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**From:** J Weavers [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday 1 February 2019 19:41  
**To:** rses  
**Cc:** Mick Dolan  
**Subject:** Submission by Kiltimagh Greenway Group on the draft Regional Spatial Economic Strategies 2019  
**Attachments:** Report to Mayo County Council Planning Department May 2017 re KM Greenway petition.pdf

To: NWRA

### **Submission by Kiltimagh Greenway Group on the draft Regional Spatial Economic Strategies 2019.**

#### **Background:**

The Kiltimagh Greenway Group is a community group based in Kiltimagh County Mayo. The group is registered with Mayo County Council as a community group. The group was formed in 2017 in response to local pressure and public demand in East Mayo to canvass Mayo county council to include a greenway alongside the closed railway in the vicinity of Kiltimagh that was planned to be used as a Velo-Rail. The idea for a velorail is sponsored by Mayo county council for six kilometres north and south of Kiltimagh on the closed railway that forms part of the so called Western Rail Corridor running from Claremorris to Charlestown in County Mayo.

The Mission statement of the group is set out on the groups Facebook group page and states:

The Kiltimagh Greenway Group's mission is the creation of a walking/cycling corridor alongside the former Claremorris to Collooney Railway line passing through Kiltimagh, Co Mayo. We are prepared to cooperate with the Velorail stakeholders in their effort to create an attraction for paying customers on a portion of the track, while safeguarding free unobstructed access for all others along the entire length of the route.

**Public Support:** The group has achieved phenomenal levels of public support in the East Mayo area. In Spring 2017 an online petition on Change.org attracted over 1000 signatures before being closed to new signatures, and a hard copy petition was signed by 166 local people. Analysis of the petition showed that 34% of the entire population of Kiltimagh signed the petitions in favour of a greenway without taking into account any weighting for minors and children.

We feel it is important that the NWRA is made aware of the support for a greenway on the route of the closed railway in East Mayo. We have therefore included a document with this submission which reported on the support for this idea expressed in public petitions in Spring 2017 which was sent to Mayo county council, the Four Mayo TDs and the Minister of Transport Shane Ross in May 2017. The attached document provides the NWRA planners with an idea of the level of public support for the groups aims and objectives.

#### **The draft RSES – what the Kiltimagh Greenway Group would like to comment on.**

The Kiltimagh Greenway Group are asking that the draft RSES take into consideration the weight of argument and support in East Mayo in particular in the towns of Kiltimagh, Kilkelly and Claremorris, that exists for a greenway on the closed railway route from Claremorris to Charlestown. In fact the RSES need to take into account the fact that Mayo county council actually supports an alternate use of the closed railway until such time as a railway is possible, the de facto case based on the Mayo County council support for a velorail on the closed railway.

Mayo county council has active plans to utilise part of the closed railway as a tourism/leisure attraction called a velo-rail which will run 6 km north and 6 km south of Kiltimagh, this project has already received €300,000 of seed

funding for the project from the Department of Rural Affairs and has been approved by the Landowner Irish Rail. The principle of using this closed railway route for leisure purposes until such time as a railway is possible, under licence from Irish Rail, has already been accepted by Mayo County Council. Kiltimagh Greenway Group would also like to make the NWRA aware that Sligo county council has a submission made to the Department of Transport in November 2018 to utilise the closed railway from Collooney to Charlestown as a greenway as part of the National Greenway Strategy.

We are concerned that objectives 115 (a) and 115 (b) do not mention other potential uses of the closed railway for leisure purposed until such time as a railway is possible. The Kiltimagh Greenway Group are asking the NWRA to redraft objective 115 (a) and 115 (b) to reflect the reality that the closed railway route from Claremorris to Charlestown could be used for multiple leisure uses until such time as a railway might be possible. The way objectives 115 (a) and 115 (b) are worded in the draft RSES only the return of railway on this route is considered; this may not happen for decades possibly never and in any event is subject to what may come out of the Western Rail Corridor Rail Review which is currently underway.

The real value of this route is that it is a piece of publicly owned land which the landowner (Irish Rail) wants to retain ownership of and which the landowner (Irish Rail) is perfectly happy to release to local authorities for use as a leisure facility be it Velo-Rail or Greenway or both in order to protect the alignment for possible rail use in the future. A greenway on this closed railway route would be a massive asset to Tourism in the West of Ireland in particular along the route of the Atlantic Economic Corridor. The draft RSES needs to reflect on this position and amend objectives 115 (a) and 115 (b) accordingly and we trust this matter will be recognised.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Weavers

On behalf of Kiltimagh Greenway Group

Link to KM Greenway Group facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1984279158467256/>

Link to Change.org KM Greenway group petition:

<https://www.change.org/p/peter-hynes-mayo-county-manager-put-a-walking-and-cycling-path-for-everyone-to-enjoy-parallel-with-kiltimagh-velorail>

Copy of report on petition attached dated May 2017.