

From: Sligo Cycling Campaign <sligocycles@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday 7 February 2019 21:08
To: rses
Subject: Observations re Greenways in RSES

I wish to make a submission re above on behalf of Sligo Cycling Campaign. Sligo Cycling Campaign very much welcomes the positive approach of Sligo Co Co to a Greenway along the alignment of the Collooney to Bellaghy section of the former Collooney to Athenry Rail Line. We are aware that the council has submitted a funding application under the Greenway Strategy and wish it every success. This proposal serves the purpose of preserving the integrity of the line for future use if conditions mandate same while also providing a recreational amenity for locals and tourists alike. We were pleased too to see the reference to the "*potential for a further walkway/cycleway connection from Collooney to Sligo , which can also serve as a Smarter Travel commuter route*" but we would suggest that the Sligo Ballysadare connection is essential even before the construction of the new Greenway. There is a lovely new route through Union Wood from Ballysadare to Collooney but neither route from Sligo to Ballysadare is safe for cycling. the N4 has a hard shoulder but very fast traffic and the old N4 has bends, so poor visibility and no hard shoulder. These days, the magic word re Greenways is "networked" and indeed there are plans all around the country and in our own region for exactly that. European tourists in particular are used to being able to cycle on long segregated routes as the Eurovelo 6 Rivers Route encompassing the Loire, Rhine and Danube or the Rhine Route from Rotterdam to Basle. Here at home too, exciting plans are in place to complete the Royal and Grand Canal routes and to link them. There are also plans to link Greenways in Wexford and Kilkenny with the Waterford Greenway.

So we would like to respectfully request that the possibility of eventually extending the Sligo - Bellaghy route along its full length to Athenry must be kept open and this means that the RSES must not pre-empt this possibility by adopting the reopening of the rail line as a strategic objective. The current rail review only covers the Athenry to Claremorris section of the line and since the result of the review is not available nothing can be assumed. A parallel funding application for a Feasibility Study on the use of the Galway section of the rail line as the Quiet Man Greenway is also currently with DTTaS and it is clearly has a lot of support in the region.

The Draft RSES has many references to place-making and states that

"Ultimately, this regions differentiation is its potential to be the single most 'liveable' place internationally". The Draft Strategy also references the risk of "*Exacerbation of rural and village decline*" if the right steps are not taken. The Waterford and Great Western Greenways have contributed greatly to the revitalisation of villages and towns on their respective routes so this should be borne in mind when weighing up the merits of Greenways as economic stimulators. The RSES identifies Tuam is one of the key towns earmarked for growth, something else to be borne in mind when considering options.

We look forward to reading the final strategy,

Yours sincerely
Joan Swift (Chairperson)
Sligo Cycling Campaign

