



**Kildare County Council
via website**

Date: 22nd June 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Celbridge Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge

1.0 INTRODUCTION

County Kildare Chamber is the business organisation in Kildare, proactively working to identify and progress developments that are facilitative of economic and sustainable growth. Representing an employer base of 400 businesses and over 38,000 employees across the county, County Kildare Chamber is the largest business organisation in the mid-east region of Ireland.

Given the significant breadth and depth of our membership, and our representation on various bodies at local and national level, County Kildare Chamber constitutes the representative voice for business in Kildare.

County Kildare Chamber is committed to improving the business environment and quality of life in Kildare and the wider region, and strongly supports the vision of growth contained within the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Mid Eastern Enterprise Plan. With this in mind, County Kildare Chamber welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Celbridge Pedestrian & Cycle Bridge consultation.

As a business organisation, County Kildare Chamber believes that long term planning and development, and specific project delivery such as this within key towns and villages creates a more diverse and resilient County.



2.0 SUBMISSION

Celbridge is a historic town, located within the Greater Dublin Region of Kildare and a population of over 20,000 (figures from Census 2016).

Over the last two decades the population of Celbridge has increased by over 20%. This increase has also seen increased development of Celbridge town, businesses and house building within the area.

This increased population and development has naturally led to greater road users, be it private vehicle use, public transport, pedestrian or cycle movement. The current road bridge is no longer fit for purpose, with two narrow traffic lanes and a very tight footpath on one side of the bridge.

An unsafe travel environment makes active travel less inviting and diminishes demand. For our Chamber traffic is a key concern, congestion carries significant costs with it, but the greatest harms are done to quality of life.

The benefits of people friendly streets that promote the utilisation of public transport in combination with active transport networks and technologies create a healthier urban environment, reduce CO2 emissions, encourages resilient local economies, and makes for a more efficient use of finite land resources –in the short-run, the reprioritisation of resources will be zero-sum.

County Kildare Chamber welcomes the decision by the NTA and Kildare County Council to review and open consultation on the new preferred option for a foot and cycle bridge to be constructed adjacent to the current road bridge.

Public safety should always be of the utmost importance for any Public office or Authority, the current bridge layout is, we believe hazardous to pedestrians, in very close proximity to narrow traffic lanes, and in the instances of cyclists no facilities at all. We believe option 3a, provides the least disruption to the town & natural surroundings whilst providing a safe and convenient choice for pedestrians and cyclists moving from east to west across the town.

In March 2020, County Kildare Chamber, Chambers Ireland and ICC Ireland announced that we had signed up to a new charter supporting the UN Sustainability Goals (SDGs). One of these goals, which we have worked to advocate for is the Sustainable Cities and Communities Goal.



County Kildare Chamber strives to lead and work with our stakeholders to develop the idea of sustainable towns and economically vibrant communities in the County.

With this in mind, we believe that cities and towns need more housing, transport and social infrastructure and while this project does elevate the safety concerns for cyclists and pedestrians and should intime promote less use of vehicular traffic within Celbridge, it does not address the short to medium term effects of large scale traffic congestion at the bridge junction.

The Chamber understands the original proposal made in 2019 included for the traffic to be prevented from entering and exiting the Hazelhatch road from this junction and the provision for essentially a one way system through the town.

Severe traffic congestion can be recorded at the bridge most weekdays during peak times, with traffic from outside of Celbridge unacquainted with the road layout adding further to confusion and time delays. The Chamber believes this plan should also have included some traffic calming measures, which would have added to increasing traffic movement at pinch points during peak hours.

3.0 CONCLUSION

County Kildare Chamber welcomes the provision for pedestrians and cyclists at this hazardous junction and cross. For many years this was the only bridge crossing for vehicles and cyclist. This development will mean a safer way for the public to travel through Celbridge and the surrounds. We believe it will also increase the numbers using active travel and transport options, as these modes of transport are now amenable.

The one area the design has failed to focus on is traffic congestion, vehicular traffic will in the short to medium term make up the majority of road users in Celbridge. This development and others promoting active forms of transport will go a long way to making towns and villages more sustainable in Kildare, but it would be remiss to omit traffic calming and alleviation measures in the hope of attracting increased pedestrian and cycle activity.



We trust that the contents of this submission will be taken into consideration by Kildare County Council, and we are available at all times for consultation, discussion and support. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries regarding this submission.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sinéad Ronan', written in a cursive style.

Sinéad Ronan
Public Affairs Manager
County Kildare Chamber
www.countykildarechamber.ie
045 894074