

Fingal Coastal Way

Options Assessment Report Executive Summary

Fingal County Council

October 2022



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1. Introduction

1.1. Scheme Context

The Fingal Coastal Way is a proposed coastal greenway extending approximately 32km along the Fingal Coast from Newbridge Demesne to the Fingal/Meath Border. The scheme is being developed in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and forms part of TII's proposed National Cycle Network (NCN) which was subject to a public consultation from the 4th of May to the 7th of June 2022. Information on the NCN is available at <https://ncn.consultation.ai>.

The scheme is a long-standing objective of Fingal County Council and this is further reflected in the current 2017-2023 Fingal Development Plan (FDP). The Development Plan outlines numerous policies and objectives to plan and develop a route that integrates a coastal pedestrian and cycle route with sensitive natural and built heritage sites whilst achieving a balance between conservation of such sites and public uses such as leisure, recreation and tourism. Further details on the relevant FDP are available in 3.1.4 of this report.

The scheme is also identified within the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan where it will form part of the overall route FG1/N5. Route FG1/N5 is set out indicatively in the plan and the emerging preferred route of the Fingal Coastal Way scheme is not restricted to this outlined indicative route. The scheme also aligns with the objectives of the "Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways", published by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in July 2018.

In September 2021, the Department of Transport appointed Transport Infrastructure Ireland as the Approving Authority for national greenway projects. As such, Fingal County Council is the Sponsoring Agency for this project whilst TII is the Approving Authority.

This report outlines the study undertaken to determine the route feasibility and option assessment process.

1.1.1. Project Benefits

The project meets all of the criteria highlighted in the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways published by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in 2018. It is regarded as strategic in nature in that it will link to other nationally important cycle routes, ultimately connecting the eastern counties of Louth, Meath, and Dublin with the well-developed greenway network in Northern Ireland. The proposed greenway will run along the Fingal coastline which boasts breath-taking scenic views of the Irish Sea. It will pass by a number of coastal towns and villages and numerous historical landmarks. The route will be designed to be segregated as far as possible and will be enjoyed by a range of different users.

1.1.1.1. Strategic

The East Coast Trail (Arklow – Drogheda) is proposed within the National Transport Authority's Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan. It is also proposed as part of TII's National Cycle Network to run from Rosslare to Northern Ireland. The Fingal Coastal Way goes a long way to delivering these objectives.

The proposed scheme will also tie into the Sutton to Sandycove cycle scheme via the approved Broadmeadow Way scheme and the Sutton-Malahide pedestrian and cycle route (at pre-planning stage), providing a high quality, continuous link to Dublin City to the south. There is unrivalled connectivity for the overall East Coast Trail route as it passes close to Dublin Airport, Dublin City including Dublin Port, the major national road network and directly adjacent to the main Dublin-Belfast rail line.

1.1.1.2. Scenic

The route will pass along a number of areas of picturesque scenery with views of the sea from Rogerstown Estuary, Howth Head, Ireland's Eye and Lambay Island. A number of quaint seaside towns which boast harbours and marinas are also directly on the route including Balbriggan, Skerries, Loughshinny and Rush.

1.1.1.3. See & Do

The multitude of activities along the route will cater for all tastes and ages, from medieval castles, prehistoric tombs, water sports, adventure sports, walking trails and cultural centres. Highlights include Newbridge House and Farm, Drumanagh Fort, Ardgillan Castle, and Skerries Mills.

1.1.1.4. Sustainable

Passing through one of the youngest, fastest growing and most densely populated areas of the state, the route will be well used all year round by residents and visitors alike. Furthermore, the accessibility of the route is second to none being positioned closest to Dublin Airport and numerous stations along the Dublin-Belfast railway line. It is also positioned to service a number of fast-growing towns in Fingal including Swords, Malahide, Rush, Lusk, Skerries and Balbriggan as well as providing an onward connection northwards to Drogheda and Dundalk.

1.1.1.5. Segregated

The route will be developed as a primarily segregated off-road facility that will be attractive for all levels of cycling and walking enthusiasts and from all ages.

1.2. Purpose of the Feasibility and Options Assessment Process

The project is being brought forward through the following stages as set out by Transport Infrastructure Ireland's (TII's) Project Management Guidelines:

- **Phase 0:** Scope and Pre-Appraisal
- **Phase 1:** Concept and Feasibility
- **Phase 2:** Options Selection
- **Phase 3:** Design and Environmental Evaluation
- **Phase 4:** Statutory Process
- **Phase 5:** Enabling and Procurement
- **Phase 6:** Construction and Implementation
- **Phase 7:** Close Out and Review

This report sits within Phase 2 of the project as outlined above and includes the route options assessment process.

The purpose behind the Feasibility Study and Options Assessment report is to outline the process involved in selecting the Emerging Preferred Route option. As part of identifying the Emerging Preferred Route, the following steps were undertaken:

- Confirm study area extents
- Identify key constraints within the study area (desktop study, site inspections, mapping of identified constraints, utility information, traffic surveys, review of flood maps)
- Develop a long list of potentially viable route options
- Undertake a high-level sifting process to identify a short list of feasible options that can potentially deliver the project objectives
- Carry out a detailed systematic assessment of the short-listed options
- Arrange public consultations at the relevant stages
- Stakeholder engagement; and,
- Further evaluate options following public consultations, taking feedback from the consultation process into account to determine an emerging preferred route corridor.

A more detailed description is provided in the following sections.

2. Identification of Need

The development of the Fingal Coastal Way meets the objectives of a large number of national and regional policies to improve sustainable travel, increase local amenities and provide social, health and economic benefits as contained within the following strategies:

- National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040
- National Development Plan 2021 – 2030
- Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways 2018
- National Sustainable Mobility Policy 2022 – 2025
- Climate Action Plan 2021
- National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland 2021
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2019
- National Cycle Network 2022
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019
- Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016 – 2035
- Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan 2013
- Tourism Development and Innovation – A Strategy for Investment 2016-2022
- Fáilte Ireland Strategy to 2023: From Survival to Recovery

The Fingal Coastal Way also meets the objectives of a wide variety of local policies and is a long-standing objective of the Fingal Development Plan. The Development Plan includes numerous policies and objectives to plan and develop a route that integrates a coastal pedestrian and cycle route with sensitive natural and built heritage sites while achieving a balance between conservation of such sites and public uses such as leisure, recreation and tourism. Other local policies fulfilled by the Fingal Coastal Way are included in the following:

- Fingal Development Plan 2017 – 2023
- Fingal Tourism Strategy 2015 – 2018
- Fingal Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 – 2020
- Fingal Climate Change Action Plan 2016 – 2020
- Rogerstown Inner Estuary Masterplan 2008
- Donabate Local Area Plan 2016
- Castlelands Masterplan 2021
- Our Balbriggan Plan 2019 – 2025

The Fingal Coastal Way will have a positive benefit when considered under each of the five main aims outlined be the national strategy for greenways by being Strategic, Scenic, Sustainable, Segregated and having lots to See and Do.

The proposed study area is one of immense scenic beauty and amenity value, rich with heritage and archaeological attractions. There is huge potential to deliver a scenic coastal greenway, designed to high quality of user safety and comfort standards, that can deliver a high-class amenity for local users including improved recreational facilities. This will benefit the economy of the adjacent local communities, contribute significantly to health and wellbeing of all users by improving physical and mental health. Further benefits to the local community will be delivered by the ability of the project to facilitate short to medium local commuter journeys, thereby encouraging modal shift to active and sustainable transport alternatives and reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality. The proposed Fingal Coastal Way will also be a very attractive tourist route which will benefit the local area through increased commerce and attracting large numbers of visitors to the area.

3. Constraints

A detailed Constraints Study was carried out, incorporating guidance set out in Transport Infrastructure Ireland's (TII) Project Management Guidelines, (2019). The study documented and mapped the nature and extent of known constraints within the defined study area for the scheme so that as much information as possible was available to inform the subsequent feasible option identification and selection process. The constraints are divided into three principal categories, namely: Natural Constraints, Artificial Constraints and External Parameters. These constraints form key considerations in the route options assessment process which is covered in the following sections.

4. Stakeholder Consultation

4.1. Public Consultations

Two public engagement periods have been undertaken for the project to date. These were:

- Opportunities and Constraints Public Engagement, November – December 2019
- Stage 1 Route Options Assessment Public Consultation, April – May 2021

These consultations included information on the study area, constraints, opportunities and initial Stage 1 Route Assessment process. Submissions were invited from the public which were taken into consideration as the project continues to develop. The Opportunities and Constraints Public Engagement received 182 submissions and responses while the Stage 1 Route Options Assessment Public Consultation received 529.

In general, the majority of the public submissions and responses to both public consultations were positive with most people looking forward to the project being delivered. However, concerns were raised about a number of particular issues such as specific routes, potential anti-social behaviour, impacts on land use and environmental impacts. These were considered as part of the development of routes at all stages including modifying and adding additional routes to reflect concerns as part of the Stage 2 assessment process.

4.2. Key Stakeholder Consultation

As part of the consultation associated with this stage of the scheme, various consultation meetings and workshops have been undertaken to discuss strategic and specific elements of the route options with key stakeholder groups as listed below:

- Fingal County Council
 - Planning & Strategic Infrastructure Department,
 - Architects Department,
 - Environment Department,
 - Operations Department
 - Economic Enterprise, Tourism and Cultural Development Department
- Irish Rail
- National Parks and Wildlife Service.

This consultation has assisted in guiding particular technical and strategic elements of the scheme. The consultation undertaken to date will continue over the duration of the project with further parties being contacted in due course.

In addition to the public consultation process described above, standalone meetings were held with some landowners within the study area as well as residents' groups in several key, specific locations. A few modifications to proposed routes along with new routes have been included in the Stage 2, detailed assessment.

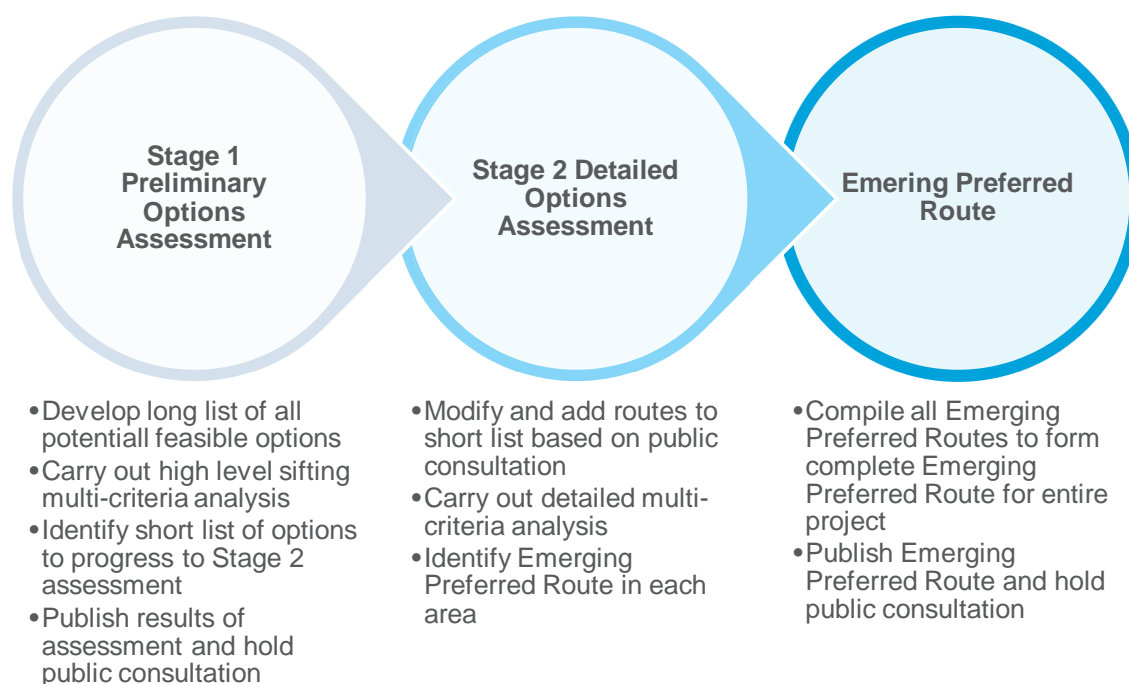
4.3. Code of Best Practice for National and Regional Greenways (2021)

The Code of Best Practice for National and Regional Greenways was published by Transport Infrastructure Ireland in December 2021 and sets out the proposed process for the development of greenways of this scale in a collaborative way, taking into account the views of landowners, local communities, other stakeholders and the needs of those who will use them. The Code of Best Practice sets out a number of public consultations to be undertaken at various stages of the project development along with recommendations for liaising directly with landowners.

Although the public consultations and associated work carried out from 2019 to 2021 for the Fingal Coastal Way predate the publishing of the Code of Practice, they have broadly taken place at the corresponding stages and in line with the recommended process as outlined in the figure below. Further consultations and liaison with landowners will be carried out in alignment with this Code of Best Practice.

5. Options Assessment Process

In order to adequately assess the many possible options for the route of the proposed greenway, a two-stage assessment process was undertaken. The assessment process is summarised below.



6. Stage 1 Preliminary Options Assessment

To arrive at the Emerging Preferred Route, a two-stage assessment process was used. The Stage 1 Preliminary Options Assessment, which was the subject of the last public consultation in May – June 2021, was undertaken on the initial route options. The main assessment criteria utilised for the Stage 1 Preliminary Options Assessment are Engineering, Environment and Economy as referenced in TII’s Project Appraisal Guidelines Unit 7.0 Multi Criteria Analysis.

Sub criteria were developed with reference to PAG Unit 7.0 and with particular attention given to the scheme Vision Statement and Project Objectives. The route was divided into 7 sub-sections, to allow for a large number of feasible routes to be examined in each, ranging from a minimum of 9 to a maximum of 17 routes. For each sub-section, all routes were mapped and compared to one another under each sub-criteria using the three-point ranking scale shown below.

Table 6-1 - Scoring Scale

Colour Coding	Rank Description
Green	Some advantages over other options
Yellow	Comparable to all other options
Orange	Some disadvantages over other options

The criteria included for assessment are outlined in the table below.

Table 6-2 - Stage 1 - Preliminary Options Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Sub Criteria	Considerations
Engineering	Usability	Gradients
		Flooding
		Safety - Real & Perceived
	User Experience	Connectivity – Heritage Sites, Amenities, Public Transport etc.
		Scenery - Landscape & Views
	Buildability	Ground Conditions
		Complex Structures
		Construction Access
		Traffic Management
		Interdependence on Adjacent Scheme(s)
Environment	Ecology and other Natural Factors	SACs, SPAs
		Vulnerable Rocks & Soils
		Vulnerable Aquifers & Wells
		Watercourses & Water Supplies
		Landscape & Views
Environment	Built Heritage and Archaeology	Recorded Monuments & Places
		Areas of Archaeological Potential
	Material Assets	Material Assets - Dwellings, Land Severance, Amenities, Utilities, Roads, Junctions, Railways etc.
Economy	Costs	Extensive Structures
		Protection of Investment
	Benefits	Impacts on Agricultural Operations
		Impacts on Businesses
		Propensity to Walk / Cycle - Population, Connectivity

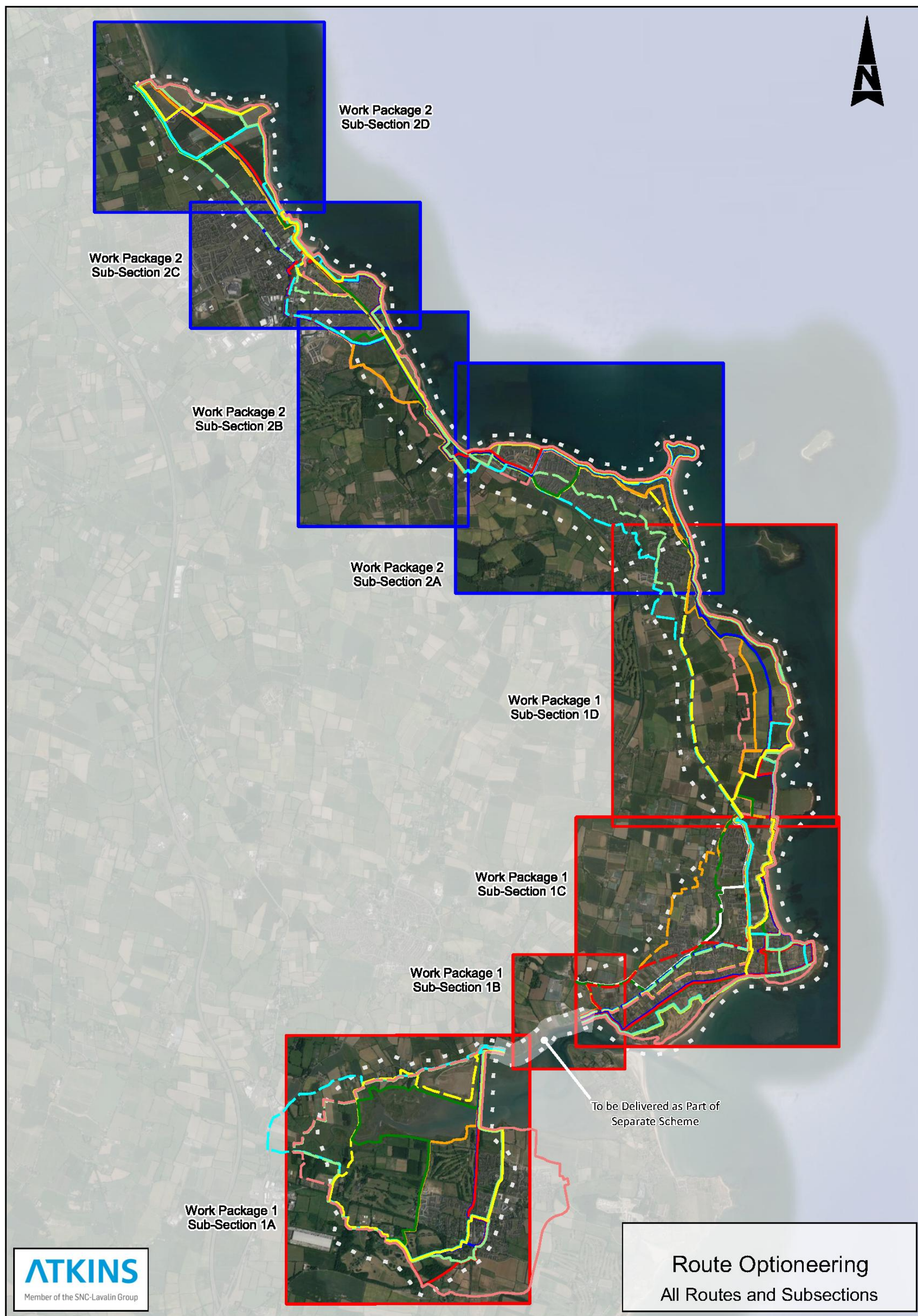
The various route options considered for Stage 1 Route Option Assessment are shown in Figure 6-1 below and the outcome of the assessment is shown in the table below which summarises which routes are preferred in each sub-section.

Table 6-3 - Stage 1 Assessment Summary

Sub-Sections		Route	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
		Work Package 1	1A	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	1B	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	1C	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	
	1D	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Work Package 2	2A	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	2B	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	2C	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	2D	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

The Stage 1 Preliminary Options Assessment reduced the number of feasible route options to, in general, three to five options. These routes were then brought forward through a more rigorous assessment at Stage 2, and the outcome of the Stage 2 assessment is the Emerging Preferred Route.

Figure 6-1 - Stage 1 Route Options Assessed



7. Stage 2 Detailed Assessment

7.1. Stage 2 Route Options

As the number of routes are significantly reduced within the Stage 2 process, a simpler approach has been taken than in Stage 1 by referencing each route relevant to the Work Package and Sub-Section with a colour. This allows for an easy identifiable correspondence between the maps and this report.

7.1.1. Modified and Additional Routes

A number of routes from Stage 1 were modified as a result of feedback received from stakeholders and from the public as part of the earlier engagement process while a number of additional routes were included in various sub-sections for similar reasons. These routes address comments received from various statutory bodies and also from landowners, residents and commercial operators.

In addition, Sub-Section 1B which covers the area between Rogerstown Park and Spout Road between Donabate and Rush was also included for assessment at this stage. This was initially not included in the proposed scheme as it was intended to be delivered by a separate scheme. However, in order to remove any risks associated with project splitting, to ensure the overall environmental impact of the scheme could be readily and clearly assessed, and to ensure that the greenway could be completed in its entirety without relying on other projects, it was included in Stage 2 with new routes developed and assessed in line with all other sub-sections.

A summary of the route changes and their relationship to the Stage 1 routes is included in the tables below.

7.1.1.1. Sub-Section 1A: Newbridge Demesne to Rogerstown

Table 7-1 - Sub-Section 1A Proposed Routes

Stage 1 Route ID	Stage 2 Route Colour	Changes from Stage 1 to Stage 2
SS.1A.2	Red	No change from Stage 1
SS.1A.3	Green	Modified to route northwards through Newbridge, Turvey Green and Beverton
SS.1A.4	Blue	No Change from Stage 1
SS.1A.9	Yellow	No Change from Stage 1
SS.1A.11	Orange	No Change from Stage 1

7.1.1.2. Sub-Section 1B: Rogerstown to Rush

Table 7-2 - Sub-Section 1B Proposed Routes

Stage 1 Route ID	Stage 2 Route Colour	Changes from Stage 1 to Stage 2
N/A	Red	New route for Stage 2
N/A	Green	New route for Stage 2
N/A	Blue	New route for Stage 2

7.1.1.3. Sub-Section 1C: Rush

Table 7-3 - Sub-Section 1C Proposed Routes

Stage 1 Route ID	Stage 2 Route Colour	Changes from Stage 1 to Stage 2
SS.1C.5	Red	Loop link to Rush Harbour removed for Stage 2
SS.1C.7	Green	Loop link to Rush Harbour removed for Stage 2
SS.1C.9	Blue	New route for Stage 2
SS.1C.11	Yellow	No Change from Stage 1
SS.1C.14	Orange	No Change from Stage 1
N/A	Pink	New route for Stage 2

7.1.1.4. Sub-Section 1D: Rush to Skerries

Table 7-4 - Sub-Section 1D Proposed Routes

Stage 1 Route ID	Stage 2 Route Colour	Changes from Stage 1 to Stage 2
SS.1D.6	Red	No Change from Stage 1
SS.1D.7	Green	No Change from Stage 1
SS.1D.8	Blue	No Change from Stage 1
N/A	Yellow	New route for Stage 2
N/A	Orange	New route for Stage 2

7.1.1.5. Sub-Section 2A: Skerries

Table 7-5 - Sub-Section 2A Proposed Routes

Stage 1 Route ID	Stage 2 Route Colour	Changes from Stage 1 to Stage 2
SS.2A.2	Red	Loop around Red Island removed for Stage 2
SS.2A.3	Green	Loop around Red Island removed for Stage 2
SS.2A.4	Blue	Loop around Red Island removed for Stage 2
SS.2A.6	Yellow	Loop around Red Island removed and railway crossing at western end removed for Stage 2

7.1.1.6. Sub-Section 2B: Skerries to Balbriggan

Table 7-6 - Sub-Section 2B Proposed Routes

Stage 1 Route ID	Stage 2 Route Colour	Changes from Stage 1 to Stage 2
SS.2B.1	Red	No change from Stage 1
SS.2B.2	Green	No change from Stage 1
SS.2B.4	Blue	No change from Stage 1

7.1.1.7. Sub-Section 2C: Balbriggan

Table 7-7 - Sub-Section 2C Proposed Routes

Stage 1 Route ID	Stage 2 Route Colour	Changes from Stage 1 to Stage 2
SS.2C.2	Red	No Change from Stage 1
SS.2C.4	Green	No Change from Stage 1
SS.2C.5	Blue	No Change from Stage 1
SS.2C.6	Yellow	No Change from Stage 1
SS.2C.7	Orange	No Change from Stage 1
SS.2C.13	Pink	No Change from Stage 1

7.1.1.8. Sub-Section 2D: Balbriggan to Meath Border

Table 7-8 - Sub-Section 2D Proposed Routes

Stage 1 Route ID	Stage 2 Route Colour	Changes from Stage 1 to Stage 2
SS.2D.3	Red	No Change from Stage 1
SS.2D.5	Green	No Change from Stage 1
SS.2D.6	Blue	No Change from Stage 1
SS.2D.8	Yellow	No Change from Stage 1

7.2. Stage 2 Assessment Criteria and Scoring

In order to identify the Emerging Preferred Route (EPR), a Stage 2 Detailed Options Assessment was undertaken on the short list of options outlined above.

The main assessment criteria utilised for the Stage 2 Detailed Options Assessment are the six Common Appraisal Framework (CAF) criteria of Safety, Accessibility and Social Inclusion, Integration, Environment, Economy and lastly physical Activity, as referenced in TII's Project Appraisal Guidelines Unit 7.0 Multi Criteria Analysis. The Stage 2 assessment process is undertaken on a detailed quantitative basis with supporting qualitative assessment where appropriate or necessary.

Sub-criteria and associated considerations have been developed by Atkins with reference to PAG Unit 7.0 and with particular attention given to the scheme Vision Statement and Project Objectives, ensuring that the criteria can appropriately measure the achievement of these objectives by each identified route option.

As such, the focus of the Stage 2 assessment process is to compare the short-listed Stage 2 routes against each other through a detailed and rigorous assessment process of wide-ranging criteria, sub criteria and associated considerations in order to identify the Emerging Preferred Route.

The criteria used to determine the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the considerations relating to the Sub-Criteria are identified in Table 7-1 below. This information is to be assessed in conjunction with insights gained through meetings, workshops and public engagement events.

Table 7-9 - Stage 2 – Detailed Route Option Assessment Criteria and Considerations

Criteria	Sub Criteria	Considerations
Safety	Road Safety	Interaction with traffic at junctions.
		Interaction with other conflicts (mid-block crossings, parking, driveways, bus stops).
	Personal Safety	Passive surveillance – usership, overlooking.

Criteria	Sub Criteria	Considerations
Accessibility and Social Inclusion	Accessibility and Comfort	Extent of segregation.
		Extent of maximum gradients.
		Potential for flooding
	Social Inclusion	Proximity and catchment to residential areas.
		Potential for route to connect to deprived geographical areas.
		Potential for route to facilitate community and recreational activity and participation.
Integration	Coherence	Connectivity with key heritage, ecological, town centre and public transport attractors.
		Potential for route discontinuity in terms of link type.
	Directness	Excessive or unnecessary detours.
	Policy and Infrastructure Compatibility	Compatibility with committed and future schemes and land uses.
		Local policy and objectives.
Environment	Ecology	Conservation Sites of International Importance (Natura 2000 sites).
		Conservation Sites of National Importance (NHAs, Nature Reserves).
		Habitats of Ecological Importance (Watercourses, Woodlands, Wetlands).
		Rare, Protected, Invasive Species.
	Soils and Geology	Bedrock and overburden. Alluvium Soils
		Karst features.
		Landside susceptibility.
		Contaminated lands.
		Ground Investigation.
		Geological Heritage Areas.
		Quarries.
	Hydrology and Hydrogeology	Groundwater Quality (Public and Private Wells, GWDTes).
		Groundwater Resources / Levels (Vulnerable Aquifers).
		Surface Water Quality and Flows.
	Cultural Heritage	Tangible (Archaeological & Architectural) Heritage Assets.
	Material Assets	Utilities.
		Properties.
		Road network operation.
		Public transport and infrastructure impacted (rail, bus – existing and future).
	Agronomy	Land cover.
		Farm Types, Livestock and Operations.
		Agribusinesses.

Criteria	Sub Criteria	Considerations
Environment	Noise, Vibration and Air Quality	Human health.
	Landscape and Visual	Landscape Character and Topography.
		Natural Features and Vegetation.
		Views and Obstructions.
	Population and Human Health	Land Use.
		Demographics and Local Population.
		Socio-economic Profile and Employment.
Tourism, Amenities and Recreation.		
Economy	Whole Life Costs (Elemental)	Land acquisition.
		Construction.
	Benefits	Tourism benefits.
	Attractiveness	Ability of route to facilitate place function enhancements.
		Scenery and views.
		Proximity to high traffic volumes and speeds.

7.2.1. Scoring Procedure

Route options were assessed against the above criteria in a performance matrix which describes how each route performs against the defined sub criteria in comparison with other routes.

Each route was comparatively ranked on a five-point colour coded scale as shown in the table below. The preferred route in each sub section was then determined based on which option is most advantageous compared to others which is reflected in the colour coding as generally having the highest number of green colours and the lowest number of orange colours.

Table 7-10 - Stage 2 – Detailed Assessment Scoring Scale

Colour Coding	Rank Description
	Significant advantages to other options
	Some advantages to other options
	Comparable to all other options
	Some disadvantages to other options
	Significant disadvantages to other options

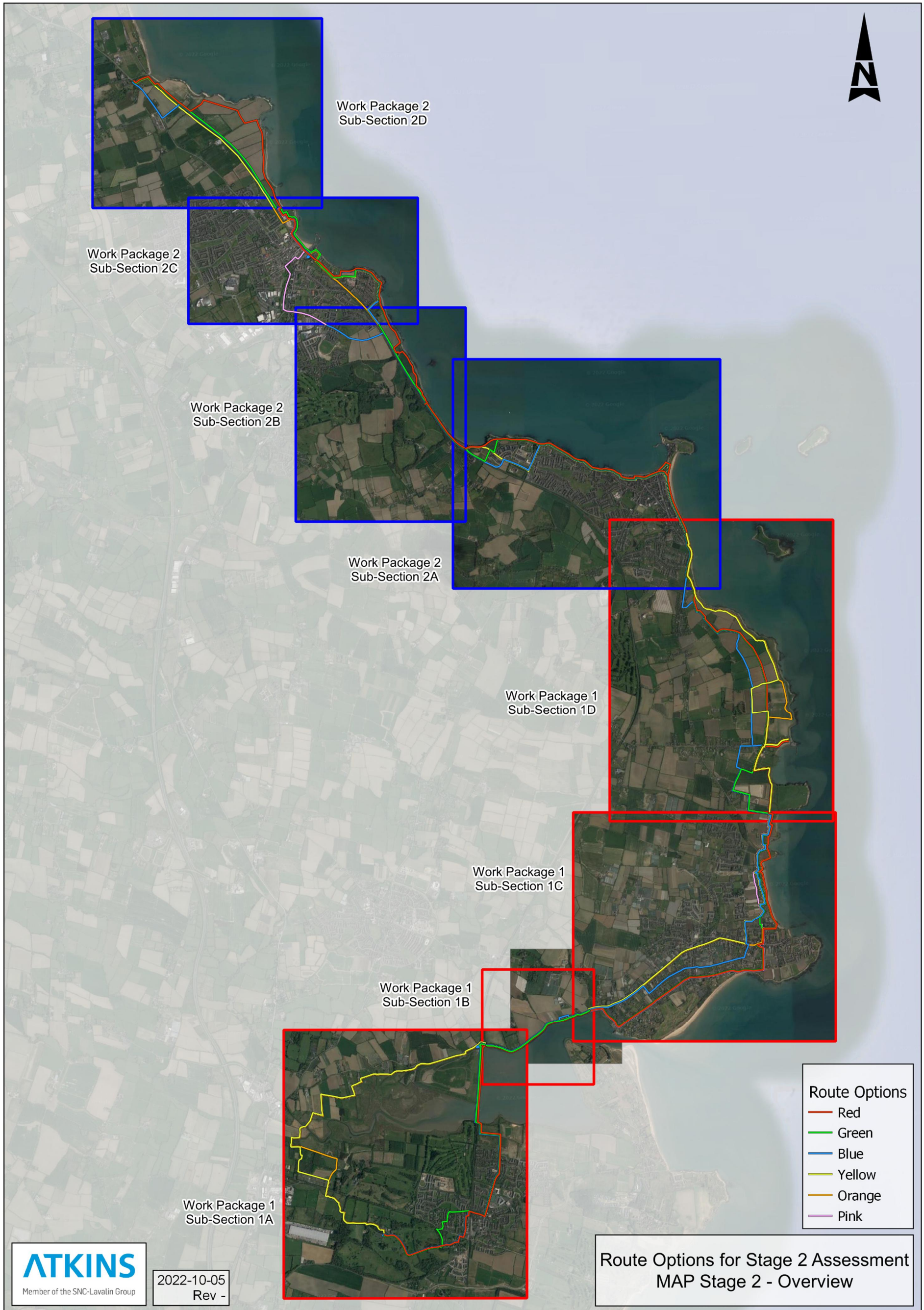
7.3. Stage 2 Route Assessment Outcome

The routes which were assessed are shown in Figure 7-1 while the outcome of the Stage 2 Assessment for each sub-section is summarised in the table below.

Table 7-11 - Stage 2 Assessment Outcome

Sub-Section	Emerging Preferred Route
1A	Green
1B	Blue
1C	Pink
1D	Orange
2A	Red
2B	Green
2C	Yellow
2D	Green

Figure 7-1 - Stage 2 Routes Assessed



8. Emerging Preferred Route

Following the Stage 2 assessment, an Emerging Preferred Route was identified. A map of the Emerging Preferred Route is presented below in Figure 8-1 below.

8.1. Key Benefits of Emerging Preferred Route

8.1.1. Sub-Section 1A: Newbridge Demesne to Rogerstown - Green Route

There are particular key benefits to the Emerging Preferred Route in this section including its attractiveness, directness and future linkages to Donabate Town Centre, Donabate Train Station and major population areas.

This ensures that the route will give the maximum benefit to the local area with tourists, commuters and local recreational users likely to avail of the facility.

While this route will have some environmental impacts, these are balanced by the significant benefits to the local community and economy. Travelling adjacent to the west of the existing railway line and using the existing Rogerstown Park pathways reduces the environmental impacts when compared to other routes that travel in a similar direction.

8.1.2. Sub-Section 1B: Rogerstown to Rush – Blue Route

The Emerging Preferred Route in this section has several advantages and benefits. In particular, it is removed from the SAC/SPA at Rogerstown Estuary which minimises flooding risks and the impact of the proposed greenway on the sensitive ecological habitats at the estuary. The route remains directly adjacent to the coastline and will be an attractive link locally to Rogerstown Park as well as providing views around the estuary.

8.1.3. Sub-Section 1C: Rush - Pink Route

The Emerging Preferred Route in this section will minimise impacts on the Main Street of Rush while maximising access to both the North and South Beaches and the scenery associated with them.

While some landtake and impacts on local roads will be necessary, it is the most attractive route for local users and tourists as it avoids busy roads while showcasing the scenery in the area and still providing good links to the town centre and maximising the amount of the greenway segregated from vehicles.

This will ensure that the economic and social benefits in the town are maximised. While access will be possible to both beaches, not routing directly along them minimises any environmental impacts and reduces the overall construction and maintenance costs.

8.1.4. Sub-Section 1D: Rush to Skerries - Orange Route

The Emerging Preferred Route in this section is beneficial in several key considerations, particularly in terms of its benefits for tourism and scenery.

In general, the scenery provided along it near the clifftops in Loughshinny and along the coastline in general is significantly better than other routes further inland while also providing the best access to the important cultural heritage site at Drumanagh while minimising any impacts on that site.

This route also allows for the improvement of the local environment through rewilding of buffer lands at the coast and minimises the need for farm operators to cross and interact with the greenway.

As this route remains coastal almost throughout with excellent scenery and links to cultural heritage, it is likely to be attractive to both tourists and local users.

8.1.5. Sub-Section 2A: Skerries - Red Route

The Emerging Preferred Route in this section provides exposure to the coastline and the associated views along most of its length. The route ensures that pedestrians and cyclists are directed off busy roads and junctions while still providing access to the town centre. This is likely to be an attractive facility for tourists and local users.

The implementation of a one-way traffic system on the R127 will reduce traffic on this road, making it more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists, while changes to the traffic management measures in the Quay Street/The Hoar Rock area will reduce through traffic and speeds in that area and improving safety.

8.1.6. Sub-Section 2B: Skerries to Balbriggan - Green Route

The Emerging Preferred Route in this section generally follows the R127 on the coastal side of the boundary. This ensures that there is excellent access to scenery and views along the coastline for its entire length, while also providing separation from the R127. This option minimises the required landtake while still providing the benefits of being fully segregated from traffic. There is an impact on existing traffic flows by using a new one-way system here, but the traffic impacts are not considered unduly adverse given the proposed diversion routes.

New or upgraded linkage at the Lady's Stairs bridge is proposed to provide direct access to Ardgillan from the greenway, improving links for pedestrians and cyclists to an important local amenity.

8.1.7. Sub-Section 2C: Balbriggan - Yellow Route

The Emerging Preferred Route in this section has some clear benefits including that it links well with the harbour area and Bremore Park and will tie in well with the overall future plans for Balbriggan. In general, the route minimises impacts on the environment, avoids high speed/volume roads, avoids impacts to residential properties while still providing excellent coastal views and linkages to the town centre.

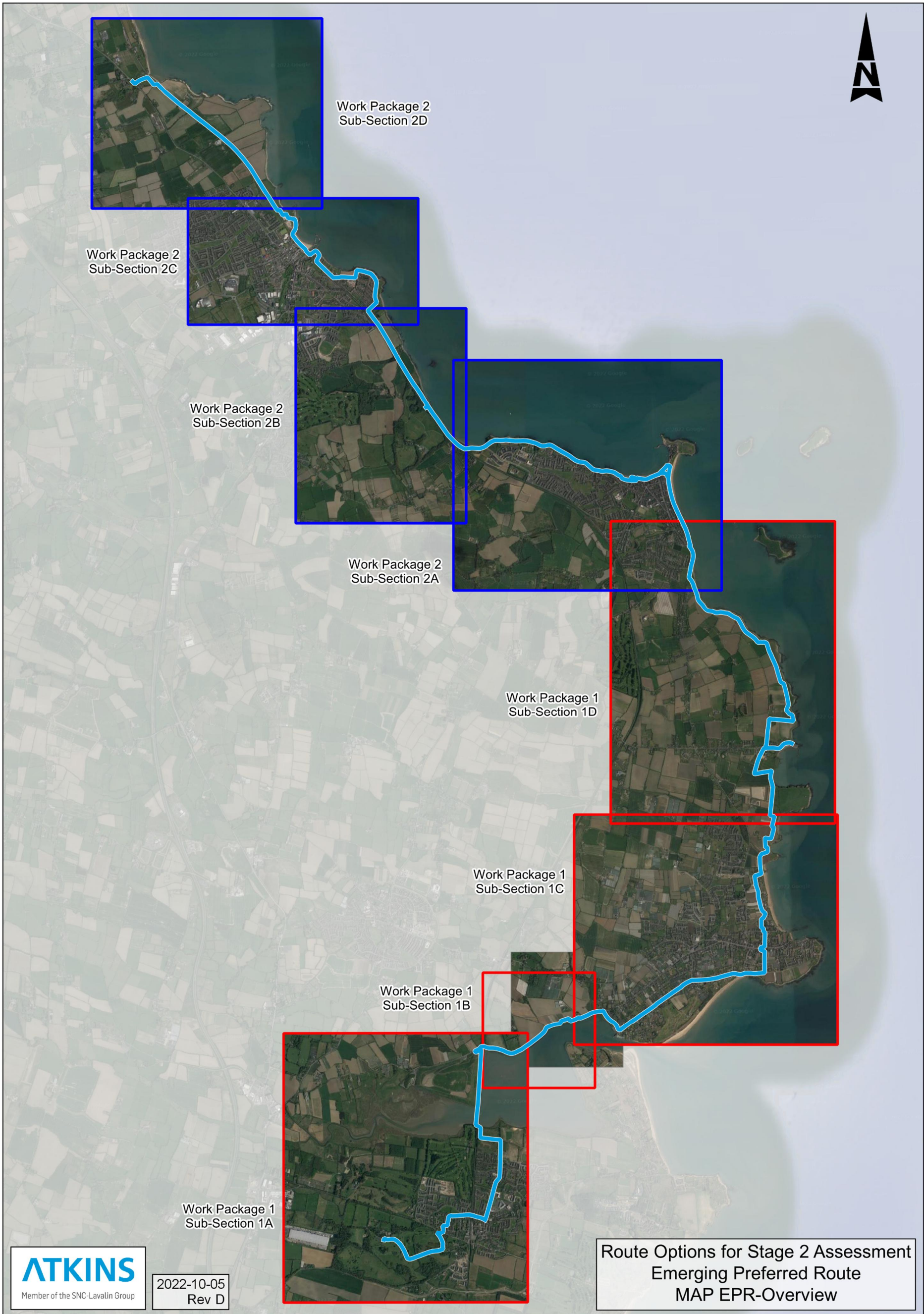
As such it is sensitive to the surrounding environment whilst also providing an excellent tourism product that can boost economic activity and therefore substantially meets, more than all other route options, the scheme vision and objectives.

8.1.8. Sub-Section 2D: Balbriggan to Meath Border - Green Route

This route has a number of benefits as it is almost fully segregated from vehicular traffic with good scenery and views and direct route continuity. The location of the route adjacent to the eastern side of the railway ensures that coastal views remain available, however, impacts on ecological sites of importance are minimised.

While this route will have some impact on farms, the land take is reduced by running adjacent to linear boundary features when compared with other routes.

Figure 8-1 - Emerging Preferred Route



9. Project Appraisal

Following the identification of the Emerging Preferred Route and the associated public consultation, further stakeholder consultation will take place during the next stage of the project, and this will lead to the identification of the Preferred Route. This will be designed and then will be subject to a Project Appraisal process. The purpose of the appraisal will be to ascertain the merits of the scheme to ensure that it represents sound investment and thus warrants the allocation of public funds. It is anticipated that the completed scheme will fall into the €20 - €100 million cost band as identified by TII in their Project Appraisal Guidelines.

The Project Appraisal process will be used throughout the various project phases to inform the following:

- Support the decision-making process
- Assess the ‘worth’ of the project
- Identify if the project will yield benefits and to whom
- Understand if the project is meeting the set objectives.

The Fingal Coastal Way is a major project and will be appraised as such. However, the level of appraisal should be proportionate to the scale and complexity of a greenway. The main output of the Project Appraisal process will be the Preliminary Business Case. This is essentially a condensed Business Case Report, appropriate for the subject scheme and will present and report on the Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) and Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA).

9.1. Appraisal Methodology

9.1.1. Qualitative Appraisal

The appraisal will be carried out in accordance with TII’s Appraisal of Active Modes (PE-PAG-02036). It will include a qualitative appraisal of the Emerging Preferred Route against the objectives previously identified with a score attributed to each criterion ranging from Major Negative to Major Positive impacts as outlined below. This assessment differs from the multi-criteria analysis carried in the Stage 1 and Stage 2 assessments as it is not comparing options to one another but instead assesses the impacts of the Emerging Preferred Route on the existing area.

Table 9-1 - Qualitative Appraisal Scoring

Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Impact	Major Negative	Moderate Negative	Minor Negative	Neutral	Minor Positive	Moderate Positive	Major Positive

9.1.2. Demand Forecasting

Demand forecasting for user number on the greenway will be developed using a variety of sources including:

- Census data (population and commuting data)
- User numbers on existing greenways from counter data (e.g. Baldoyle to Portmarnock Greenway)
- User intercept surveys (e.g. for the Waterford Greenway)
- Fáilte Ireland data and predictions

9.1.3. Cost/Benefit Analysis

A Cost/Benefit Analysis will be carried out using TII’s TEAM tool which has been specifically designed to assess active travel schemes and greenways. This takes account of a number of economic benefits of these types of schemes including:

- Mode Shift
 - Vehicle Operating & Ownership Costs
 - Carbon
 - Air Quality
 - Noise
 - Congestion
- Health
 - Reduced Mortality
 - Workplace Absenteeism
- Journey Time
- Journey Quality
- Recreation

Tourism benefits will also be included in the assessment based on data of projected visitors to the scheme.

The benefits accrued from all of the above will then be compared to the projected costs including capital and maintenance costs which will be calculated based on similar schemes and costs of materials. A Benefit/Cost Ratio (BCR) will be the ultimate outcome of this assessment, where a BCR greater than one indicates that the benefits outweigh the costs.

9.2. Summary

The appraisal process considers both the qualitative impacts, both positive and negative, associated with a project along with the Benefit to Cost Ratio. This will determine whether the scheme is desirable for investment based on the wider benefits and impacts on society rather than just financial matters.