

Ballymakeera / Ballyvourney (Baile Mhic Ire / Baile Bhúirne) Flood Defence Scheme



The Lee CFRAM study highlighted Baile Mhic Ire as an area where a flood relief scheme was justifiable based on social, environmental and costs benefits analyses. A review of the Lee CFRAM study concluded that a standalone study focusing on the Baile Mhic Ire area was required.

The causes of flooding in the town are from the river itself, surface water flooding along the main street including backing up of surface water mains, overland flow and localized flooding from a number of minor tributaries entering the Sullane River through the town from the north.

Historically the flood areas include; upstream of Baile Bhuirne Bridge, through the middle of the town at the garage yard, upstream of Baile Mhic Ire Bridge and just west of the Post Office where surface water is backed up from the river.

The Baile Mhic Ire, Baile Bhuirne Engineering report completed in September 2013 included a range of flood relief options for the Baile Mhic Ire, Baile Bhuirne study area and justified a preferred flood relief scheme option. The option includes a combination of embankments, walls, channel straightening, bridge underpinning and localised dredging.

The stretch of the Sullane River within the study area has a history of Fresh Water Pearl Mussels (FWPM), due to this and the preferred options need for in channel works, a stage two FWPM survey was required – this survey was complete in June 2014.

The survey found FWPM along all the reaches, which the preferred option required in-channel works. On the environmental consultant's advice, for the preferred option to be environmentally viable, a solution to avoid damage to the FWPM was required to be illustrated. A proposed solution was to translocate the effected FWPM during the construction of the preferred scheme option then re-introduce them post the scheme works.

To attain an evaluation on such a solution, the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) as the responsible authority were contacted and a proposal prepared and forwarded to them for evaluation.

NPWS provided a positive response to the proposal and as a result, the OPW are in a position to proceed. The stage two public consultation day will take place and in tandem, an environmental impact statement will be prepared followed closely by the schemes exhibition.

The Ballymakeera / Ballyvourney (Baile Mhic Ire / Baile Bhúirne) scheme is currently at option design stage. Tenders have been invited for a ground investigation contract and the works associated with this contract are expected to take approximately two months.

The results of this will determine the final options for the scheme, with a public information day to follow offering an opportunity for local representatives and stakeholders to raise issues and discuss their concerns. Details of this public information day will be made available as soon as possible on conclusion of the investigative works.