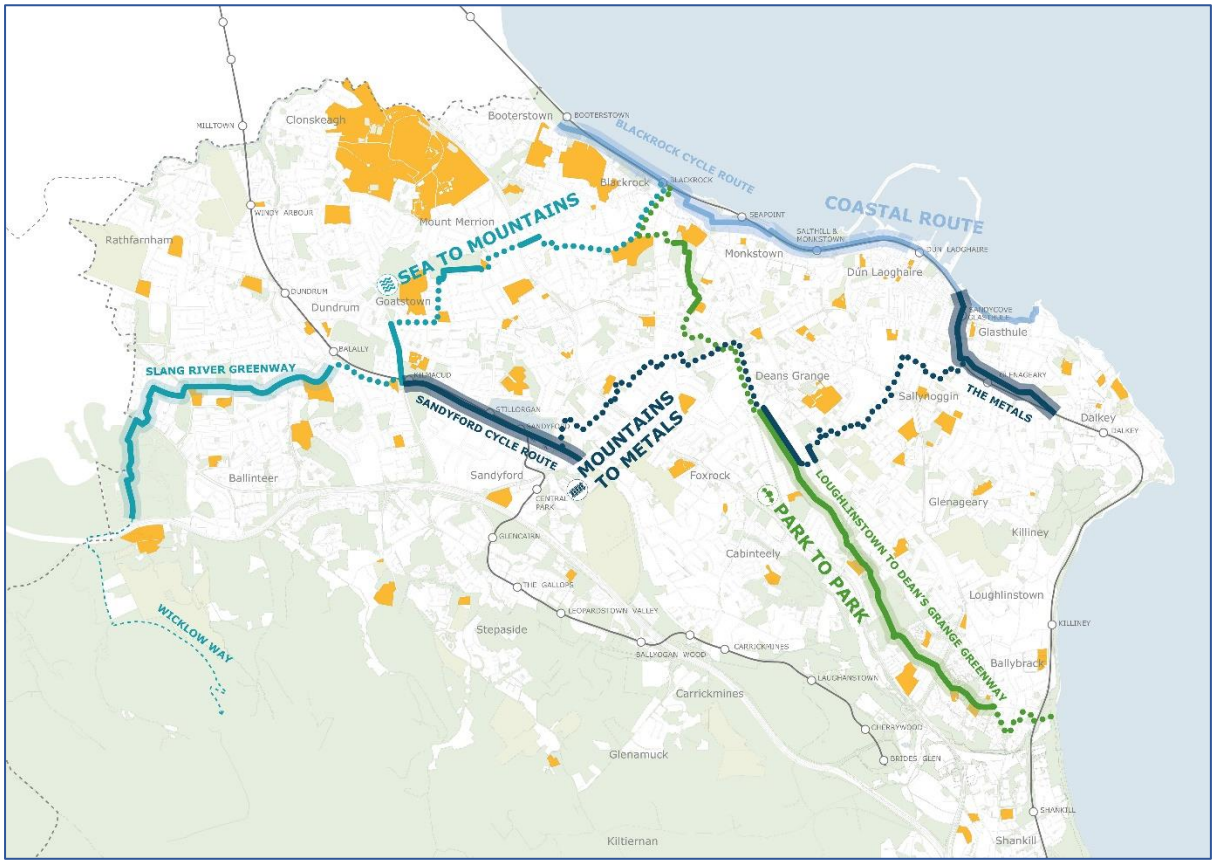
Active School Travel

Safe Walking and Cycling Routes

Project Update September 2021



Background:

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown-County Council's (DLRCC) Active School Travel project has a strategic focus and aims to provide a network of safe walking and cycling routes, facilitating access to a large number of schools across the County. The project's primary objective is to provide safe, direct and comfortable walking and cycling routes to school for children and their parents, giving a viable and safe alternative form of transport for families who do not or cannot drive, may not be able to avail of public transport or who wish to travel to school on foot or by bike.

The importance of continuous facilities for cyclists along their trip cannot be overstated. Each junction or link that does not have good quality facilities acts as a barrier to people choosing to walk or cycle. Providing routes that have gaps will not encourage modal shift. On the other hand, high quality, safe and attractive routes that are continuous will encourage modal shift as seen on the Coastal Mobility Route, between Blackrock and Sandycove.

The Active School Travel scheme proposes three routes totalling approximately 25 km in length and linking 65 schools across the County, comprised of existing cycle paths, shared paths, quiet streets and a small proportion of new infrastructure elements. The project was first proposed in August 2020 and involves supporting and enabling various alternative means of transport for children to get to school in a safe and active way, through walking and cycling. The promotion and facilitation of an active lifestyle has well-documented health, environmental and economic benefits. It can help to supplement the public transport system, which is experiencing difficulties with capacity due to Covid, and helps avoid traffic congestion at school gates, as well as encouraging a shift away from the use of the private car, particularly for short journeys up to approximately 4 km in length. This initiative is also aligned with the Council's wider climate action agenda, including objectives of the County Development Plan and the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, and is in line with national policy on enabling and promoting sustainable transport.

DLRCC carried out a public engagement process on the proposed Active School Travel routes in September, October and November 2020. As part of the public engagement process, and in response to Covid-19 restrictions, the Council used a variety of online and more traditional engagement methods, to consult and engage with the citizens of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, and a range of other stakeholders and interested parties including local residents, businesses and community groups.

Scheme drawings are broken down by route and are available on the DLRCC website here: https://www.dlrcoco.ie/en/environment/active-school-travel

Along quiet streets road marking paint is being provided to allow for wayfinding. Along existing infrastructure some minor alterations are proposed e.g. removing barriers, new dishing's, junction radii tightening. Through parks areas, similar to quiet streets wayfinding will be provided. New infrastructure consists of the provision of new cycle lanes, landscaping and junction alternations. A summary of the breakdown of the routes is given in the table below

Route	Sea to Mountains	Park to Park	Mountains to Metals
Overall length	6.2 km	10.1 km	8.7 km
Proportion of route utilising a Quiet Street with wayfinding and signage	3.4 km	3.3 km	4.2 km
Proportion of route utilising an existing Cycleway with minor interventions	1.2 km	0.4km	2.4 km
Proportion on route utilising an existing park path	0.8 km	5.5 km	0.7 km
Proportion of new infrastructure	0.8 km	0.9 km	1.4 km
Number of schools	26	28	30

Public Consultation:

A public engagement process in relation to the Project was undertaken in the latter part of 2020, with over 6,431 respondents making submissions. The proposals were supported by 63% of respondents, with a range of views and feedback received. Supplementary to the general public consultation the Council also undertook - and continues to undertake - engagement with local residents, businesses and community groups. To date these virtual and site meetings total more than 70 hours.

A summary of the meetings carried out during and after the consultation are given below:

Meeting type	**Dates**
Councillor briefing	15th July 2020, 20th Aug, 21st Sept, 4th Dec, 10th June 2021, 30th June, 21st July (x 2)
Business group meeting	6th Oct 2020, 16th Nov, 16th April, 17th Aug, 26th Aug
Resident group meeting	9th Oct 2020, 12th Oct, 13th Oct, 14th Oct, 16th Oct, 5th Feb 2021, 10th March (x 2), 11th March, 12th March, 18th March, 19th March (x 2), 23rd March, 26th March, 7th April, 29th April(x 2), 30th April (x2), 5th May, 6th May (x 2), 15th May, 5th June
Webinar – general public	13th Oct 2020

General Recommendations;

The public consultation report made a number of recommendations. These are re-stated below along with the actions take:

A cohesive Monitoring Plan should be put in place to gather a baseline data and measure impacts of the pilots and the three routes.

- Baseline traffic counts have been collected;
- Locations for permanent pedestrian and cycle counters have been agreed and will be supplemented by air and noise monitoring locations;
- A number of perception surveys have been commissioned to understand how active mobility is perceived by the public and to understand where it is effective and where improvements are required;
- School travel surveys have been undertaken to identify the baseline capacity, key issues and inherent demand for the proposed routes;
- DLRCC has acquired access to real time GPS data that can be used to assess changes in movement patterns.

DLRCC will enable maintenance and upgrades of existing walking and cycling infrastructure to ensure safe and equitable access is facilitated.

- DLRCC Road Maintenance have acquired several mini-sweepers to ensure cycle facilities are cleaned on a routine basis;
- Maintenance of adjacent facilities e.g. paths are included as part of works packages;
- Routine drainage maintenance works and improved drainage networks are to be advanced.

Accessibility and inclusive design as the design for the proposed routes are refined and piloted DLRCC should ensure that the proposals meet with the required standards and are monitored and evaluated to ensure equitable usage and access.

- Accessibility improvements have been integrated across the safe walking and cycling network with protection and segregation provided for vulnerable users at crossings, junctions and between motorised and non-motorised user movements;
- Feedback was sought from the DLR Disability Consultation Group on the proposed measures;
- We will continue to engage as the schemes are deployed.

Emergency Vehicle Access should be maintained across all proposed routes.

- Emergency access is not restricted as part of this project. Where cycle facilities are provided emergency services are permitted to use these facilities when carrying out their duties

In implementing the three routes in residential spaces DLRCC should work closely with residents to refine and implement a design that works for all.

- We have engaged with over 15 resident associations or groups of residents across the three routes; these engagements have included virtual presentations, proposals reviews, COVID-19 compliant on-site meetings, site

marking of the proposed interventions and follow-up meetings to finalise the proposed design solutions;

- We have regularly briefed local elected representatives on the proposals and provided draft layout plans to enable community engagement and discussion;
- We have carried out more than 50+ hours of meetings with various resident groups across the schemes and incorporated a number of changes;
- The specifics of these changes are explained in more detail below.

DLRCC should review all suggested extensions to the scheme and seek to broaden the access to active travel modes in particular for schools.

- This is an ongoing process. The current proposals are now finalised, but suggestions are being taken forward as part of upcoming projects and we continue to refer to the suggested schemes.

DLRCC should make available resources, share links to cycling education programmes and promote schemes available in the county.

- We are continuing to engage with schools to promote active travel. We have a programme of schools' zones that is currently being developed;
- We have carried out a school travel survey to establish base line data and help identify where promotion and engagement activities would generate most benefit;
- We are working on an engine idling awareness campaign that will promote awareness around air quality and help improve air quality in our community.

Location Specific Recommendations;

It is recommended that the proposals for George's Avenue, Blackrock are adapted to allow for business loading

Following engagement with local businesses the parking bays on George's Avenue have been made dual use i.e., parking and loading. The need for outdoor dining areas to facilitate businesses reopening was also incorporated into the proposed plans with the provision of a build-out along the street.

It is recommended the proposals on Avoca Avenue, Blackrock are refined to deliver the outcome of a safe street whilst taking into account the concerns of residents

We have developed a traffic calming scheme for Avoca Avenue and continued to engage with the local residents. It went through 4 iterations in consultation with the local residents and the final version includes:

- A number of speed ramps;
- Alterations to some of the existing junctions;
- Signing and lining measures;
- A mini roundabout was introduced at Woodlands Park.

Our preference was to use horizontal measures in the form of pinch points to achieve a desirable speed reduction. We agreed to install standard ramps in the first instance and then assess their effectiveness after 3 months. If they were successful in achieving the

desired 30kph speed along the route, then no further measures would be installed. If they were unsuccessful, we would seek to install further measures.
Find

It is recommended that alternative routes at Deansgrange Road and Kill Lane are reviewed and the proposal which best facilitates the objectives of the Active School Travel initiative is implemented.

Our proposal on Deansgrange Road was to replace the northbound traffic lane with a 2-way cycle lane and retain the existing pedestrian footways, residents parking and one-way trafficked lane southbound. Although the proposals received the broad support of the public consultation process, proposed alternatives submitted during the consultation phase were considered to determine a preferred solution.

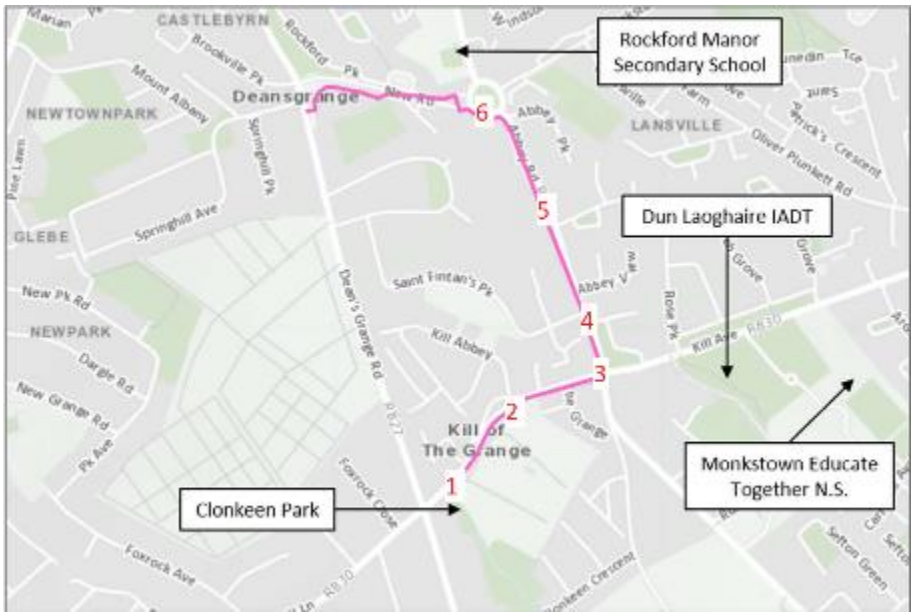
Four alternative options were put forward by a local business group. These are illustrated and discussed below:

1. Option 1

To enable this route to proceed a new signalised crossing would be required at the exit of Clonkeen Park and a new two-way cycle track along Kill Lane to Kill Abbey. Within Kill Abbey and St Fintan's Park cyclists would be mixing with vehicles on road. In comparison to the proposed segregated facilities on Deansgrange Road, integrated cycling on road is less desirable and less likely to encourage new or less confident cyclists to use the route. The circuitous nature of this route would not encourage cyclists whose natural desire line is along Deansgrange Road. This option proposed bringing a route on the south side of the Stradbrook roundabout. Noting the available space in this location it would require the removal of the existing footpath and the displacement of pedestrians clockwise around the junction (which would not be recommended). A route could be facilitated through the roundabout if there was a reconfiguration of the roundabout. This is a large infrastructure project and would take a number of years to complete (in comparison to the proposed measures on Deansgrange Road that could be completed within a number of months). Abbey Road is also on the DLR Cycle Network and it should be progressed in addition to,

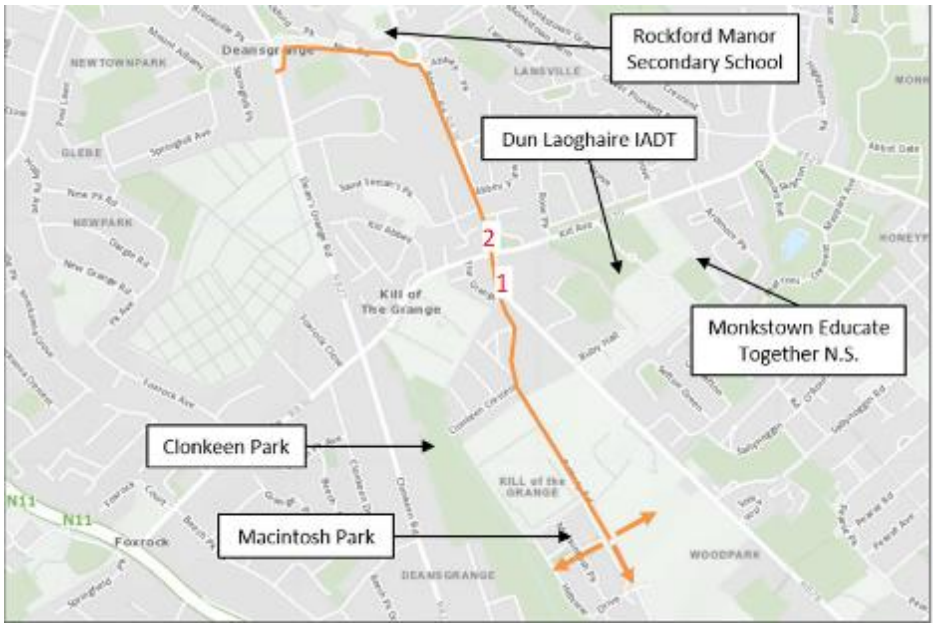
not as a substitute for, Deansgrange Road. DLRCC is progressing with a redesign of the Stradbrook Roundabout but this is expected to take a number of years to complete.

2. Option 2



This option has similar challenges to Option 1 but involves remaining on Kill Avenue and using Bakers Corner junction. This option would require a reconfiguration of the Bakers Corner junction which would have an impact on traffic flows (removal of slip / turning lanes, phasing alterations, etc). Another significant barrier is a pinch point on Abbey Road which would require compulsory land acquisition to provide sufficient space for cycle facilities.

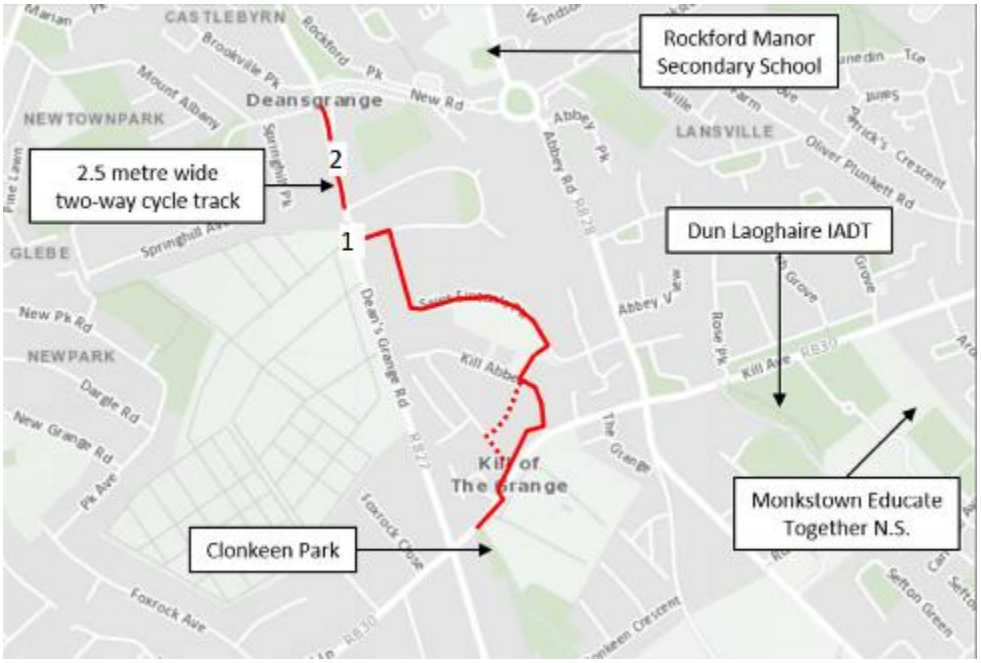
3. Option 3



The option of using Pottery Road has similar constraints to options 1 and 2 but also would require a reconfiguration of the Rochestown Avenue approach to the junction to enable

the provision of segregated facilities. This would require the removal of the turning lane onto Kill Lane which would also impact traffic flows. As mentioned above both Abbey Road and Deansgrange Road should have cycle provision and both should be delivered. There is a natural desire line from Kilbogget and Clonkeen Parks into Deansgrange and onward trips (as well as provided enhanced access to the Park) should be facilitated.

4. Option 4



This option was considered and was brought forward for further assessment as recommended in the report.

In addition to the suggestion options above DLRCC have also considered the following:

- The option of using the Deansgrange Cemetery. The cemetery is not open on 24-hour/7 day per week basis and relying on a route that is only available at certain times of the day will not encourage modal shift. It has no public lighting and there would be concerns about personal security. The cemetery ends approx. 250m from the Deansgrange crossroads and a one-way system would still be required to facilitate a route to the village
- Using the cemetery and then crossing Deansgrange Road and entering Kill Abbey was also considered. This would require a signalised crossing point on Deansgrange Road and Kill Lane and the removal of approx. 7 car parking spaces. In comparison to the proposed segregated route on Deansgrange Road this would be less attractive and has the same issues as the above options
- DLRCC considered the removal of the path on the west side of Deansgrange Road and converting it to a cycle facility. Apart from the principle of removing a path and diminishing facilities for pedestrians or persons with disabilities (which we would not support) the existing path is not wide enough and additional space would have to be removed from the carriageway which would result in a one-way system as there would not be sufficient space remaining for two-way traffic

The removal of all of the parking and loading facilities on Deansgrange Road, narrowing the carriageway to a minimum (which would require a HGV and bus diversion) was considered but not progressed due to the impact to residents and businesses.

In total 10 options for a route between Clonkeen Park and Springhill Avenue were considered. The following three options were brought forward for additional assessment:

a. Two-way cycle track on Deansgrange Road with one-way flow for motor vehicles north to south whilst maintaining on-street car parking.
b. Two-way cycle track on Deansgrange Road only between Brookville Park and St Fintan's Villas combined with controlled crossings for pedestrians and cyclists on Deansgrange Road at St Fintan's Park and on Kill Lane at Clonkeen Park. Two-way flow for motor vehicle traffic and formal on-street car parking on Deansgrange Road is maintained. HGV movements are restricted due to limited carriageway width.
c. Two-way cycle track on Deansgrange Road with single travel lane for motor vehicles whilst maintaining car parking. The single travel lane can be used in two directions, but drivers have to wait turns when passing parked cars. On-street car parking can be reorganised to facilitate sufficient point for vehicles in opposite directions to pass each other. HGV movements are restricted due to limited carriageway width.

A traffic modelling exercise concluded that Option C would result in significant traffic disruption and was discounted.

Traffic modelling and multi-criteria analysis of Options A and B concluded that Option A was the preferred option. Option A has been brought forward as the recommended route and more details of this exercise are contained in the Deansgrange Route Options Report. Other interesting points to note from traffic modelling and multi-criteria analysis are:

- It is important to note that the model illustrates that approximately 75% of all motor vehicle traffic along Deansgrange Road does not have an origin or destination within the model extents, i.e. the vast majority of motor vehicle traffic within the Core Analysis Network area is commuting through the area but not stopping within it.
- Live traffic data obtained for the traffic model has identified approximate 17% of all trips through Deansgrange Road are shorter than 4km, which shows the significant potential for modal shift to walking and cycling for car-based journeys of short distance in the locality.

It is recommended that the proposals at Belmont Lawn and Ardagh Crescent are implemented along with additional safety measures

The ownership of the green area in Belmont was clarified as part of the project. To proceed with these works, land acquisition is required and we are progressing this element separately.

It is recommended that the proposals for Belmont Terrace are refined to minimise impact on informal parking

We met with local residents and business owners and finalised the design of a small section of two-way cycle lane from the crossing at the N11 to the entrance to Belmont. This minimised the removal of parking. We also liaised with the proposed Bus Connects Project to align the two proposals.

It is recommended that the proposals for Eden Park, Knocknashee and Lower Kilmacud are implemented with input into the design from local residents

Through feedback received and continuing engagement we have progressed the design of a new linear park at the junction of Eden Park / Kilmacud Road Lower. The proposed uncontrolled crossing at Mount Anville Wood was relocated to the east side of the junction and upgraded to a signalised crossing.

Other Project Improvements:

Throughout the various discussions many items have been put forward for consideration. We have endeavoured to include any additional items that would benefit the objectives of the scheme. These include:

- Traffic calming measures at Woodlands Park (mini-roundabout)
- Traffic calming measures at Brookfield Terrance (mini-roundabout)
- The addition of zebra crossings at Granville Park and Longmeadow Drive
- Enhancement of the area between Mount Annville Wood and Park

- Additional uncontrolled crossing points at Trees Road

Habitats Regulations Assessment:

The Council arranged for Ramboll Consultants to carry out an assessment of the Project under the European Union (Birds and Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015. Ramboll Consultants are fully qualified and have the relevant expertise to carry out this assessment under these Regulations. Ramboll Consultants has prepared a stage 1 screening report where they concluded that the Project is not likely to have a significant effect on the European Sites identified in the report and that an appropriate assessment of the Project under the Birds and Habitats Regulations was not required.

Summary:

The Active School Travel Project proposes three safe walking and cycling routes across the County of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. The provision of continuous routes that links existing infrastructure allows for the deployment of safe walking and cycle facilities in a short timeframe to provide more sustainable travel options. The provision of a network of routes will enable more children to safely walk and cycle to school.

The public engagement process on the Active School Travel Project is one of the most significant ever carried out by DLRCC, with over 6,431 submissions received. DLRCC has continued to engage with residents and businesses following the public engagement process completed in late 2020. While not every response supported every measure proposed Through a dynamic engagement process, DLRCC has taken a significant period of time (almost 12 months) to engage with stakeholders and has endeavoured to explain the rationale behind the chosen routes, the measures being proposed measures and facilitated open discussion about the project.

The Project comprising the installation of the three connected safe walking and cycling routes is being undertaken on a trial basis. It is expected that the works will be completed in by February 2021. Once the works are completed to all three routes, a six-month trial period for the Project will commence. During this six-month period it is intended that the Council will gather data, seek feedback on the Project and at the end of the six-month period it will engage in a public engagement process before deciding whether to retain the Project in its entirety, retain the Project with changes or discontinue the Project in its entirety.

The primary purpose of this project is to provide a connected active travel network to enable school children to safely walk and cycle to school and enabling this will have wider benefits to help improve road safety, address climate change, reduce harmful environmental emissions and support physical health and wellbeing.

FAQs

Is access to any area by private vehicle being removed?
All areas will still be accessible by car. Routing options may change but no area will be inaccessible.

Where can I get updates about the project?
The DLRCC website is regularly updated with project specific information including consultation reports, maps, survey responses and project timings: https://www.dlrcoco.ie/en/environment/active-school-travel

Scheme drawings are broken into the 3 routes as follows:

- Sea to Mountains
- Mountains to Metals
- Park to Park

When will construction commence and how long will it take?
DLRCC expects to complete the works by February 2022, following completion of the works a 6-month pilot period will commence to understand how effectively the routes operate, or if they need to be adjusted. At the end of the trial period an evaluation process will be carried out and a report completed in a reasonable timeframe.

What will the routes look like in my area where no cycle tracks are being provided?
The majority of the routes will use streets and spaces where it is already safe to cycle in the roadway and walk on the pavement. In these situations, routes symbol markers

(painted dots) will be provided on the ground. These will be accompanied by route posts at key junctions and maps at transport interchanges

How are you assessing the success of the project?
The Active School Travel project will be assessed under the Common Appraisal framework for Transport Projects (issued by the Department for Transport).

The process will measure performance of the project against six quantitative and qualitative criteria namely, Economy; Safety; Environment; Accessibility and Social Inclusion; Physical Activity and Integration. The Multi-Criteria assessment will ascertain how the projects performed in seeking to achieve the National, Regional and Local Policy objectives. These include policies such as Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future; National Cycle Policy Framework; Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area; Greater Dublin Area Cycling Network Plan; Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan (2016-2022), specifically Policy ST5: Walking and Cycling, ST6: Footways and Pedestrian Routes; ST7: County Cycle Network and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Climate Change Action Pan 2019-2024 including Actions T4, T6, T7, T8, T11 and T13.

With respect to specific monitoring tools to inform the Multi-Criteria Assessment, each of the six criteria will be supported by both quantitative and qualitative data. A short summary of the parameters, monitoring approach and assessment method is described below.

- Economic – Modal shift will be assessed and the economic effect calculated, relevant Transport Parameters as identified in Annex 1 of the Common Appraisal Framework will be assessed to define their economic value, this may include: improved value of time, reduced vehicle operating costs, improved emission values, reduced collision costs and active travel benefits such as health and absenteeism benefits.

- Safety – Safety for motorised, non-motorised and vulnerable road users will be assessed. Engagement and survey work to understand issues like safe access to active mobility options. Pre and post-implementation survey work will help assess the value of the proposals to deliver safer and more accessible active travel options.

- Environment – Air Quality, Noise and Vibration, Landscape and Visual Quality, Biodiversity, Cultural Heritage, Land Use and Water resources will be assessed. Noise and Air Quality monitoring completed pre and post construction will also support the economic criteria, defining the value of improved air quality and reduced noise and enhanced health and wellbeing, leading to reductions in costs of healthcare.

- Accessibility and Social Inclusion – The impact of the proposals on issues like social exclusion particularly as it affects vulnerable groups such as vulnerable women, children and young people, older people, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities in line with the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion will be assessed.

- Physical Activity - This relates to the health benefits derived from using different transport. A summary of nature of physical activity impacts including impacts on particular groups of road users, will be made based largely on the modal shift assessment. The value of the health benefits will be calculated in line with approach outlined in the Common Appraisal Framework

- Integration – The ability of the proposals to act as an enabler for an Integrated Transport Policy will be assessed. The planning for each transport infrastructure and mode needs to take account of other elements of transport infrastructure and services. This assessment will include Land Use integration, Transport Integration and Geographical Integration.

Report by the Active Travel Team
Infrastructure and Climate Change Department
3rd September 2021