

Part 8 Planning Report

for

Clairín Bridge Replacement

September 2022

TCC/22/0016


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1 INTRODUCTION

The planning for the proposed scheme is undertaken in accordance with the legislative requirement under Section 179 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 as amended.

In accordance with section 80(1)(k) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 Part 8 planning approval is required for the Development. The following report discusses the proposed nature and development of the Clairín Bridge Replacement.

An existing pedestrian rail bridge, OBL149A, is situated on the north western outskirts of Carrick-on-Suir, 1.4km west of the train station and 260m north of the N24 on Clairín Close. The bridge links St John’s Terrace to the north of the railway track with Clairín Close and the N24 to the south.

In 2021 the pedestrian rail bridge at Clairín Close in Carrick-on-Suir was identified as requiring immediate repair works, by Irish Rail, to ensure the continued operation of the footbridge. The replacement of the bridge was recommended on the longer term.

Tipperary County Council commissioned an options assessment report in 2021 to identify the optimum solution at Clairín bridge.

Four options were considered the bridge replacement, repair and repaint the existing bridge, repair and resurface the existing bridge and the final option was to close and remove the bridge. The loss of the bridge would result in a 1.8km diversion for residents of St John’s Terrace wishing to access Clairín Close or vice versa.

The recommended option was to replace the footbridge.

View of the existing footbridge is shown below:



The clear width between the handrails on the existing footbridge is 1.4m. The steel parapets are 1.34m high, with a solid metal sheet infill for the main span. There are significant issues with corrosion of the steelwork in the bridge.

In February 2022, a steel repair contract was undertaken, to extend the lifespan of the bridge by 2-3 years to allow time for a replacement bridge to be installed.

The scheme aims to provide an upgraded active travel connection from St John's Terrace to the north of the track with Clairín Close, south of the railway line.

The project includes the provision of a new 3m bridge, with an overall span between the abutments of 10.6m.

The overarching objectives of the project are to:

- Deliver a new bridge with a design life of 120 years.
- Maintain the existing off-road walking and cycling facility between St John's Terrace to the north of the railway line with Clairín Close, south of the line.
- Eliminate the ongoing maintenance costs to the existing bridge.
- Provide a wider more accessible walking and cycling facility over the railway.

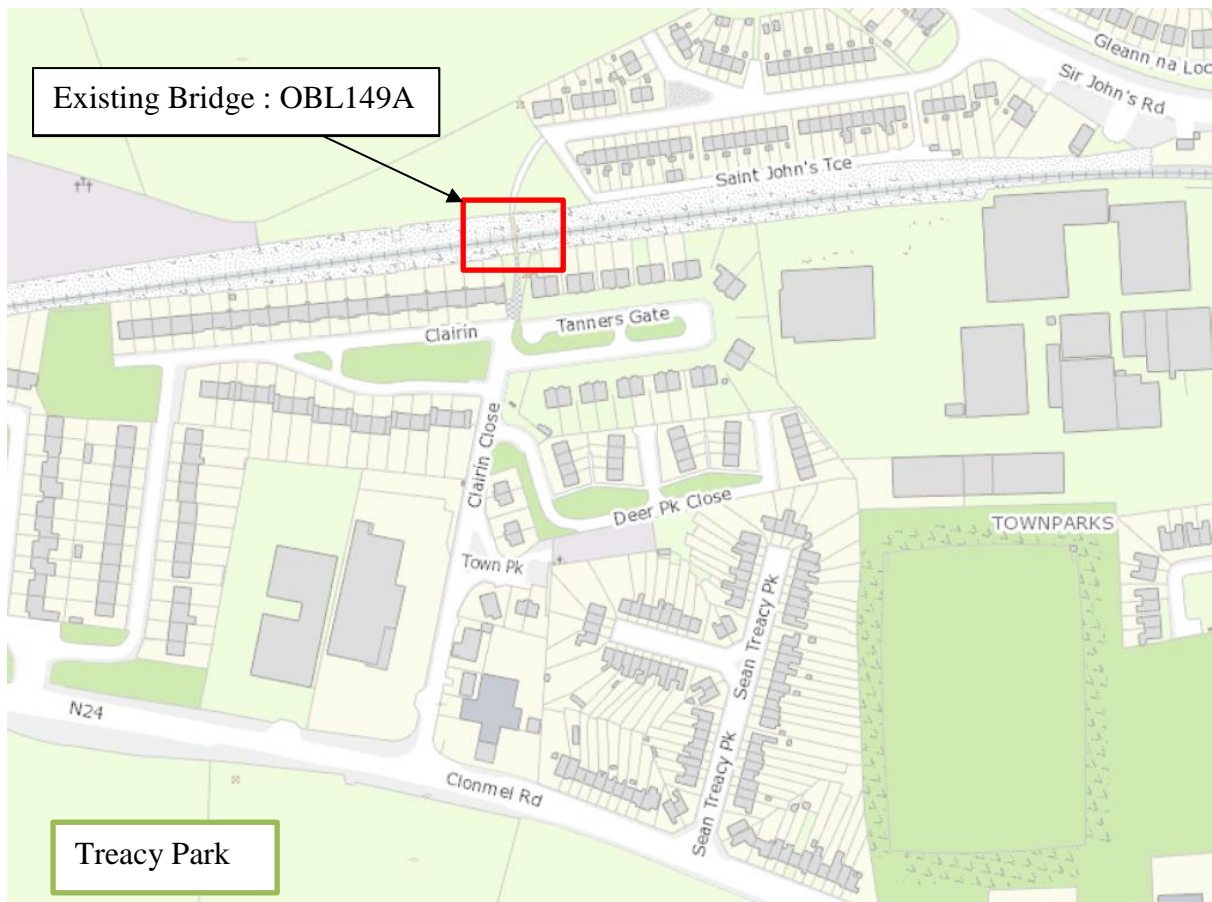


Figure 1: Site Location

The replacement bridge will be more aesthetically pleasing than the existing. However, as the bridge is over a railway cutting, the elevation will only be fully visible from the rail track. The parapets will be the most visible element of the bridge. These will be specified to a high standard, compliant with Irish Rail requirements. The concrete surface of the bridge and approach ramps will be sprayed with a coloured epoxy anti-slip surface treatment.

2 POLICY CONTEXT

The following policies and objectives are relevant to the site:

Project Ireland 2040 / National Development Plan 2021 -2030

The Government is firmly committed to encouraging the use of walking, cycling and other active travel methods, and this has been signalled by the recent increase in the active travel budget. This NDP represents a step-change in the approach towards funding active travel in Ireland. Over the next 10 years approximately €360 million per annum will be invested in walking and cycling infrastructure in cities, towns and villages across the country, including Greenways. This investment has a transformative potential to substantially increase the numbers choosing to make active travel part of their daily life, improving personal health and mental well-being, making our city, town, and village centres more vibrant and people focused spaces, and significantly addressing our climate action challenge.

The National Sustainability Mobility Policy

The National Sustainable Mobility Policy sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. It is accompanied by an action plan to 2025 which contains actions to improve and expand sustainable mobility options across the country by providing safe, green, accessible and efficient alternatives to car journeys.

The policy aims to deliver at least 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys by 2030 and a 10% reduction in the number of kilometres driven by fossil fuelled cars.

Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020

Actions 15 and 16 of the policy outlines the Government’s vision of creating strong cycling and walking cultures for all towns, villages and rural areas.

‘Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future’, published by the Department of Transport, recognises that investment in transport infrastructure is important, however, one of the key elements of the document is to ensure people choose sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. The policy is a response to the fact that continued growth in demand for road transport is unsustainable as it will lead to further congestion, further local air pollution, contribute to global warming, and result in negative impacts to health through promoting increasing sedentary lifestyles.

Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy

Active walking and cycle infrastructure will support active health initiatives and healthy communities, encourage transition to sustainable modes of travel, promote sustainable mobility and significantly assist our transition to a lower carbon society.

Walking and Cycling The following walking and cycling objectives are supported and will guide investment subject to the required appraisal:

- Enhance pedestrian facilities in all urban areas in the region;
- Delivery of high-quality safe cycle route network across the Region and cycling environments (applicable to cities, towns and villages) with provision for segregated cycle tracks;

Tipperary County Development Plan 2022 -2028

3.4.4 Sustainable Transport and Active Travel

Sustainable transport and active travel are a key focus of the Programme for Government as illustrated by the commitment of an allocation of 10% of the total transport capital budget for cycling projects, and an allocation of 10% of the total capital budget for pedestrian infrastructure. Key areas of focus and change include:

- unprecedented modal shift in all areas by a reorientation of investment to walking, cycling and public transport,
- Sustainable Rural Mobility Plan,
- Accelerating the electrification of the transport system, including electric bikes, electric vehicles, and electric public transport.

12.4 Modal Shift

Smarter Travel a Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020 sets a target for work-related and school-related commuting. In particular, it seeks commuting by car to be reduced from a modal share of 66% to 45% of journeys. The 2016 modal share for work/school related car journeys in Tipperary was 70%, thus, illustrating the challenge ahead. Although the existing countywide modal share is heavily reliant on the private car for commuter/school journeys, there is an opportunity to achieve a modal shift to sustainable transport within Tipperary's compact urban settlements, particularly for the 42% of people who commute for less than 15 minutes each day. The Council will work with the National Transport Authority through the preparation of LTPs and Active Travel Plans (in identifying the cohort of people that can be targeted for a shift to sustainable modes of transport).

Carrick-on-Suir Town Development Plan 2013

6.1.3 Pedestrian/Cycle Routes

Carrick on Suir is a compact town and the majority of the urban and residential areas are within walking/cycling distance (2km) of the town centre. The town is also identified on the National Cycle Network Scoping Study and the Fáilte Ireland Cycle Network linking Clonmel to Waterford City

(<http://www.smartertravel.ie/sites/default/files/uploads/FINAL%20NCNScopingStudyAugust2010%5B1%5D.pdf>). In addition to developing cycle routes within the plan boundary along the Clonmel – Waterford City Cycling Route there are also desire lines for pedestrians and cyclists from the residential areas and the town centre to the Train Station, educational establishments, amenity and sports facilities within the town and its environs.

Policy INF 4: Accessibility It is the Council's policy to improve facilities for pedestrians and access facilities for people with special mobility needs in line with the aims of the European Charter of Pedestrian Rights.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The replacement bridge will be a precast concrete portal frame 2 No L-shaped abutments/footings per ring. The width of the bridge to the inside face of the parapets will be 3m.

The overall span, between the faces of the abutments, will be 10.6m. The height of the abutments will be approximately 6m, above top of base. The abutments will be 0.4m thick.

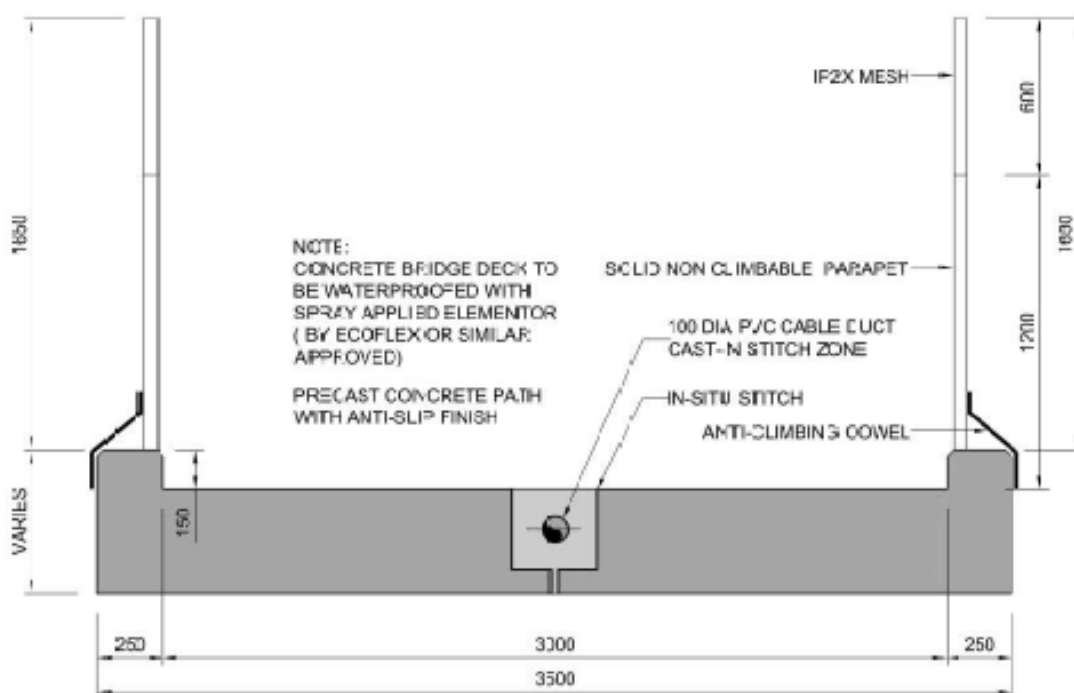
The deck will be 0.4m thick at the abutments and 0.55m thick at mid span.

The parapets on the bridge will have an overall height of 1.8m with the bottom 1.2m being solid and the top 0.6m in IP2X mesh.

The approach ramps will be 3.0m wide and be in reinforced concrete. The northern approach ramp will be on an earthen embankment and will not require parapet railings. The southern approach ramp will be provided with 1.25m high parapets, with grab rails at 0.9m high.

The existing public lighting will be replaced and upgraded as part of the works. The lighting standards will be off the bridge and power will be fed from either side of the bridge. There will be no services crossing the bridge.

The bridge replacement can be accommodated within existing public lands. See typical cross section below.



3.1 Nature of the Works

The installation of the proposed 3m wide shared facility will include the following works:

- Removal of the existing bridge,
- Excavation within the railway cutting for pre-cast concrete abutments and wing walls of new bridge,
- Removal of vegetation within the site extent,
- Installation of pre-cast concrete bridge deck,
- Installation new parapets and finishing works,
- Provision of new public lighting,
- The works will include surface water drainage, handrails, signage and all ancillary works necessary for the completion of the scheme.

4 DESIGN STANDARDS AND APPROACH

4.1 Design Standards

The design standard adopted for this scheme follows the requirements of The National Cycle Manual (2011), TII Publication; Rural Cycleway Design 2022 and Design Manual for Urban Streets (DMURS) (2019).

4.2 Design Approach

The project is currently at Preliminary Design Stage. Detailed design of the scheme will be undertaken on successful approval of the Part VIII application and in accordance with any conditions imposed.

4.3 Proposed Cross Section & Geometry

The width of the proposed path is 3m which will provide a shared space for pedestrians and cyclists in accordance with current standards.

The National Cycle Manual provides the following guidance on bridges: Non-traffic short flat bridges are suitable for shared use with pedestrian priority.

The Design Manual for Urban Streets and TII Publication; Rural Cycleway Design 2022 provides guidance on minimum widths for shared pedestrian and cycle facilities of 3m.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report & Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report were prepared for the project.

The Appropriate Assessment screening concluded that the proposed development would not be likely to give rise to significant or indeterminate impacts on any Natura 2000 site.

Having regard to the information specified under Schedule 7A of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, as amended and based on an examination of the nature, size and location of the development, it is determined that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required.

6 FLOODING

The development is classified as a water compatible development in accordance with the OPW Guidelines. The project does not fall within an OPW Flood Zone.

Historical flood records were checked on the OPW Flood Maps website and on the Carrick on Suir Town Development Plan 2013 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment map. No flooding was recorded within the site on either map.

The existing drainage system is being maintained.

7 CONCLUSION

This report demonstrates that :

- There is a clear need for the scheme. The proposed development is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, and relevant policy documents including the Tipperary County Development Plan, The Regional Spatial Economic Strategy for the Southern Region and the National Planning Framework.
- The proposed scheme will cater for residents wishing to move between St John's Terrace to the north of the track with Clairín Close, south of the railway line
- The scheme will provide a safer connection for residents north of the railway line to the Suir Blueway which is located south of Treacy Park on the bank of the River Suir.
- The proposed works will substantially improve the quality of the existing pedestrian and cyclist provision between St John's Terrace and Clairín Close.
- The facility will ensure that Carrick-on-Suir town can offer a good quality of life and a sustainable travel option for those who choose to walk or cycle to work or school.