North West Greenway Plan
A Vision & Action Plan For Greenway Development
September 2015
About Sustrans

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0.1 Executive Summary

This document aims to provide the basis of a strategic and co-ordinated plan for the development of a network of Greenways throughout the North West. It provides a potential greenways map, which identifies a series of recommended Greenway routes for further investigation, as a result of information gathered and initial consultations. The recommended routes are indicative only and demonstrate desirable positions on the most appropriate alignments found at the time of writing. Negotiations with specific land owners and access providers, as well as new opportunities through land use change and re-development may suggest alternative or more favourable connections.

The entire network will take many years and a cocktail of funding to deliver, however, it is hoped that this plan will provide a blueprint for that development. It will enable a more joined up approach and sharing of resources to ensure efficient delivery and a quality product. Further to the scope of this plan, it is intended that the recommended routes are examined on a project by project basis to formulate a provisional programme of delivery. No priority order for delivery has been set as it is recognised that flexibility is essential to maximise opportunities to respond to funding streams and other factors beyond the control of the lead partners in delivery. It is also important to note that this plan does not supersede or preclude any statutory planning or consultation processes. Engagement and buy in from local communities, land owners and stakeholders is viewed as an essential element throughout the route development process.

The Plan will also help inform future route provision, throughout and connecting out of the region and in particular it will help with the preparation of business cases for funding.
The increasing demand and desire for Greenway development was recognised by the Local Authorities of the North West Cross Border Region. In support of this, the study has been developed in partnership between Donegal County Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council. The study was proposed and supported by the North West Region Cross Border Group (NWRCBG), the Council’s cross border collaborative partnership. It has been part financed by the European Union’s European Regional Development Fund through the INTERREG IVA Cross Border Programme.

It was recognised that to date that a significant number of projects have already been delivered within each Council area. However, the partnership also recognised that there is value in working collaboratively to plan, develop and seek funding for cross border projects at a regional level.

The objective of collaborative working is to maximise resources, knowledge and synergies, increase the regional value of provision and aid in delivering product of a larger scale. Importantly the partners also felt it was necessary to avoid “back to back” planning and ad hoc provision and to ensure the connectivity of routes across the region. The partners believed that the inherent value in greenways can only be realised through joint planning and development.

It was agreed to develop a long term plan and strategic overview for greenway development in order to promote modal shift across the North West Cross Border Region. This would aid in the delivery of a longer term cohesive regional network and shorter term sustainable travel routes between urban settlements and outlying residential and rural areas.

In developing the Study a North West Greenway Working Group was established with membership from the Councils, the NWRCBG and with support and input from the Department of Regional Development NI (DRD) and the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport ROI (DTTAS). The North West Greenway Working Group has agreed on a broad definition for greenways in order to make sure that a high quality product is delivered. It agreed that the term ‘greenway’ is a largely traffic free route connecting people to facilities, parks and open spaces. A more detailed definition of this and other transport infrastructure used in this document can be found in section 1.1 and in Appendix A.

The Group also sought to ensure that greenways would be developed in order to provide the maximum value to the region. To this end the Group have worked with local groups and stakeholders to ensure that the routes chosen benefit the Health & Community, Business & Culture, and Environment of the localities they serve.
2.1 The Study Area

The Plan will focus on a study area comprising of County Donegal in the Republic of Ireland and Derry City and Strabane District Council in Northern Ireland (see Map 1). The total size of the study area is over 6000 km² with a total population of around 309,000. The region is served by a number of urban centres, the largest of which is the City of Derry-Londonderry with a population of 107,877. Letterkenny is next largest with a population of 19,588 followed by Strabane with a population of 13,172 and Buncrana with a population of 6,639.

The Region’s geography and scenery varies from undulating river valleys and forested glens to rugged mountains and dramatic coastlines; Donegal’s coastline being one of the longest on the island at 1,134km.

Within the study area there are many walking and cycling routes developed in line with national, regional, local and even European policies. In developing proposals for greenway Development it is important to place them within a logical hierarchy of routes. It is also important to look at the definition of greenways and understand the level of planning and development necessary to develop a product which can be defined as a greenway.
2.2 National Cycling Networks

The National Cycle Network (NCN) is the countrywide network of both regional and local routes within Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This National Network will help inform the development of the North West Greenway Plan and be a consideration in the selection of projects going forward.

The National Cycle Network in Northern Ireland linking to the Republic of Ireland border counties.

The Network in the UK and Northern Ireland has, since its initial development, always included links to cross border routes including routes through Donegal as is illustrated in the accompanying map.

It is of interest to note from a recent UK-wide survey the type of users of the Network as this will give some indication of how the proposed Greenways in the study area may be used. Key points to note are that 46% of users are walkers and of cyclists 53% are local leisure users with 33% commuting cyclists. Across the range of all users 11% are sixty-five years or older and 62% are male.

Work on developing a similar NCN structure is ongoing within the Republic of Ireland, with sections being delivered by different bodies such as the National Roads Authority and individual County Councils. Donegal County Council developed the Donegal Cycle Route as part of the NCN in recent years, delivering almost 200km of coastal cycling route around the County from Donegal Town to Newtowncunningham. Sustrans previously also undertook work on route selection for Fáilte Ireland.

A common all island Network plan is clearly needed, with similar route selection criteria. For example, the NCN in Northern Ireland and the UK is designated and designed to an appropriate standard to attract a wide range of users and abilities:

- A competent 12 year old child cycling unaccompanied
- Family groups with younger, supervised children; and
- All novice cyclists (aged 12 years and above)

However, in the Republic of Ireland different criteria are used with NCN routes often following and sharing road alignments with other traffic or making use of quiet country roads and disused railway line. The map below illustrates the RD1 Fáilte Ireland and proposed NCN routes.
The National Cycle Network (NCN) is the countrywide network of both regional and local routes within Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This National Network will help inform the development of the North West Greenway Plan and be a consideration in the selection of projects going forward. These fit within the framework of the National Cycle Network. They frequently join up places of interest, take you through areas of outstanding landscape, but of course can be used for local leisure and commuting cycling as well. The Inis Eoghain 55km Cycleway is a good example. They can have a particular theme such as cultural or natural heritage and can overlap with the NCN. They are often attractive to visitors who cycle for one day during their holiday (i.e., tourists that cycle.).

Other examples of established regional routes in the study area are: the North West Trail, the Faughan Valley Cycleway and the Kingfisher Trail.

This plan will seek to develop a regional cross border route with common route selection criteria across the jurisdictions, thereby in time hopefully aiding in the delivery of a safe and marketable overall route which can be used by a wide range of users and abilities.

Regional Cycle Networks

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Local Cycle Networks

A number of local cycle networks exist in the study area particularly within urban areas. These networks are important in that they complete the hierarchy of provision. The local cycle network within Derry~Londonderry is a good example, with multiple routes, both on and off road, offering local people and visitors a range of route options. Again, there is overlap between local, regional and national routes. Finishes will be much more urban in character and lighting is likely to be required to allow greater use in winter time.

International Routes - EuroVelo

The European Cycling Federation has developed a network of trans-European routes, known as EuroVelo which are based on existing National cycle networks. The EuroVelo project is more of a branding and marketing exercise than a capital works project as the routes exist more as corridors using the existing national cycling networks as they run through countries.

EuroVelo route 1, “The Atlantic Route”, stretches for the length of the continent from Scandinavia to the Algarve consisting of on road and traffic free sections. On the island of Ireland the route passes through the study area via Newtownstewart and Strabane, where it crosses into Donegal and is signposted on quiet rural roads for over 200km, following the “Donegal Cycle Route” then continuing south out of the county following the North West Trail. There is an opportunity to explore the possibility of realigning this route to extend further north, taking in the City of Derry~Londonderry, Buncrana and parts of Inis Eoghain before re-joining the alignment at Letterkenny.
2.3 Walking Networks

It is also important to consider the existing and potential network of designated walking routes as part of developing greenways.

Many greenways were developed initially as walking routes and then later upgraded, either by simply resigning/designating that existing space or widening and/or resurfacing the path to at least an acceptable minimum standard which would accommodate other users such as cyclists, people with disability and even horse riders. If the alignments and change in usage are appropriate this approach may be preferable both in terms of associated costs versus new path construction and because the use and access of the land is already being used for similar, non-motorised activities.

Of course, it will not always be appropriate or feasible for many walking routes to be upgraded to greenways. However, from a tourism and marketing perspective it is important to include them in the mapping and promotional information as new greenways are developed as they increase the attractiveness and usage of the greenway network.

In Donegal and Northern Ireland there are hundreds of kilometres of designated walking and hiking routes of different terrain and type. In general they are well signposted and branded and cater for the various types of walkers similar to the way the NCN has developed to cater for the various types of cyclists. A good example of these are the Slí na Sláinte (www.irishheart.ie/sli) and Highway to Health initiatives (www.walkni.com) which are short signposted walks in and around towns and villages. These provide an excellent opportunity for local residents to incorporate walking into their daily lives as means of active travel or regular exercise.

Other walks such as the Wildlife Reserve in Inch, Co Donegal have been developed to improve access to previously inaccessible areas of significant beauty and biodiversity. Longer distance, circular walks such as the Bluestack Way and the Bealach na Gaeltachta (Donegal) and the Ulster Way are well established routes designed for locals and visitors alike.

In recent times the International Appalachian Trail initiative (http://iat-sia.org/) with chapters across the world, including Ireland and the UK has established a route from Killybegs, Co Donegal to Larne, Co Antrim (www.walkni.com/iat/).
2.4 What are Greenways?

It is important to note that varying definitions exist across Europe and other parts of the world. There are a few characteristics that make up or define a greenway; these being:

- Largely a Traffic Free Route
- Links people with places of work, education and leisure
- Used by a wide range of people / groups
- Has a high environmental quality / promoting local bio-diversity
- A place to meet / run events
- Has a high level of community engagement
- Brings significant economic benefit to the locality
- Provides a memorable experience

Each greenway will have distinctive characteristics reflecting the landscape it passes through and the people it connects. No two greenways are the same and their development is always a result of collaboration between diverse bodies and organisations, many years of planning and significant engagement with local communities and landowners.

The models of development for Greenways differ across the two jurisdictions. Furthermore the NW network proposed in the remainder of this document will require different approaches for different sections. Some sections will be urban in nature and used primarily to facilitate sustainable transport; other sections will be rural and may be used more for recreation and leisure purposes.

This study aims to be the first step in presenting a strategic approach and overview to the development of a shared greenway network which is cross border, planned at a regional level and links the urban settlements of the region to their rural hinterlands.
To illustrate the different approaches and models used for development two case studies have been chosen to inform this study. The Comber Greenway in East Belfast / North Down and the Great Western Way in Co Mayo are highly successful examples of successfully delivered Greenways. Both follow the line of former railways.

The Comber Greenway

The Comber Greenway is approximately seven miles long, linking urban Belfast with rural Comber in Co Down.

It passes through areas of industry, communities and the city’s green suburbs and eventually the countryside. Since its development it has become more and more popular with local people as a place to walk and enjoy nature. For others it is a commuting route, providing quick, safe access to the City.

In 2006, Sustrans secured European funding administered by the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development under the Building Sustainable Prosperity Measure. The focus of this Measure was to put in place infrastructure to help develop sustainable tourism activities.

Sustrans were project managers which included securing grant funding, managing the grant funding draw down from various sources, managing grant funding claims and administering payments to the Department for Regional Development who carried out the works. Sustrans also worked with local communities along the route as the project developed promoting the Greenway and supporting and enabling people to benefit from the new active travel choice which it presented.

The Comber Greenway was the main element of this programme and alongside the European funds secured, funding was also contributed by the Department for Regional Development Roads Service, NIEA (Environment and Heritage Service), local councils, Better Belfast Landfill funding and DCAL.

Reserved as a transportation corridor within the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan most of the route which lay disused remained within ownership of the Department for Regional Development and was also exempt from the Planning Application process. The Department for Regional Development carried out the works to put the Comber Greenway in place and remain the owners today. It is maintained by the Department with varying degrees of support from the three local authorities it passes through. It is of consistent design standards throughout; a 3m wide bitmac surface with no kerbs or lighting.

Maintenance, management and future development of the Greenway have been recently been discussed by members of the NI Assembly, with calls for lighting to increase winter usage, new network linkages and an improved and enhanced maintenance regime. Conflicts between different user groups also need to be resolved. It is effectively an urban park for local people. The Greenway is hugely popular with an estimated annual usage of over 200,000 people in 2014. Occasional visitors do use it because it is part of the NCN but they are clearly in the minority.
Great Western Greenway

The 42km, mostly traffic free, Great Western Greenway, in contrast, has proven to not only provide an amenity for local people, but also attract huge numbers of day visitors. While Westport is a significant centre of population the Greenway’s primary function is to provide for local leisure and visitors. Because of its greater length and diversity of landscape and intensity of use, its surface treatment can vary from waterbound paths in rural areas to harder wearing bitmac in urban areas. The private sector have engaged with it and developed products and services specific to it, boosting the local economy and job creation.

Fully realised and opened by 2011, the Greenway was developed in partnership between: Fáilte Ireland; the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Mayo Co. Council and the local community. To date Fáilte Ireland and the other various funders have contributed approximately 3m towards the capital cost of the project.

Usage estimates in 2011 were around 80,000 “visits” or “uses” per year. The breakdown of this is different in comparison to the Comber Greenway with 38% “local” (Co. Mayo), 39% domestic visitors and 23% from overseas visitors. Counter and monitoring data along the Greenway shows that there are pronounced morning peaks and afternoon/evening Monday to Friday. This indicates that not only are tourists and visitors using this facility, but it is being used as a sustainable travel mode for locals.

The Greenway was also developed differently. Since the lands on which the former railway operated had gradually passed into the ownership of local landowners over a period of 70 years permission for access to the lands was needed in order to develop the project.

Beginning in 2009, Mayo Co. Council in partnership with the local community and community development agencies approached each landowner involved, seeking an agreement that would permit the construction of a gravel path along the railway track and also permit the public to cycle or walk through. The development of the trail was in turn ultimately only made possible through the goodwill of these local landowners and permissive access agreements were eventually signed by 85 different landowners along the route.

The route was endorsed by the national trails office and therefore could be insured under public liability insurance. The route closes one day a year to protect landowner’s rights with regard to right of way. An example of a Permissive Access Agreements from both jurisdictions can be seen in Appendix B.
2.5 Benefits of Greenways

Aligned to Councils reorganisation and directorates, it can be clearly demonstrated that in areas where Greenways are developed they positively impact on:

- Health and Community
- Business and Culture
- Environment

Greenways address the barriers people have to cycling; such as perceptions of safety, limited infrastructure for cyclists and low confidence. They facilitate casual social interaction and exercise thereby contributing to the health and wellbeing of users as well as generating significant overall health savings.

Developing Greenways allows for diverse sections of the population to get active. For example Sustrans’ largest and most important project, the National Cycle Network (NCN) in the UK connects to every major town and city and stretches 14,000 miles across the UK. It is used by cyclists, walkers, joggers, wheel chair users and horses as well. It is of interest to note the type of users of the NCN as this will give some indication of how the proposed greenways in the study area may be used. Key points to note are that 46% of users are walkers, of cyclists 53% are local leisure users with 33% commuting cyclists.

2.5 Benefits of Greenways

Aligned to Councils reorganisation and directorates, it can be clearly demonstrated that in areas where Greenways are developed they positively impact on:

- Health and Community
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- Environment

Greenways improve access to employment and encourage sustainable transport and cycling tourism in the areas along them. There is even a growing base of evidence that shows how greenways have a positive impact on property values; by increasing access to amenities and improving the natural beauty of communities they make adjacent properties easier to sell.

The Irish Government has recognised that cycle tourism is increasing and Fáilte Ireland commissioned market research in 2013 with nearly 15,000 interviews being conducted across the four key overseas markets (Britain, France, Germany and the Netherlands) and the domestic Irish market. From the results we can paint a picture of what the ideal route for a cycle tourist would be; one that is circular, more rural in nature yet under 50km with other activities/attractions and services available along the way. The route would ideally be scenic yet not over difficult gradients and would be mostly segregated/traffic-free.

Sustrans Scotland recently commissioned Transform Scotland to investigate and cost business from leisure cycling. Data gathered over many years was used to develop a clearer picture of the benefits of leisure cycling. The study identified four major areas of economic contribution from cycle tourism in Scotland. Their estimated combined values ranged between £117.2 million and £239 million per year. Separate contributing elements are presented in the table ......

- In addition to the monetised benefits identified in Table 1, leisure cycle tourism contributes £38.5 million to the Gross Value Added (GVA) of Scotland.
- When combined with mountain biking, for which separate prior research has been conducted by Ekos in 2009, the total value of cycle tourism in Scotland is estimated to be between £241 million and £362 million per year, with a cumulative annual contribution to GVA of £123m.
Business and Culture

Fig 2: Economic values of cycling tourism (Scotland)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Values</th>
<th>(£Million)/per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health benefits</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure cycle events</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure cycle-related infrastructure</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure by leisure cyclists</td>
<td>106.2 – 228.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total economic contribution</td>
<td>117.4 – 239.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Environment

Greenways preserve and improve the environment by providing green infrastructure, increasing biodiversity and reducing congestion, contributing to lowering of carbon emissions and getting more cars off the road. They serve as “green lungs” connecting multi-functional zones with compatible land uses and allowing recreational and ecosystem conservation to operate in the same space. Greenways also act as features for climate change adaptation and mitigation for flood prevention, water and carbon storage. In December 2007, Sustrans won Big Lottery Funding to design new cycling and walking infrastructure to reconnect communities and to tackle the barriers – busy roads, railway lines or rivers – that prevent them from accessing their local area on foot or by bike. Over 700km of new routes were delivered including the Waterside Greenway in Derry–Londonderry. The table below illustrates the estimated reduction in car usage as a result of the scheme.

As part of the project a Route User Survey was undertaken by Derry City Council and Sustrans. The results showed a 50% increase in use of the route between 2011-2014 with 99% of respondents saying they used the greenway because it feels safe and 57% because they thought it was the most convenient option.

Fig 3: estimated reduction in car as a result of the Connect2 Waterside Greenway scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reduction in Car Use</th>
<th>km/per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car kilometres replaced before scheme</td>
<td>261,874 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car kilometres replaced after scheme</td>
<td>288,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional car kilometres replaced</td>
<td>26,752 km</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.0 Vision, Aims and Objectives

The North West Regional Cross Border Group and its partner Councils of Derry City and Strabane District and Donegal County Councils have adopted the following vision, aims and objectives for greenway development within the region:

3.1 Vision:
To develop a cross border network of greenways that link people with places locally, regionally and nationally - bringing social, economic and environmental well-being to all.

The realisation of this vision will create a region where active travel, through the use of the greenways and other active travel routes, is part of everyday life for everyone - improving social interaction, health and well-being, economic activity, creating jobs within an enhanced and improved environment.

3.2 Aim:
To establish the region as a place where people want to live and work and where businesses want to locate, by making sustainability and active travel key elements in the planning and development policy of the region.

The North West Greenway Plan
A Vision & Action Plan
For Greenway Development

In order to realise the vision and achieve the aim of this Plan the cross border partnership have agreed to work together, under the three thematic pillars of Health & Communities, Business & Culture and Environment. Twelve objectives have been agreed under the three pillars. The core objectives of these forming an integral part of the assessment matrix (see section 4.2). It is planned that this matrix will be used as an initial step in gauging the potential benefit each greenway specific project may have.

3.3 Objectives

As presented in Section 2, it is clearly demonstrated that where greenways are developed they positively impact on:

- Health and Community
- Business and Culture
- Environment

In order to realise the vision and achieve the aim of this Plan the cross border partnership have agreed to work together, under the three thematic pillars of Health & Communities, Business & Culture and Environment. Twelve objectives have been agreed under the three pillars. The core objectives of these forming an integral part of the assessment matrix (see section 4.2). It is planned that this matrix will be used as an initial step in gauging the potential benefit each greenway specific project may have.
3.3 Objectives

Twelve objectives have been agreed under the three pillars. The core objectives of these forming an integral part of the assessment matrix (see section 4.2). It is planned that this matrix will be used as an initial step in gauging the potential benefit each greenway specific project may have.

Business & Culture
- To improve access to employment
- To help encourage and support awareness and promote growth in this region
- To attract visitors to the area, cycling and walking tourists and by foot to enjoy the City and towns, places of interest, events and festivals, landscapes, the built and natural heritage
- To create new employment / business opportunities in both urban and rural areas through direct services, bicycle hire / rental, guided tours (walking and cycling) and related services such as food and accommodation

Health & Communities
- To promote active travel in order to improve the health and well-being of all who live and work in the region
- To create opportunities for positive social interaction
- To ensure adequate monitoring and evaluation of network to quantity and quality usage
- To negative transport poverty and promote equality of transport and equality for all

Environment
- To develop a walking and cycling network of greenways and other routes that connect centres of population, places of interest, workplaces, shops, schools and residential areas with each other
- To support public transport by linking the networks to transport hubs, the rail and bus network and local ferry
- To improve the environment by reducing vehicle emissions, noise and reducing congestion
- To improve the environment by enhancing bio-diversity along the greenway corridors

4.0 Policy and Strategic Context

In seeking to develop this Plan, the cross-border partners are mindful of the importance of supporting and implementing best practice, policy and most up to date strategic thinking at a European, National, Regional and Local Authority level. In order to provide high quality greenways and develop traffic free routes insofar as reasonable practical the partner Councils have agreed to review their own access, recreation, greenway documents and land use documents (e.g., Local Area, Development and Town Plans) to maintain and include new policy provision for

4.1 European Context

The European Commission is working towards sustainable, energy-efficient transport which does not have negative effects on the environment. Priorities include promoting co-modality (combining various transport modes in the same chain), technical innovation and a shift towards the least polluting forms of transport — especially for long distance and urban travel. Key policies relating to sustainable transport are outlined.

In March 2010 the European Commission published ‘Europe 2020 – A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth’. This forms the cornerstone of all EU policies and programmes for the current funding period 2014-2020. It puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Sustainable transport strategy is set out under the “sustainable growth” priority, through flagship Initiative: “Resource efficient Europe”, which supports a shift towards a resource efficient and low-carbon economy. At EU level this includes proposals to modernise and decarbonise the transport sector. At national level, Member States will need to coordinate implementation of infrastructure projects, to develop interconnected transport networks, with a particular focus on urban areas.
The Smarter Travel programme doesn’t just set out a vision for better travel choices but also provides funding to provide information and improve facilities for cyclists, walkers and public transport users to make it easier for us to make the right choices.

North West Greenway Plan
A Vision & Action Plan

On 12th August 2013, the UK Prime Minister announced his intention to “kickstart a cycling revolution which would remove the barriers for a new generation of cyclists”. The draft Cycling Delivery Plan was published by the Department for Transport (DfT) on 16th October 2014 and demonstrates the significant role walking and cycling can play as a sustainable transport mode, congestion reliever, and trigger for the creation of good quality public realm and liveable communities. Significantly, it highlights the economic and health benefits that walking and cycling bring.

In March 2015, the DfT published “Investing in Cycling and Walking: An Economic Case for Action” which summarises recent changes in the evidence base as well as the key legacy studies that should help not only to quantify the impacts resulting from investment in cycling and walking, but also to make the case for investing in cycling and walking above other demands on budgets.

In Northern Ireland, the Department for Regional Development’s strategic document, ‘Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future – A New Approach to Regional Transportation’ sets out the plans to develop regional transportation beyond 2015. It highlights the Department’s aim to, ‘provide a transportation network that supports economic growth while meeting the needs of all in our society and reducing environmental impacts’ and is closely aligned to the Programme for Government priorities of growing a sustainable economy while building communities and protecting the environment. The establishment of an Active Travel Forum in 2010 by The Department for Regional Development shows recognition of the importance of Active Travel. This Forum brings together representatives from Government Departments, Local Government, the voluntary and community sector and private sector.
4.2.2 UK & Northern Ireland

In August 2015, the Cycling Unit within the Department for Regional Development launched a Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland soon to be accompanied by a delivery Action Plan. The ‘New Approach’ document also sets out the importance of accessible transport to addressing exclusion and improving access to education, employment and social opportunities. Greenway development features in the strategy and Department for Regional Development states that it will look at proposals to develop both urban and rural greenways throughout NI as it aspires “to use rural greenways as an integral part of the Northern Ireland comprehensive network in order to create long distance, high quality routes.”

4.3 Regional and Local Context

This section will examine some of the policies and existing infrastructure that support greenway development at a regional and local level within the study area.

Map 2 has shown all the existing types of walking and cycling infrastructure in the study area as well as how the routes connect to the wider region. The maps 2a-2d in this section will show existing and potential routes the largest urban and population centres within the study area: Derry~Londonderry, Strabane, Letterkenny and Buncrana.

It is not the objective of this plan to examine in great detail the potential local routes and connections. What is important is to highlight what exists and any known routes that are planned in the selected areas. The majority of the potential greenways in the Plan connect towns and villages so it will important to examine how they actually connect into a local, more urban and built up environment. The potential links on the town maps are therefore not meant to be taken as a firm proposal of an alignment. Such details will be determined on a project by project basis during future stages of the greenway’s development.

4.3.1 Derry~Londonderry

In 1999, Derry City Council set up a Cycling Forum and together with other key stakeholders such as Sustrans, DRD and the Public Health Agency (PHA) created a Cycling Masterplan for the City. In 2008, the Forum was renamed the Access Forum and broadened its remit to include the development, promotion and maintenance of walking and cycling routes as well as access to the countryside and links to public transport.

The Access Plan (2009 – 2014) was subsequently produced by the Derry Access Forum to inform the development of cycling and walking routes across the City Council Area.
4.3.1 Derry~Londonderry

Objectives of the plan are:

- To enhance the quality of both the urban and rural environment by developing a network of diverse and attractive routes.
- To provide a safe, clean and accessible network of routes which meet the needs of local communities and visitors, both now and in the future.
- To contribute to the economic prosperity of the City and District through inward investment and tourism by delivering quality facilities.
- To encourage healthier lifestyles by creating and promoting opportunities for recreation for citizens of all ages and abilities.
- To promote the branding and marketing of routes and the wider network.
- To secure the necessary capital and revenue resources to implement it.

To date over 40km of traffic free (i.e., separated by at least a kerb from motor vehicle traffic) routes have been developed in the City alone, 26km of which are greenway standard (see Map 2a). The existing and potential routes map in the document is based on the most up to date version of the Derry City Walking and Cycling Masterplan (July 2015). There is great potential to expand the greenway network to communities and amenities away from the city centre and river basin, some of which could form part of longer greenway projects identified in Sections 5 & 6.
4.3.2 Strabane

Strabane, like many towns of a similar size and nature on the Island, has great potential to expand its greenway network and encourage more active travel and much has been done by in recent years to improve access. 2015 will see the opening of a new walking and cycling bridge across the River Mourne and Transport NI are investing in ongoing improvements to the local network.

The Strabane Town Forum published an Action Plan in 2013 which sets out a range of measures to improve the Town Centre as a destination. The main aims of the Masterplan in relation to access and movement are to achieve greater use of more sustainable and inclusive modes of travel, namely walking, cycling and public transport. The plan highlights how Strabane town should be easily accessible by foot and by public transport and routes in and around the town should align with major destinations in the town.

Recent developments in Strabane such as the Strabane Canal towpath near Ballymagorry and the new foot and cycle bridge near the Town Centre have improved local access and provided opportunities for leisure and recreational journeys by foot and bike.

Prior to this piece of work the Strabane Masterplan (2010) examined a range of issues including transport and accessibility. In terms of issues around active travel, the Masterplan recommended that:

- The relationship between vehicular traffic, pedestrians, and cyclists maximises accessibility for all users and;
- Streets and walks are designed to ensure that people can easily and conveniently get to where they need to be. Provide attractive and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to adjoining areas enhancing the overall accessibility of the central area; and Enhancing key gateways and ensuring development in the vicinity of gateway locations is of the highest design standard and makes a positive contribution to the arrival experience.

In addition to this, the Masterplan recommended that:

- Provide connections between the various greenways and
canal towpaths.

The relationship between vehicular traffic, pedestrians, and cyclists maximises accessibility for all users and;
- Streets and walks are designed to ensure that people can easily and conveniently get to where they need to be. Provide attractive and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to adjoining areas enhancing the overall accessibility of the central area; and Enhancing key gateways and ensuring development in the vicinity of gateway locations is of the highest design standard and makes a positive contribution to the arrival experience.
Recent developments in Strabane such as the Strabane Canal towpath near Ballymagorry and the new foot and cycle bridge near the Town Centre have improved local access and provided opportunities for leisure and recreational journeys by foot and bike.

Of some of the other key issues that the report picked up on was that “The bus centre is sited away from the town centre making access difficult and taking potential trade away from the town centre. There is no reasonable interchange with the town buses, and it is reportedly unpleasant to use especially at night.” This relates directly to the need and potential greenway and 2nd foot and cycle bridge idea identified in the Plan (Sections 5 & 6).

With the creation of the new Derry City and Strabane District Council in April 2015, plans are currently being prepared for an agreed walking and cycling masterplan for the Strabane area. Map 2b shows the existing and potential routes in and around Strabane and is the most recent draft. It highlights not only possible new purpose built greenway routes but improvements to the local network that would increase active travel.

4.3.2 Strabane

4.3.3 Letterkenny

The County Donegal Development Plan (2012-2018) outlines how a high quality and sustainable transport network is a crucial element in growth and development across all areas of social, environmental and economic development. The plan emphasises how a transportation network is central in attracting investment, developing the tourism industry, addressing environmental issues and in creating sustainable places and communities. The plan highlights the transport corridor between Letterkenny and Derry as a ‘Linked Gateway Area’.

Over the last two decades, Letterkenny has experienced remarkable rates of growth and development which have created a more urban environment and increased its importance as a regional hub to live, work and invest in. Between 2002-2006, for example, the area had a growth rate of 21.5% compared to rates of less than 10% at the national, regional and county levels during the same period.

With this unprecedented and relatively quick growth came an increase in car usage, congestion and the need to make improvements and better use of the land available for development. In 2009, Donegal County Council employed Atkins Consultants to undertake an Integrated Land Use and Transportation Study (ILUTS) which presented both "road based" and "sustainable modes" transportation strategies. One of the main aims of the ILUTS was to identify transportation measures that could encourage modal shift; maintain the economic viability of the town centre and accommodate the sustainable development of the town.
4.3.3 Letterkenny

Of the key recommendations for sustainable modes was the implementation of Quality Walking and Cycling Networks. Since the study was published Letterkenny Town Council has invested in developing the local network (shown in Map 2c). As with many local urban networks, the type and quality of the routes varies from traffic-free greenways through town parks to on-road cycle lanes and shared use paths adjacent to carriageways.

There is opportunity to develop both the traffic free and on road network further as three of the potential route ideas (identified in Section 6) connect into Letterkenny.

Examples of the different types of walking cycling infrastructure in Letterkenny: traffic free paths in Ballymacoil Town Park and segregated shared use path along N14 coming into the town centre.
4.3.4 Buncrana

Buncrana, on the shores of Lough Swilly, is the main population centre on the Inis. The Buncrana & Environs Development Plan 2014-2020 identifies several potential local routes that can either be developed as greenways as well as existing walking and cycling trails. The National Greenways (Sections 5 & 6) is an example of a successful project in the area.

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5.0 Overview and Assessment of Potential Greenways

This section examines potential greenway projects across the North West study area. It illustrates some of the wider connections and opportunities beyond the region level (i.e. Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of the Republic). It presents an overview of the existing network and summarise the types of infrastructure and alignments the potential routes may be developed on; primarily, but not limited to, disused/abandoned railway lines, flood embankments and canal paths, forest paths, coastal and beach routes.

Contained within this section an Assessment Matrix is presented to support project promoters in developing sections of the North West Greenway. This Matrix helps examine routes with regard to their alignment with national, regional and other routes which may be eligible for associated funding. It will also help to determine estimated costs and the contribution that sections of each route make or link to facilities and destinations such as residential areas, schools, workplaces and public transport hubs. It also assists in determining the physical interventions necessary to develop the each greenway route or section of route and their state of readiness with regard to legal and land ownership issues. Comparisons between routes and sections of routes can be made regarding the agreed objectives under the three agreed themes of Health & Communities, Business & Culture and Environment.

It is envisioned that this Matrix will provide a useful tool to help prioritise sections for development and to determine information and issues to be addressed as part of the planning and development process. It is intended to aid the development of a phased action plan approach by categorising development potential into short, medium or long term as can be seen in Section 6.0.
5.1 A brief overview of the disused railway network in the North West

The general concept for future greenway development in the North West follows on from previous strategies and studies, such as the North West Linear Park report (2002), which sought to utilise wherever possible sections of now disused railway lines. From a technical point of view, old railway lines provide an excellent opportunity to convert into greenways. If intact they often have good beds to surface, with little engineering required to bring them to an acceptable standard for light use such as walking and cycling.

The pattern of railway development in Ireland was similar to that in the UK, starting in the 1830s with numerous small independent companies operating modest lines which were gradually absorbed by larger competitors to leave a small number of dominant players by the early 1900s. At its peak the study area (i.e., County Donegal and the Derry and Strabane Council) had over 250 miles of railway lines. By the 1960s, however, only the lines leading to Derry and Sligo remained operational.

Map 4 illustrates the alignments and locations of the old lines. The concept for the potential greenways as part of this study is that they will follow the railway corridors where possible. However, given that most of the abandoned lines have been closed for over 40 years, track ownership is a very complex issue because of continuing development and changing land use and ownership. As many lines ran alongside the road, their reservations have frequently been incorporated into road widening schemes. Some railway property has never been sold and is either demolished or lying derelict. Once a line is abandoned and the track bed sold to several new owners the natural linearity and associated right of way is lost.

Some of the lengths of lines have been kept in public ownership (e.g., local Council or Coillte - Forest Service), providing the opportunity for relatively easy development into greenways. Many parts, however, are in private ownership and detailed work needs to be undertaken to identify owners and initiate negotiations. Community buy in and engagement is an essential element of establishing land ownership, promoting development and ensuring informal ownership and surveillance.

Useful sections of the railway corridors have been outlined in previous studies and they will be further examined as part of individual route feasibility studies which build on the plan in this document.
Within the study area there are many opportunities for developing waterside paths as greenways in their own right or to provide traffic free connections where railway or other access has been lost or is unsuitable. Riverside paths are a particularly attractive location for greenways. They can often be continuous for quite long distances. They may be the only route available through the urban environment. They lead out from towns into the countryside, often they have opportunities for passing under road and rail bridges and they always have open river to give a spacious aspect to the journey. Developing a riverside route is not always straightforward. Rivers frequently flood, there may be complex land ownership issues, they may pass through sensitive environmental areas and by their very nature are barriers to movement and new crossing points may be required to create access. However, where links can be achieved, such as the riverside network in Derry-Londonderry or the Sli na Sláinte routes in many towns and villages in Donegal, the opportunities for the public to walk and cycle in the area can be significantly enhanced.

Flood Embankments
Whilst paths alongside rivers most probably will flood occasionally, paths on flood banks are afforded a greater level of protection. Flood banks can make for excellent routes with wide-ranging views over the countryside. They may present an easier option to building near water courses and further examination of this as an opportunity is required. Support of the appropriate agencies (e.g., NIEA, Office of Public Works OPW) is of course critical.

Canal Paths
Canal paths share many of the characteristics of riverside paths and have long been favourite places to walk and cycle. They have the particular attraction of being continuous over long lengths with comfortable gradients. In general, they were built with access to adjacent areas which can provide opportunities to link the path to local communities. Within the study area a stretch of ESB canal near Gweedore, Donegal has been identified as a potential alignment for the Greenway which would avoid the N56 and take users along Lough Nacung Upper into Dunlewy.

Forest Roads and Paths
Consideration should be given to Bord na Mona, Coillte Ireland and the Forest Service NI are another potential source of walking and cycling routes. The particular characteristics of greenways running through forests are that they are likely to be following tracks constructed for the management of the forest. These may not have been used for many years, depending on the maintenance regime or they may just recently have been used for extraction.
There is currently some 250km of NCN traffic free greenway routes in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties. This includes such routes as the Comber Greenway in Belfast, the riverside greenways in Omagh and Enniskillen and the Waterside and Foyle Valley Greenways in Derry~Londonderry. Within the North West study area, 26km, or 10% of the total network, is classified as traffic-free greenway. Map 4 shows the existing traffic free network in the study area as of July 2015.

With an estimated 567km of potential greenway routes identified in the North West Cross Border Regional study area alone it is easy to understand the significant opportunity that exists to develop the network and gain economically, environmentally and in health and wellbeing as a region.

However, it is important to show links to the wider context of potential greenway development outside the study area (Map 5). Indeed many of the routes may be developed as part of a wider scheme and will not be developed in isolation. These ideas have been previously identified by other agencies such as the DRD and DTTS and the other regional cross border groups such as the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) and the East Border Region (ERB).

As with the potential network in the North West, many of the other route ideas follow former railway lines (e.g., Omagh to Dungannon and Portadown, Sligo to Enniskillen) and it developed there would then be opportunities to link into existing greenway networks such as the Lagan and Newry Canal towpaths. Realising some of these wider regional connections into the North West would further increase the value and positive impact of the network as well as create the opportunity for a complete traffic free greenway connection across the island. This would bring both immense tourism and local travel/modal shift potential.

5.3 Existing and Potential Network

Forest Roads and Paths

Forest roads were of course built for a different purpose from the local routes and wider network linking places of interest. These places might need to connect to the greenway in the area, so short links, new paths and sometimes additional roads, will be needed to make useful routes – normally constructed from the same materials and to a similar standard to the existing tracks. Within the study area there are opportunities to look developing greenways, for example, particularly around the Bannmore Gap area of Co Donegal. Some organisations, such as Coillte, have established guidelines and strategies for developing paths and accessing trails (e.g., Coillte Outdoors Off-Road Cycling Strategy, June 2012).

Coastal and Beach Routes

Coastal routes offer excellent opportunities for long greenway routes, often with spectacular views. Due to the nature of their location, long routes with a minimum number of junctions and crossings are often possible.

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4. Existing North West Greenways

5. Potential Regional Greenway Network
The Assessment Matrix has been developed in conjunction with the NW Greenway Working Group as a tool to assist groups and organisations planning on developing greenways. It should be used as one of the first steps in giving guidance to determining the potential benefit a proposed greenway could bring to the area and the type of route it will deliver and the state of readiness of the proposal.

The criteria are directly linked to the agreed themes and objectives in section 3.3 in addition to other key criteria such as links to wider walking and cycling networks, land and engineering issues and estimated costs.

As with all matrices there is a degree of subjectivity and assumed knowledge involved when using the tool. It is therefore good practice to complete this matrix as a collective where a group agrees values together or multiple individuals complete separately and then amalgamate their scores to form an average. Ultimately, the real value of the final scores is for comparison purposes with groups, communities and local authorities developing other route ideas in the study area. This will allow for the process of categorising and prioritising the growing list of proposals ranging from long, rural routes to short, inter urban links.

The matrix allows for larger projects (e.g., 20km or more) to be broken down into smaller phases which can then be assessed individually using the same criteria. This process may be applicable for small route ideas either (e.g., even relatively short urban greenways of less than 4km have been delivered in phased approaches due to funding and land constraints – see Section 7.2 for more detail and examples of approached to delivery).

Examples of completed matrices for selected route ideas are included as Appendix D. A blank matrix is included below for printing/hard copy use. An electronic spreadsheet version is also available for use.
## Project Assessment Framework

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<th>Project category</th>
<th>Assessment criteria</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>Special destinations, points of interest, natural beauty, etc.</td>
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<td>substantial, minor, note (1,2,3)</td>
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<td>Statutory designations</td>
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<td>Land Ownership</td>
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<tr>
<td>To improve investment / job creation</td>
<td>L/M/H (1,2,3)</td>
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<td>To attract visitors to the area</td>
<td>L/M/H (1,2,3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To create new urban and rural jobs (direct/indirect)</td>
<td>L/M/H (1,2,3)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>To improve access to employment</td>
<td>L/M/H (1,2,3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>To improve investment / job creation</td>
<td>L/M/H (1,2,3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>To attract visitors to the area</td>
<td>L/M/H (1,2,3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>To create new urban and rural jobs (direct/indirect)</td>
<td>L/M/H (1,2,3)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Environment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution to walking and cycling network</td>
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<td>Linkages to support use of public transport</td>
<td>L/M/H (1,2,3)</td>
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<td>Reduction in vehicle emissions, noise and congestion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhances local biodiversity</td>
<td>L/M/H (1,2,3)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cost</strong></td>
<td>Generated cost of route or section</td>
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</table>

**TOTAL SCORE**: 0
6.0 Action Plan

This section will look more closely at the range of potential greenway projects across the study area. The list has been generated over a four month consultation period with a wide range of groups and including statutory agencies, local authorities, grassroots community groups and campaigners. The list is by no means exhaustive as this is meant to be a living document that will naturally change and develop as sections of greenway are delivered and new route plans and ideas are brought forward.

The alignments and route lengths shown in the plan and on the maps are indicative at this stage and should not be considered as accurate and confirmed. The potential greenway ideas are at various stages of development. Some have had feasibility studies undertaken and even planning approval given. Others are in the initial concept stages and have been brought to the attention of the NWRCBG as part of this study. Other still have had development work undertaken several years ago that would need to be updated and revisited in order to progress.

The individual ideas have been identified by letters in Map 7 for reference in the Plan. Although no priority of delivery is given, they can be broken down into the following categories:

- Waterside Greenway - Phase IV (P)
- Strabane bridge and greenway (O)
- Potential small phases of larger projects within Buncrana and Letterkenny

6.1 Short, urban links

Typically less than 5km, no longer than 10km, these greenways link neighbourhoods and areas of towns and cities to amenities, education, employment and transport hubs. They will facilitate modal shift from cars and increase sustainable transport outputs. They should link into and form part of a wider network of existing traffic free and on road local routes. They will typically be of a high standard/finish with a bound surface, often with lighting to increase their attractiveness and encourage utility journeys in the evening and winter months. They are mostly traffic free, utilising parks and green spaces but may need to incorporate appropriate road crossings and access controls as part of their design.

- Inis Eoaghain Greenway (B)
- Lough Swilly Greenway (C)
- Letterkenny to Burtonport (E)
- Glenties to Baileybofey (G)
- Buncrana Greenway (I)
- Lough Foyle Greenway (Q)

6.2 Medium, interurban

The majority of the potential greenway ideas fall into this category. These routes generally will be around 10-25km in length (no longer than 30km) and will form a physical link between two or more larger urban centre as well as forming local connections between villages and hamlets along the way. They will be mostly traffic free but may need to include segregated facilities near roads for short sections. Bridges and other structures may need to be incorporated to overcome physical barriers between areas of population and to ensure the route remains attractive for both recreation and utility journeys. Design standards may vary as the intensity of use changes and the route traverses through different environments.

- Inis Eoaghain Greenway (B)
- Lough Swilly Greenway (C)
- Letterkenny to Burtonport (E)
- Glenties to Baileybofey (G)
- Buncrana Greenway (I)
- Lough Foyle Greenway (Q)
Long distance

These potential routes extend over 30km and would most likely be delivered in a phased approach of no more than 10-20km at a time. They can physically connect urban areas if fully realised and also act as recreation routes for visitors and local residents alike. Their design will vary from high quality sections to unbound tracks and very rural isolated sections on quiet, traffic calmed roads and farm lanes.

- Iris Eoagáin Greenway (B)
- Lough Swilly Greenway (C)
- Letterkenny to Burtonport (B)
- Glineties to Ballybofey (G)
- Banesmore Greenway (I)
- Lough Foyle Greenway (J)

A note on costs

Costs and finishing works will of course vary. It is important to remember that each greenway project will present its own set of issues that will impact on the overall costs. Greenways, as discussed in Section 2.4, can be highly engineered with bound surfaces, kerbs and lighting – particularly when they run through urban areas with high levels of use. Greenways can also be delivered to a much lower specification for rural, lower use environments with unbound surfacing.

Development costs of greenways can be high if there are many technical issues to resolve and parties to satisfy, particularly in relation to land issues. Sustrans’ own project records, for example, show that the cost of developing a scheme successfully from inception through to planning approval stage and managing the works on the ground, could amount to 27% of the total project costs (This includes land negotiation and costs which is about 10% of the total).

The costs listed against potential greenway ideas in the action plan are based on either previous studies/estimates or average costs based on actual costs of other similar type greenway projects. For example, a high quality urban greenway can cost as much as £500,000/km, whilst some rural long distance routes have been delivered for as little as £50,000/km.

More accurate costings and details of route ideas will be generated as part of separate feasibility studies taken forward by the greenway developers.

## North West Greenway Development Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Lead Authority/Ownership</th>
<th>Length (km)</th>
<th>Cost estimate (£000s)</th>
<th>Delivery Phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) Foyle Valley Greenway</td>
<td>Mostly traffic free cross-border greenway linking Derry~Londonderry, Strabane and Lifford. Travels via the former Great Northern Railway Board (GNRB) line through Donegal and linking a number of smaller settlements en route (includes reinstating and reuse of Foyle Bridge at Corkan Isle into Strabane)</td>
<td>Donegal County Council, Derry City &amp; Strabane District Council</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4250-5000</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Inis Eoghain Greenway</td>
<td>A circuitous route of over 90km of mostly traffic free greenway linking Derry-Buncrana-Carndonagh via the former Londonderry &amp; Lough Swilly (L&amp;LS) railway before crossing peninsula returning to Derry south along Lough Foyle via Moville-Muff-Culmore. Additional spur possible from Moville-Greencastle via upgrade of existing shore path.</td>
<td>Donegal CC, DCSD, National Roads Authority, Transport NI</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3500-17000</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section I: Derry to Buncrana</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2000-3500</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section II: Buncrana to Carndonagh</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4000-4500</td>
<td>M-L</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section III: Carndonagh to Moville</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3000-4000</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section IV: Moville to Derry</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4000-5000</td>
<td>M-L</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional spur: Moville to Greencastle via upgrade of existing shore path</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>250-350</td>
<td>M-L</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Lough Swilly Greenway</td>
<td>A c.45km route using a combination of traffic free greenways and quiet roads/segregated verges linking Buncrana and Letterkenny along former L&amp;LS railway corridor.</td>
<td>Donegal CC, NRA</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3000-5000</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D) Strabane- Letterkenny</td>
<td>A c.31km route using a combination of traffic free greenways and quiet roads/segregated verges linking Strabane and Letterkenny via Raphoe and the former County Donegal Joint Committee (CJDJ) railway corridor.</td>
<td>Donegal CC, NFA</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2500-4500</td>
<td>M-L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(E) Letterkenny to Burtonport Greenway</td>
<td>A long distance route of mostly traffic free greenway following the alignment of the L&amp;LS Railway. Includes possible link from Carraig to Overournas</td>
<td>Donegal CC, DLDC</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>6250-12250</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section I: Burtonport to Crilly c. 21km with 7km already opened as walking route (Burtonport to Meenbanad Lake) and little needed to upgrade to shared use standard</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1000-1500</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section II: Crilly to Cashelmagh (Dunway) c.10km using traffic free alignment along section of Donegal’s only canal</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1000-1500</td>
<td>S-M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section III: Cashelmagh to Creevagh with opportunity to access Lough Agher</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1750-2250</td>
<td>M-L</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section IV: Creevagh to Kilmoreen. Possible signature project reinstating old viaducts at Creevagh</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4000-5000</td>
<td>M-L</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section V: Kilmoreen to Letterkenny. Sections near L’kenny overdeveloped/unusable but links into existing and planned local network may be possible</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>250-350</td>
<td>M-L</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F) Dungloe to Glenbeigh</td>
<td>A new greenway delivered by NRA as part of planned N59 realignment</td>
<td>NRA</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2500-3500</td>
<td>S-M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(G) Glenties to Balleybofey</td>
<td>A c.48km route following the former CJDJ railway/ RN93 corridor</td>
<td>Donegal CC, DLDC</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2500-3500</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### North West Greenway Plan

**A Vision & Action Plan For Greenway Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Lead Authority/Ownership</th>
<th>Length (km)</th>
<th>Cost estimate (£000s)</th>
<th>Delivery Phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(H) River Links</td>
<td>Donegal Local Development Company</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section II: Ballybofey to Killygordon</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>600-750</td>
<td>S-M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section III: Clady to Killygordon</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>450-600</td>
<td>M-L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section IV: Creeslough to Kilmacrenan</td>
<td>Donegal Local Development Company</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>400-5000</td>
<td>M-L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(I) Barnesmore Greenway</td>
<td>Donegal CC, DLDC, Coillte</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2000-3000</td>
<td>M-L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(J) Donegal Town to Killybegs</td>
<td>Donegal CC, NRA</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2000-3000</td>
<td>M-L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(K) Donegal Town to Ballyshannon</td>
<td>Donegal CC, NRA</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2000-3000</td>
<td>M-L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section I: Ballybofey to Enniskillen</td>
<td>Donegal CCs, Omagh and Fermanagh District Council</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5500-8500</td>
<td>M-L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M) Beleek to Enniskillen</td>
<td>Donegal CCs, Omagh and Fermanagh District Council</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5500-8500</td>
<td>M-L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section I: Beleek to Pettigo</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2000-3000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section II: Pettigo to Irvinestown</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2000-3000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section III: Irvinestown to Enniskillen</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1500-2500</td>
<td>M-L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N) Strabane to Sion Mills</td>
<td>Donegal CCs, Omagh and Fermanagh District Council</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7000-10000</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section II: Melvin Sports Complex/new foot/cycle bridge to Milmount Rd Roundabout new riverside greenway along Council/GAA grounds and golf course</td>
<td>DCSDC, THI</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section III: Milmount Rd Roundabout to Sion Mills using segregated verges along A5 and/or new greenway along former GNRB railway with possible access to former Hartman's factory site and across Mourne via existing foot bridge to NCN92</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>500-1000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(O) Strabane to Ballyshannon</td>
<td>Transport NI</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3500</td>
<td>S-M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A new pedestrian/cycle “Town Centre” bridge linking bus station and residential areas to the business centre (including local traffic free links)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P) Waterside Greenway</td>
<td>DCSDC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An extension of riverside greenway linking the Strathfoyle community to City of Derry along the River Foyle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Q) Lough Foyle Greenway</td>
<td>DCSDC, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Lough's Agency</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7000-10000</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mostly new build shoreline greenway connecting Derry-Londonderry to Coleraine and the North Coast via Lough Foyle.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>572.5</td>
<td>65000-91700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1 Potential Funding Sources

The lists of potential funding sources can be as varied as the schemes themselves. Almost every project is funded in a different way and almost all from a range of different sources. The list of potential sources identified below are not exhaustive and is intended only intended to identify a number of organisations that are currently or have previously funded greenway and walking/cycling route developments on the island.

**Northern Ireland**
- Department for Regional Development
- Department for Social Development
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development’s Rural Development Programme 2014-2020
- Tourism NI
- Lottery funding – Big Lottery Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund
- Other funders such as ENTREST under the Landfill Communities Fund and the Dept. of Environment Challenge Fund (small grants for maintenance and enhancement of existing greenways only)

**Republic of Ireland**
- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport under the National Cycle Network Programme
- National Roads Authority
- Fáilte Ireland under the Tourism Capital Investment Programme (note that this programme is currently closed to further applications)
- Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government under the Leader element of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020; and
- Local authorities’ own resources.

**Cross-Border/Multi-national**
- Special EU Programmes Body under the proposed INTERREG VA (Sustainable Transport theme) Programme
- City- ViTAlity-Sustainability (CIVITAS) Initiative

**European Union funding**

The Special European Union Programmes Body’s new INTERREG Programme for 2014-2020 is one of 60 programmes across the European Union designed to promote greater levels of cross-border co-operation and address many issues faced by border areas across Europe. Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland share a number of common features with other border areas across Europe where developmental problems are exacerbated by the existence of borders. In accordance with the need to demonstrate a higher degree of concentration within the 2014-2020 programming period, it is proposed that the new INTERREG Programme will have four key Priorities: Research & Innovation, Environment, Sustainable Transport and Health.

With a total European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) contribution of €40m, Priority 3: Sustainable Transport, will promote cross-border intermodal and sustainable mobility in the cross-border region. It will result in an increased number of passenger journeys (up to 25%) utilising cross-border public transport services by 2023. It will also increase the number of cross-border journeys made by walking/cycling (up to 10%) in the region, as well as the number of Electric Vehicle (EV) registrations, up to 2,000 by 2023.

The agreed outputs are:

1. Creation of one cross-border, multi-modal public transport hub encompassing integrated services
2. Creation of 80km of new cross-border greenways
3. Creation of a cross-border EV network including 73 new/upgraded rapid chargers

The Citizens’ Summary of the INTERREG V Programme states that the greenway outputs can be achieved through the “development of cross-border greenways and cycle networks to reduce car journeys in cross-border transportation”.

A timetable for calls for applications has been agreed with calls opening on 18 December 2015 for output 3.2 Greenways and Stage 1 applications to be received by 29 February 2016.
7.0 Recommendations

1. That the Plan and project assessment matrix framework is adopted by Donegal and Derry City and Strabane District Councils.

Elected Members should be aware of the Plan and actively promote it. Senior management and all relevant officers should be made aware of the Plan and understand how it relates to the aims and objective of their various departments.

2. That a review is undertaken by the two Councils to understand where the Plan can be used to support and strengthen existing policies and strategies.

As we have examined in previous sections, greenway development and active travel are cross-cutting initiatives that will often fit in and bring added value to other strategies and plans from tourism and local business development to health and the environment. The Plan should serve as both a reference and source of ideas for catalyst projects for other existing and planned strategies in the study area.

3. That the two Councils immediately resource initial propriety work related to the overall greenway network.

A common maxim in greenway development is that they are “long in planning – short in delivery”. Difficult and time consuming work is required prior to construction contracts being awarded and diggers on the ground. Initial land searches, facilitating community consultations and discussions with planning officers can be undertaken by Councils. Such activities are crucial to creating momentum for network development.
7.0 Recommendations

4. That local communities and groups seeking to develop greenways in the North West are made aware of the Plan and the matrix framework. The Plan should be published and circulated to community groups and others not only to inform but engage with communities and record their views, suggestions and new ideas. Officers should work with groups to complete the matrix and discuss proposals based on the information in the Plan.

5. That the plan is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The Plan is a document that should be kept “live” between the two Councils, partner organisations and community groups. Future editions of the Plan will be published as new ideas are added and sections of greenway are delivered. The list of potential funding sources should be updated regularly. In addition to recording capital development, the Plan should also be updated to present new data on usage and the benefits realised as greenway network develops.

7.0 Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the advice and help given by:

- The North West Regional Cross-Border Group
- Inga Bock, Rural Recreation Officer, Donegal Local Development Company
- Ronan Gallagher and Blaise Harvey, The Wee Greenway Initiative (Inis Eoghain)
- Rodney Irwin, National Roads Development Office
- Daragh McDonagh, GIS Project Leader, Donegal County Council
- Willie Burke, Loughs Agency
- Jonathan Henderson, Access Officer, Derry City and Strabane District Council
- David Alcorn, The Burtonport Railway Walk group
- Tony Blake, Municipal Area Manager (Letterkenny), Donegal County Council
- Seamus Hopkins, Municipal Area Manager (Buncrana), Donegal County Council
This information is available upon request in a number of formats including large print, Braille, PDF, audio formats (CD, MP3, DAISY) and minority languages.

For further information on alternative formats please contact Tel 028 71 253253 text phone: 028 7137 6646 or e-mail equality@@derrystrabane.com