

**PRESS RELEASE 7th November 2023**

**Sod turned on Phase 1 of Newtown Road Cycle Scheme**

A sod turning ceremony to mark the commencement of construction of Phase One of the Newtown Road Cycle Scheme was held today Tues 7th November – the first stage of the Wexford Pathfinder project. This phase of the cycle scheme will see works to Newtown Road to improve safety for cyclists and walkers by developing protected cycle tracks and upgrading footpaths. The measures will also aim to reduce traffic speeds at this location to further enhance the environment designed to encourage people, where possible, to leave the car behind for short local journeys and actively travel.

The Wexford Pathfinder project, to be delivered in three stages, is an exemplar under the Department of Transport’s Pathfinder Programme. The Programme forms a key part of the implementation of the National Sustainable Mobility Policy which sets out a plan to 2030 to transform how we travel, making sustainable journeys more attractive and feasible for all. Launched on 17 October 2022, the Programme consists of 35 exemplar transport projects to be delivered by local authorities, and other bodies, around the country, focused on enabling the shift to cleaner transport choices and reducing carbon emissions in the transport sector. The Wexford project is one of the 35.

Speaking at the ceremony Mayor of Wexford Borough District, Councillor John Hegarty stated “I welcome the commencement of construction on this scheme which will enhance safety for those choosing to walk and cycle for their local journeys. It is only the start of a number of projects for Wexford town designed to improve our infrastructure to encourage more active travel and contribute towards reducing our carbon emissions”.

Speaking of the Project, Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan said “I am delighted that construction has now commenced on Newtown Road Cycle Scheme, the first step of the Wexford Pathfinder project. I was in Wexford a few months ago, and I spoke to the Councillors and local groups about the difference this project can make to people who want to come in and out of Wexford Town without the headache of congestion. This new Wexford Pathfinder project will demonstrate how this can be achieved, providing new, safe and high-quality active travel routes into the town which will offer a genuine and appealing alternative to the private car. It’s better for people’s safety and health, it will mean cleaner air in the town itself, and it will save people time that they might otherwise be wasting sitting in traffic.

A group of people wearing reflective vests and helmets

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L to R: Tom Byrne, WCC Active Travel Team; Aoife Fleming, Department of Transport; Eamonn Hore, Director of Service WCC; Vincent Gallagher, WCC Active Travel Team; Tom Enright, Chief Executive WCC; Alan O Shea, WCC Active Travel Team; Cllr. John Hegarty, Mayor of Wexford; Hugh Mc Carthy, National Transport Authority; Cllr. Maura Bell; Cllr. Garry Laffan; Claire Goodwin, WCC Walking and Cycling Officer. (Image credit: Rocket Science Media)

The works will involve 1.3km of new protected cycle track either side of the road and new or upgraded footpaths along certain sections with some road resurfacing. Phase one of the project will cost €3m to construct and construction will commence immediately. Funding has been allocated by the National Transport Authority. Alan O’ Shea, Senior Executive Engineer with Wexford County Council’s Active Travel Team outlined how Phase one of the Newtown Road scheme will be followed immediately by phases two and three which will see the works extend as far as Wygram close to the town centre. He outlined how the scheme will also ensure connectivity to the future Beechlawns/Clonard cycle scheme, also part of the Wexford ‘Pathfinder’, with works proposed to improve cycling and walking infrastructure to enhance connectivity to residential areas, schools and places of work across town. In addition, plans are being currently finalised for the third section of the Pathfinder project at Roxborough with proposals for an upgrade of cycling and walking infrastructure from Drinagh to The Faythe being developed.

Construction on the Newtown Road scheme will commence immediately and is expected to take nine months to complete.

ENDS

Notes for the editor

This year, Government is investing €1.9 billion in green, cleaner travel options to support the shift to sustainable transport.

Every day of the year, €1million is being spent on walking and cycling infrastructure, to create safe routes and sustainable connections.

For more information, visit [www.gov.ie/YourJourneyCountsCampaign](http://www.gov.ie/YourJourneyCountsCampaign)

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