

Doubt hanging over plans for cycle greenway

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LANDOWNERS WANT MORE MONEY

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LANDOWNERS want a higher offer for the strips of ground needed for the proposed Glenbeigh to Cahersiveen cycling 'greenway' and if they don't get it the whole project could be in doubt, Kerry County Council heard on Monday.

The authority heard that once established the greenway would attract thousands of walkers and cyclists each year keen to travel the 26kms of disused Great Southern Railway line in an economic boost equivalent to a new factory for the county.

Independent County Councillor Mike Cahill described the envisaged route as a 'world-class' attraction thanks to the iconic views it would offer walkers and cyclists.

But landowners now in negotiation with Kerry County Council are unhappy with the €15,000 an acre being offered for land and the potential effect on their daily business.

This price, based on agricultural land values, would result in most getting a 'pittance' as many are being asked to sell narrow strips of land, said Cllr

Cahill who is mediating in the process. He asked that the council would instead pay €25,000 per acre.

"Many people have only a short strip of land on it so it's a pittance they would be getting...there are places where the land is going through back gardens and I know families who have reclaimed land in recent years, making one field out of two which the track will now split," he said.

"I believe it is in the interests of the council to bring all landowners on side and I would urge you to go back and revisit the payments," Cllr Cahill appealed to county management.

Colleague Johnny Healy-Rae said he didn't think it was 'fair to leave a landowner out of pocket'. "If you don't do something now to up the ante you will be left with nothing," he warned council bosses.

Minister Alan Kelly said the greenway would bring visitors from all over the world to south Kerry when he announced the €3.4 million project last April. It is envisaged the plan would create up to 80 jobs in construction and sustainable positions into the future.