers of the above issues.

6.1.5 The relevance of the plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste management or water protection)

The Urban Mobility Plan is of relevance to the implementation of the following European Union legislation:

- Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 2021 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999 ('European Climate Law')
- Directive 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe ('CAFE Directive')

6.2 Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected

6.2.1 The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects

The environmental effects that are most likely to result from the Urban Mobility Plan are those associated with small-scale civil construction projects that are largely constrained with an existing urban/suburban

footprint, namely contamination of water via mobilised sediment, disturbance and direct impacts to existing habitats. The majority of the proposals are modifications within the existing road or footpath environment and are thus extremely unlikely to pose significant risk to nearby watercourses. The new linkages proposed are either within the urban footprint or adjacent improved grassland area and should not require major earthworks that could cause disruption to soil or water ecosystems.

6.2.2 The cumulative nature of the effects

The implementation of the adopted Plan will result in a number of small civil construction projects, all of which are likely to result in neutral or minor adverse impacts on the surrounding environment. The overall implementation of the plan will result in a positive environmental effect in terms of noise, air pollution and climate impacts.

6.2.3 The trans-boundary nature of the effects

Clones lies within 2km of the border with Northern Ireland, and parts of the extended Active Travel network of the town cross the border into Co. Fermanagh. Given the movement of people around this network both into and out of the urban centre, improvements made via the Urban Mobility Plan can therefore be expected to have minor positive transboundary impacts.

6.2.4 The risk to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)

By reducing the number of car journeys and vehicular usage and also by separating vulnerable road users from vehicles within the town centre, the actions proposed by the Mobility Plan can be expected to reduce the risk to human health and the environment associated with vehicular travel. Additional benefits to air quality and noise disturbance will result from the reduction in vehicular travel. Implementation of the plan may result in an increase in construction work within the area, which could potentially result in a slight increase in the chance for construction accidents during that period.

6.2.5 The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)

The implementation of the Mobility Plan will primarily impact the town footprint and the population (1,680 at the 2016 census). The effects will be limited beyond that scope.

6.2.6 The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected

6.2.6.1 Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage

As discussed in Chapter 5 above, the area is largely without significant conservation value or important natural heritage features. Kilrooskey Lough Cluster SAC to the north is the most significant feature, but as outlined in Section 5.2, it is extremely unlikely to be impacted by the proposed works. The

watercourses that run through the town and link ultimately to *Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC* are unlikely to be impacted by the actions proposed within the Plan, given their nature and constraint within the existing road footprint.

Clones has a number of significant built heritage features, largely concentrated within the Diamond in the centre of the town. Given the nature of the proposals in that area, no interactions are expected to occur. A positive effect of the improvement of air quality in the town centre due to a reduction in the number of vehicles may result in a reduction in harm to cultural heritage in the town.

6.2.6.2 Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values

A slight improvement in air quality can be expected from the full implementation of the Plan. No significant negative effects are predicted to occur during the construction phase of the proposed projects that might result in any exceedance of quality standards or emission limit values.

6.2.6.3 Intensive land use

The Urban Mobility Plan is entirely constrained with an area of already intensive land use, given its location in an urban centre. None of the proposals are likely to give rise to any increase in the intensity of land use within the area.

6.2.7 The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, EU or international protection status

As described above, the European site that lies in close proximity to the Plan, *Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC* is extremely unlikely to be negatively impacted by any of the proposed projects; no other area or landscape that is important at a national or European level lies within the Zone of Influence of the Mobility Plan.

7. Recommendation on the Requirements for SEA

The Urban Mobility Plan has been screened for the requirement for SEA under the requirements of S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended; the proposals contained within have been considered in respect of the SEA Screening Criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the above.

The screening exercise has concluded that the implementation of the Urban Mobility Plan for Clones Town has no real likelihood of having significant negative effects on the environment and will, in fact, have positive effects in relation to climate impacts and air quality within the area of Clones Town.

Therefore, it is recommended that the competent authority (Monaghan County Council) reach a determination that the Urban Mobility Plan for Clones Town is not likely to have significant negative effects on the environment and, therefore, that Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not required.

In accordance with Article 9(7) of S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended, Monaghan County Council will notify the SEA environmental authorities of its determination that SEA is not required and place a copy of said determination on public display together with the present report and associated documentation relating to the Urban Mobility Plan for Clones Town.

8. References

Clones Heritage and Economic Plan 2021

DBFL Consulting Engineers (2024) Urban Mobility Plan for Clones Town

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (October 2021): Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities

European Commission DE (2021). Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

Government of Ireland (2004) Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment – Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities

Government of Ireland (2023) National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland

Government of Ireland (2020) National Development Plan 2021 -2030

Government of Ireland (2024) Climate Action Plan 2024

Government of Ireland (2018) Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework

Monaghan County Development Plan (2019-2025)

Monaghan County Walking and Cycle Strategy 2021-2026

NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC 001786. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC 000007. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. 26 Nov 2021