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2023

EIA Screening Report - Greenogue Rural Bus Stops Scheme

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report
Greenogue Rural Bus Stops Scheme – Ashbourne, Co. Meath

Document Control Sheet

Client:	Meath County Council
Document No:	231399-ORS-XX-XX-RP-EN-13d-001

Revision	Status	Author:	Reviewed by:	Approved By:	Issue Date
P01	S2	NK	LM	JB	29/09/2023
P02	S2	NK	LM	JB	04/12/2023

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) preliminary examination exercise has been prepared in support of a proposal for the construction of two new offline bus stops and associated pedestrian infrastructure in Greenogue, Ashbourne, Co Meath. The purpose of this exercise is to determine if an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is required for the consideration of the proposed development.

EIA requirements are derived from legislation set by the European Union in the form of EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU. Most pertinent to the screening stage of the EIA process, are **Annexes I and II** of the EU Directive which comprise a list of project categories with the potential to have significant effects on the environment. Annexes I and II are transposed into Irish Legislation and contained within the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2023, in **Schedule 5, Parts 1 and 2** and additionally in Section 50 of the Roads Act, 1993 to 2007 (as amended) and Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994 outline the legislative requirements that determine whether an EIA is mandatory for a proposed road development.

This EIA Screening exercise first provides a description of the proposed development under the criteria defined in **Schedule 7A** of the *Planning and Development Regulation 2001-2023*, further described in section 3.

The project description for the proposed development is as follows:

“The proposed scheme includes for the construction of two new offline bus stops, on either side of the R125 Regional Road at Greenogue southeast of Ashbourne, associated interconnecting footpath infrastructure, including an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing, and associated public light, drainage, boundary treatments, and surfacing works.”

An initial screening appraisal was then carried out for this activity against the relevant categories in **Schedule 5, Parts 1 and 2** of the regulations, further described in section 4.

In the event where an EIA screening threshold is exceeded, the screening process is continued, and characteristics of the proposed development are considered in further detail against the relevant criteria defined by **Schedule 7** of the regulations, summarised as follows:

1. Characteristics of proposed development – size, cumulative effects, natural resources etc.
2. Location of proposed development – environmental sensitivity of the areas likely to be affected by the development.
3. Types and characteristics of potential impacts – likely significant effects on the environment.

2 EIA Screening Methodology

2.1 Legislative Requirement for EIA

Screening is the initial stage in the EIA process and determines whether or not the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, as such, require EIA to be carried out prior to a decision for a development consent application being made.

EIA requirements are derived from legislation set by the European Union in the form of EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU, collectively titled: 'on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment'. These directives set out the principles for the environmental impact assessment of projects by introducing minimum requirements regarding:

- The type of projects subject to assessment
- The main obligations of developers
- The content of the assessment
- The participation of competent authorities

Most pertinent to the screening stage of the EIA process, are Annexes I and II of the EU Directive which comprise a list of project categories with the potential to have significant effects on the environment. Annexes I and II are transposed into Irish Legislation by the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2023, in Schedule 5, Parts 1 and 2, with national thresholds added to many of the Part 2 classes of development.

In addition to the above regulations, Section 50 of the Roads Act, 1993 to 2007 (as amended) and Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994 outline legislative requirements that determine whether an EIA is mandatory for a proposed road development.

2.2 Project Categorisation

Once the proposed development is described and the principal activities are defined, the first step in the screening process can be undertaken. This preliminary examination involves assessing whether the development falls within a category listed in either **Parts 1** or **2** of schedule 5 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2023*, or if the development falls within a category listed in Section 50 of the Roads Act, 1993 (as amended) and Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994.

2.2.1 Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2023

Categories listed in **Part 1** and **Part 2** of schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2023 are described as:

- **Part 1 Activities** – consists of activities which have significant effects on the environment. Proposed developments which exceed the relevant thresholds in Part 1 are subject to a mandatory EIA. Part 1 sub-threshold developments require screening in cases where the same class of development is not listed in Part 2 with a lower mandatory threshold.
- **Part 2 Activities** – do not necessarily have significant effects on the environment in every

case; Proposed developments which exceed the relevant thresholds in Part 2, as defined by the Irish State are subject to a mandatory EIA. For all sub-threshold developments listed in Schedule 5, Part 2, where no EIAR is submitted or EIA determination requested, a screening determination is required to be undertaken by the competent authority unless, on preliminary examination it can be concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.

Corresponding developments automatically require EIA if no threshold is given or if they exceed a given threshold. Developments which correspond to **Part 2** project types but are below the given threshold must be subject to a screening exercise to determine whether they require EIA or not.

2.2.2 Section 50 of the Roads Act, 1993 (as amended) and Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994.

As mentioned in **Section 2.2**, an additional step in the screening process is to determine if the road development is subject to screening determination under Section 50 of the Roads Act, 1993 (as amended) and Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994, the categories that trigger a mandatory EIA are described as:

Section 50 (1) (a) of the Roads Act, 1993 as substituted by Section. 9(1)(d)(i) of the Roads Act, 1993 (as amended)

A road authority or the Authority shall prepare a statement of the likely effects on the environment ('environmental impact statement') of any proposed road development it proposes consisting of:

- (i) the construction of a motorway,*
- (ii) the construction of a busway,*
- (iii) the construction of a service area, or*
- (iv) any prescribed type of proposed road development consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road.”,*

Article 8 of S.I. No. 119/1994 Roads Regulations ,1994 (The prescribed types of proposed road development for the purpose of subsection (1)(a)(iv) of Section 50 of the Roads Act,1993 to 2007 (as amended)).

(a) The construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500 metres or more in length in an urban area

(b) The construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100 metres or more in length

Corresponding developments automatically require EIA if no threshold is given or if they exceed a given threshold under Section 50 of the Roads Act, 1993 to 2007 (as amended) and Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994.

2.3 Project Screening Determination

In cases where a project is deemed eligible for a mandatory EIA, a sub-threshold EIA or an exemption, the EIA preliminary examination process is concluded, and suitable recommendations are made in order to progress the project further.

In the event where a given project is deemed to be **below** the relevant **Part 2** threshold of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) or below the thresholds detailed in **Section 50** of the Roads Act, 1993 (as amended) and **Article 8** of the Roads Regulations, 1994, further screening is required, and characteristics of the proposed development are considered in further detail against the relevant criteria outlined in Schedule 7 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2023*.

This exercise is carried out for the project in **section 4**.

2.4 Determination of the EIA Requirement for Sub-Threshold Projects

Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulation 2001-2023 outlines specific information to be provided by the applicant pertaining to the project to be provided by the applicant for the purposes of screening sub-threshold projects to the competent authority's satisfaction. This includes:

1. Characteristics of the project

- a. size and design of the whole of the proposed development
- b. cumulation with other existing development and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development
- c. nature of any associated demolition works
- d. use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity
- e. production of waste
- f. pollution and nuisances
- g. the risk of major accidents, and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change
- h. the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution)

2. Location of proposed project

- a. the existing and approved land use,
- b. relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,
- c. absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:

(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths

(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment

(iii) mountain and forest areas

(iv) nature reserves and parks

(v) areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated

pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive

(vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;

(vii) densely populated areas;

(viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

3. Characteristics of potential impacts

- a. magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
- b. nature of the impact,
- c. transboundary nature of the impact,
- d. intensity and complexity of the impact,
- e. probability of the impact,
- f. expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact,
- g. cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment
- h. possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

These criteria are assessed for the proposed development in **section 5**.

2.5 Information to be provided for the purpose of Sub-Threshold Projects

In the event that the requirement for a full screening exercise is triggered, Schedule 7A of the *Planning and Development Regulation 2001-2018* outlines specific information to be provided by the applicant pertaining to the project to be provided by the applicant for the purposes of screening sub-threshold projects to the competent authority's satisfaction. This includes:

- 1. Description of the proposed development** (Outlined in **Section 3**)
 - a. description of the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development and, where relevant, of demolition works.
 - b. description of the location of the proposed development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.
- 2. Description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development** (Criteria incorporated into **Tables 5.1 - 5.3**)
- 3. Description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the proposed development on the environment resulting from:**
 - a. expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant.
 - b. use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity. (Criteria incorporated into **Tables 5.1 - 5.3**)

3 Description of the Proposed Development

3.1 Site Description

The works are located on a stretch of the R125 (Swords-Ashbourne Road) southeast of Ashbourne town. Works will take place along the existing road corridor and some additional lands either side of the existing road will be required. The road width will be unchanged and a wider footpath of 2m is being proposed.

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 notes Ashbourne town is the second largest town in Meath and is an important link to Dublin because of its connections to the airport and city centre. It is an important centre for retail, services and employment providing jobs and services to a wide catchment population in the south of the County. The proposed development sits within a cluster of one-off residential dwellings as well as agricultural land. The Broadmeadow River is located ca. 110m North of the site. The southern boundary of the site is bordered by agricultural land, beyond which lies open ground consisting mainly more agricultural land and Broadmeadow Equestrian Centre.

The site layout is detailed in drawing **DG9022** and is attached in **Appendix A**.

A map of the proposed development is seen in **figure 3.1** below.

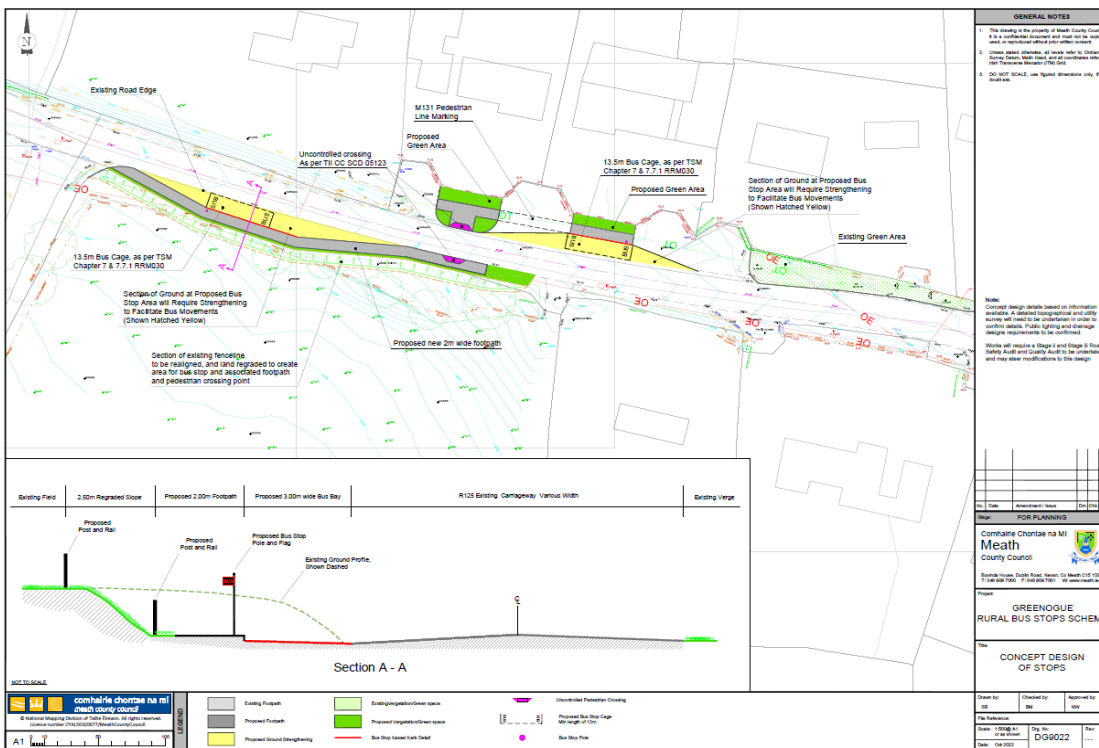


Figure 3.1: Site Outline of the proposed development, located on the R125 Greenogue, Co. Meath

3.2 Planning Description

“The proposed scheme includes for the construction of two new offline bus stops, on either side of the R125 Regional Road at Greenogue southeast of Ashbourne, associated interconnecting footpath infrastructure, including an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing, and associated public light, drainage, boundary treatments, and surfacing works.

The proposed development shall include the following elements;

(1) Construction of new kerb lines and footpath,

(2) Provision of 2 no. recessed bus stops,

(3) Provision of 1 no. uncontrolled pedestrian crossing point, Ducting and pole installation for public lighting along the scheme,

(4) Some localised re-profiling of existing road cross falls/ cambers,

(5) Earthworks excavations of portions of existing verges and embankments adjacent to the existing roadway

(6) All associated civil works with the above i.e. ducting, drainage, concreting, macadam, surfacing works, signage and road marking works, potential minor services alterations, etc.

(7) Adjustment to existing boundaries, and associated landscaping”

3.3 Environmental Setting

3.3.1 Population

The site is located within the Donaghmore electoral division. Greenogue is a settled rural area 5.840km² in size, with a total population of 291 people in 2016 and a population density of 49.83 per km².

3.3.2 Hydrology and Topography

The proposed site is located within the Nanny-Delvin Hydrometric Area (08) and Catchment (08), and the Broadmeadow Sub-Catchment (010) and Sub-Basin (020). The principle hydrological feature within the vicinity of the site is the Broadmeadow River, located approximately 110m North of the proposed bus stop development. The Broadmeadow River flows in an easterly direction and flows into the Irish Sea at the Broadmeadow Estuary ca. 12km downstream from the site.

The Water Framework Directive aims to achieve good status for all rivers, lakes and transitional and coastal waters in the EU. Achieving good ecological status for surface waters is critical to this. According to the EPA maps, the Broadmeadow River has a ‘Poor’ WFD status and is ‘At Risk’ in accordance with the Water Framework Directive. This indicates the rivers ecological status and chemical status are poor.

EPA Maps were consulted to determine if any WFD River Network Routes designated as Designated Salmonid Waters under S.I. No. 293/1988 - European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations 1988 existed in the surrounding areas of the site. The Broadmeadow River was not included in the register, therefore no adverse impacts from the site are envisioned for salmonid habitats.

The ground level is slightly higher towards the west end of the R125 at 52.29m AOD (Malin), it slopes eastwards to an approximate level of 49.01m AOD (Malin) on the east end of the works proposed on the R125.

3.3.3 Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology

Teagasc soil mapping indicates that subsoils in the site vicinity consist of till derived from limestone. The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) bedrock database indicates that soils at the site are underlain at depth by the Lucan Formation. The soil is classed as Brown Earths and Grey Brown Podzolics derived from mainly calcareous parent materials.

According to GSI groundwater maps, the site overlies a locally important aquifer, and it has a moderate groundwater vulnerability index. The hydrogeological setting at the site is described low permeability subsoil. No groundwater source protection zones or protected hydrological features such as holy wells or springs are located within the vicinity of the proposed site.

There are no geological heritage features located within, or in the immediate environs of the subject development works.

3.3.4 Designated Areas

There are no designated areas (SPAs, SACs or NHAs) detected within the vicinity of the bus corridor proposal according to the National Parks and Wildlife Services site maps. The nearest designated areas to the travel scheme corridor include:

- Malahide Estuary SAC (0000205) located ca. 10.1km E of the site.
- Rogerstown Estuary SAC (0000208) located ca. 10.8km E of the site.
- Broadmeadow/Swords Estuary SPA located ca. 10.45km E of the site.
- Rogerstown Estuary SPA located ca. 11.66km E of the site.

3.3.5 Flood Risk

OPW Flood maps indicate a 0.1%, 1% and 10% AEP flood extents are not predicted to occur within the boundary of the new travel scheme facility. OPW Flood maps indicate no risk of coastal or groundwater flooding within the boundary of the works or within a 10km radius of the travel scheme corridor. OPW maps indicate a 0.1%, 1% and 10% AEP on the surrounding lands of the Broadmeadow River located ca. 50m North from the works. There are no past flood events recorded near the proposed works.

3.3.6 Cultural Heritage

There are 1 no. historic heritage features located in the immediate environs of the subject development works. The historic heritage feature is classified as a Ringfort (Reg. no. ME045-010) and is located on the ca. 290m west of the proposed works.

There are several other historical features noted to the east of the site: Holy well (ME045-062), Church (ME045-018), graveyard (ME018002) however they are not within the vicinity and will therefore not be affected by the proposed works.

3.3.7 Landscape

The landscape surrounding the proposed site abuts a mixture of land uses with residential to the north of the site, commercial to the south of the site and agricultural being predominant in the surrounding area and beyond. The existing R125 road itself is occupied by 2 opposing lanes of undivided traffic. In the rural lands surrounding Greenogue, agriculture is the dominant land use. The proposed development is not envisaged to significantly alter the character of the landscape.

3.3.8 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

The AA screening report which accompanies this application identified 4 no. designated European sites within 15km of the application site. The closest of these is the Malahide Estuary SAC and this is 10.06km east of the site. All sites were eliminated during stage 1 of the screening process on the basis of there being no hydrological connectivity between the proposed works and also the scale of the works.

The works will be confined to a stretch of the R125 (Ashbourne – Swords Road) on the southeast outskirts of Ashbourne town, from the junction Broadmeadow for approximately 100m in an easterly direction. The works will require land to be regraded to create area for the bus stop and wider footpath. The effect of this will be minimal.

The dominant habitats associated with this site include grasslands and gardens. In the rural lands surrounding Greenogue, agriculture is the dominant land use and improved agricultural grassland is the dominant habitat.

3.4 Environmental Management Measures

The construction and operational phases of the proposed development will not consist of similar nuisance-generating activities in terms of plant and vehicle movements. Once in the operational phase it can be expected that there will be no plant movement on the project and therefore no nuisance-generating activities. It can be concluded that the operational phase impacts will be insignificant; hence the following mitigation measures shall apply to only the construction phase and not the operational phase.

3.4.1 Noise

A preliminary risk assessment was carried out for the proposed site location in accordance with the Air Quality Monitoring and Noise Control Unit's Good Practice Guide for Construction and Demolition, produced by the London Authorities Noise Action Forum, July 2016. This

assessment considered factors relating to the proximity of the site to sensitive receptors and rated the level of nuisance anticipated with scheduled work practices.

Following the completion of this risk assessment, the proposed development was determined to be a **low-risk** site based on the moderately settled site in a mixture of land uses with residential, commercial and agricultural in the surrounding setting. This section outlines suitable measures to minimise nuisance noise and dust emissions in order to minimise any impact of the proposed developments on surrounding receptors.

Marked variation of noise levels from those experienced as part of everyday life in an area can result in extreme disruption. Noise emanating from the project during the construction phase has the potential to impact off-site receptors.

The proposed development will be obliged to comply with BS 5228 “Noise Control on Construction and open sites Part 1”. The appointed contractor shall implement the following measures to eliminate or reduce noise levels where possible:

- All site staff shall be briefed on noise mitigation measures and the application of best practicable means to be employed to control noise.
- All staff should be briefed on the complaint’s procedure, the mitigation requirement, and their responsibilities to register and escalate complaints received.
- Good quality site hoarding to be erected to maximise the reduction in noise levels.
- Contact details of the contractor and site manager shall be displayed to the public, together with the permitted operating hours.
- Material and plant loading and unloading shall only take place during normal working hours.
- Ensure that each item of plant and equipment complies with the noise limits quoted in the relevant European Commission Directive 2000/14/EC.
- Fit all plant and equipment with appropriate mufflers or silencers.
- Use all plant and equipment only for the tasks for which it has been designed.
- Locate movable plant away from noise sensitive receptors.
- Ensure at least 4 days’ notice is given to Meath County Council Planning Department when applying for extensions to normal working hours. No out of hours work to be undertaken unless permission to do so has been granted.

3.4.2 Dust and Air Quality

Dust prevention measures will be put in place for any particulate pollution. The extent of dust generation under construction activities been carried out is dependent on environmental factors such as rainfall, wind speed and wind direction. The most likely sources of dust generation at this site include soil stripping and excavation of the current road surface for the construction of the new travel scheme corridor and the sawing of concrete during demolition and construction phases of the project.

Control Measures are outlined as follows:

- Soil will not be exposed until a replacing capping layer is almost ready to be placed. This is to ensure that soil is left exposed for the minimum amount of time possible.
- Material stockpiles will be strategically placed to reduce wind exposure. Materials will be

ordered on an “as needed” basis to reduce excessive storage.

- Appropriate dust suppression will be employed to prevent fugitive emissions affecting those occupying neighbouring properties or pathways.
- Restrict vehicle speeds to 15 kmph on-site as high vehicle speeds cause dust to rise.
- Covers are to be provided over soil stockpiles when high wind and dry weather are encountered if required.
- All consignments containing material with the potential to cause air pollution being transported by skips, lorries, trucks or tippers shall be covered during transit to and from the works.
- Street and footpath cleaning shall be undertaken during the demolition and ground works phase to minimise dust emissions.
- No materials shall be burned on-site.

3.4.3 Surface Water Run Off

The main pollutants with the potential to impact site water are silt, fuel/oil, concrete and chemicals. There are a number of steps outlined below to eliminate contamination of site surface water runoff. The below recommendations are advised with reference to the Eastern Regional Fisheries Board recommendations for protection of adjacent water courses during the construction phase:

- Harmful materials such as fuels, oils, greases, paints and hydraulic fluids must be stored in bunded compounds well away from storm water drains and gullies. Refuelling of machinery should be carried out using drip trays.
- Runoff from machine service and concrete mixing areas must not enter storm water drains and gullies leading away from the works.
- Stockpile areas for sands and gravel should be kept to minimum size, well away from storm water drains and gullies leading away from the works.

3.4.4 Construction Project Manager

The Construction Project Manager/Site Manger will have the overall responsibility of ensuring the measures outlined in the Project CMP/EOP are adhered to for the duration of the construction phase. The primary responsibilities of the Construction Project Manager/Site Manger are as follows:

- Promotion of awareness of environmental issues associated with each project phase/site rules.
- Facilitate environmental audits and site visits.
- Monitor the impact of construction/operational traffic on local traffic conditions.
- Monitor the impact of construction/operational traffic on local road conditions.
- Awareness and implementation of relevant legislation, codes of practice, guidance notes as stated in the CMP/EOP.
- Conduct regular site inspections to facilitate the timely identification of environmental risks or incidents.
- Ensure all construction activities are carried out with minimal risk to the environment.
- Report environmental incidents in a timely manner to the project environmental consultant and the relevant authorities.

3.4.5 Resident Engineer

Typically, the Resident Engineer's primary role involves assurance that the construction work of a project is carried out according to the quality, time and cost requirements of the contract. A significant degree of cross-over can usually be anticipated between the roles of a Resident Engineer, a Construction Project Manager and an Environmental Consultant. With respect to the Project CMP, the Resident Engineer is expected to play a crucial role in the Traffic Management Plan along with the following responsibilities:

- Performing or coordinating site inductions.
- Monitoring the performance of subcontractors.
- Monitoring the performance of the traffic management plan.
- Managing and supervising less experienced site engineers and operatives.
- Ensuring that work activities have been carried out in accordance with the plans, specifications and industry standards.
- Ensuring that tests and inspections are performed.
- Liaising with construction management to remove any hazards associated with work activities.
- Ensuring that delivered materials meet specifications and established quality standards.
- Initiating and maintaining records, back-charge procedures, progress reports etc.
- Quality assurance of the Project CMP/EOP.
- Update of the Project CMP/EOP as required paying particular attention to site-specific environmental hazards or changes in legislation.
- Ensuring compliance of Project CMP/EOP with the conditions of the Planning Permission.
- Provide expertise to the Construction Project Manager/Site Manager on environmental concerns.
- Conduct the various specialist environmental monitoring tasks outlined in section 3.5.
- Prompt response to environmental issues if they arise.

3.5 Awareness and Training

3.5.1 Environmental Induction

The key environmental topics outlined in **section 3.5** will be summarised and integrated into the general site induction. Site-specific concerns and best work practices will be outlined to all contractors and sub-contractors due to carry out work at the site. As a minimum this will include:

- The roles and responsibilities of the Construction Project Manager; the Environmental Consultant and the Resident Engineer; along with the responsibilities of contractors/sub-contractors themselves.
- Incident and complaints procedure.
- Outline of the EOP structure.
- Site specific environmental concerns.
- Best work practices

3.5.2 Toolbox Talks

Daily toolbox talks will be conducted by the Construction Project Manager/Site Manger as standard practice. It is the duty of the Construction Project Manager/Site Manger to liaise with the Project Environmental Consultant and Resident Engineer to assess site operations for environmental concerns particularly as the project advances and new activities commence. Appropriate mitigation measures will be devised and communicated to the relevant personnel prior to the commencement of any such activities.

3.6 Environmental Incidents and Complaints Procedure

The Construction Project Manager/Site Manger will maintain a register of environmental incidents which will document the nature, scale and severity of any environmental incident or complaint which arises as a result of site activities. In the event of an environmental incident the following steps must be followed:

- A suitably qualified Environmental Consultant is notified immediately.
- A suitably qualified Environmental Consultant will liaise with the competent authority if necessary.
- The details of the incident will be recorded on an Environmental Incident Form which will record the following details:
 - Cause of the incident
 - Extent of the Incident
 - Immediate actions
 - Remedial measures
- Recommendations made to avoid reoccurrence.
- If the incident has impacted on an ecologically sensitive receptor (SPA, SAC, NHA) an ecological specialist will be consulted.
- A suitably qualified Environmental Consultant and Construction Project Manager will fully cooperate with any investigations conducted by the competent authority.

4 Initial EIA Screening

4.1 Project Categorisation

A detailed description of the proposed development is outlined in **Section 3.2**. In terms of the different categories of development listed in **Schedule 5** of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2018*, there is only a single aspect of the project which could bear relevance to the thresholds outlined in **Part 1** and **2** of Regulations:

- Construction of two new offline bus stops, on either side of the R125 Regional Road at Greenogue southeast of Ashbourne, associated interconnecting footpath infrastructure, including an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing, and associated public light, drainage, boundary treatments, and surfacing works.

4.1.1 Part 1 Activities

Considering the categories listed in **Part 1** of the Regulations, the subject development does not relate to any of the activities listed.

Based on this criteria, the proposed activity is below the **Part 1** threshold hence a mandatory EIA is not required for the project based on this category.

4.1.2 Part 2 Activities

Considering the categories listed in **Part 2** of the Regulations, there is no class set out under **Schedule 5** in relation to the provision of realignment or upgrade to an existing road. Under the provisions of **Schedule 5**, the closest type of project to the subject development is for the provision of “*all private roads which would exceed 2,000 metres in length*”, as per Item 10 (a)(dd) of the Schedule.

In relation to the threshold set in Category 10. (dd), the proposed bus stop works is an upgrade of the existing R125 public road and not the construction of a new private road, it will be an approximate length of 100 metres. As a result, EIA is not required for the project based on this category.

In relation to the threshold set in Category 11. (b) EIA is required for ‘*developments for the disposal of waste with an annual intake greater than 25,000 tonnes.*’ It is not anticipated that the annual intake of waste (spoil material) at the spoil areas will exceed this threshold. As a result, EIA is not required for the project based on this category

4.1.3 Section 50 of the Roads Act, 1993 to 2007

In addition to the above regulations, **Section 50** of the *Roads Act, 1993 to 2007 (as amended)* and **Article 8** of the Roads Regulations, 1994 outline the legislative requirements that determine whether an EIA is mandatory for a proposed road development.

Section 50 (1) (a) of the Roads Act, 1993 as substituted by Section. 9(1)(d)(i) of the Roads Act, 2007

A road authority or the Authority shall prepare a statement of the likely effects on the environment ('environmental impact statement') of any proposed road development it proposes consisting of:

(i) the construction of a motorway,

(ii) the construction of a busway,

(iii) the construction of a service area, or

(iv) any prescribed type of proposed road development consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road.”

Article 8 of S.I. No. 119/1994 Roads Regulations, 1994 (The prescribed types of proposed road development for the purpose of subsection (1)(a)(iv) of **Section 50** of the Roads Act, 1993 to 2007 (as amended)).

(a) The construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500 metres or more in length in an urban area

(b) The construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100 metres or more in length.

The sub-threshold criteria which would trigger an EIA, are outlined in subsections (1) (b-d) in **Section 50** of the Roads Act (1993 as amended) and **Article 8** of S.I. 119/1994 Roads Regulations, 1994:

(b) If An Bord Pleanála considers that any road development proposed (other than development to which paragraph (a) applies) consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road would be likely to have significant effects on the environment it shall direct that the development be subject to an environmental impact assessment.

(c) Where a road authority or, as the case may be, the Authority considers that a road development that it proposes (other than development to which paragraph (a) applies) consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, it shall inform An Bord Pleanála in writing prior to making any application to the Bord for an approval referred to in section 51(1) in respect of the development.

(d) Where a proposed development (other than development to which paragraph (a) applies) consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road would be located on -

(i) a European Site within the meaning of Regulation 2 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011),

(ii) land established or recognised as a nature reserve within the meaning of section 15

or 16 of the Wildlife Act 1976 (No. 39 of 1976),

(iii) land designated as a refuge for fauna or flora under section 17 of the Wildlife Act 1976 (No. 39 of 1976), or

(iv) land designated a natural heritage area under section 18 of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000,

The proposed bus stops are limited to the reallocation of the existing road space. It is not proposed to develop a new road, nor the widening or realignment of an existing road and will not consist of four or more lanes. The works will take place on the R125 only. The site abuts a mixture of land uses with commercial, agricultural, and some residential one-off dwellings in the surrounding area. The scheme, therefore, does not trigger any of the sub-threshold criteria for EIA as per **Section 50** of the Roads Act, 1993 to 2007 (as amended) and **Article 8** of the Roads Regulations, 1994.

4.2 Project Screening Determination

Based on a review of the relevant categories listed in **Schedule 5, Part 1 and 2** of the Planning and Development Regulations and additionally, **Section 50** of the Roads Act, 1993 to 2007 (as amended) and **Article 8** of the Roads Regulations, 1994; the proposed development is not deemed eligible for a mandatory EIA, a sub-threshold EIA or an exemption. Therefore, the proposed development is subject to further screening under the relevant criteria outlined in **Schedule 7** of the regulations. This exercise is outlined in **section 5** of this report.

5 EIA Screening

Schedule 7 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018* outlines specific criteria for the determination of EIA requirements for sub-threshold projects, summarised in **section 2.4** of this report. Specific aspects of the project are screened against these criteria in **Tables 5.1 to 5.3** below.

5.1 Characteristics of Proposed Development

Table 5.1 Criteria to determine the characteristics of the proposed development:

Section 7 Criteria	Information
(a) size and design of the whole of the proposed development	<p>The proposed shared bus stop works covers an approximate length of 100m and overall width of approximately 4m. The proposed travel scheme corridor is located on the R125 (Ashbourne – Swords Road) in Greenogue. Works will include regrading of land to create area for the wider footpath and some landscaping will be included. A description of the project and of the construction methodology is provided in section 3 of this report.</p> <p>The location is within a rural area on the outskirts of Ashbourne, which is the second largest town in population in Meath according to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. Greenogue itself has a low population density of 49.83 per km².</p> <p>The size and design of the project is not likely to cause significant negative effects on the environment.</p>
(b) cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects	<p>A review of existing and previous planning applications under consideration by Meath County Council indicates that developments locally are mainly of a minor nature, consisting primarily of applications for extensions, refurbishments, change of use or retention works to commercial and residential and units located along the R125 road and in Greenogue village. The proposed bus stop works will extend along the R125 on a stretch of road where there is no planning projects awaiting approval.</p> <p>There are no IPC or IE licenced sites existing in the immediate vicinity of the proposed works, The closest being licenced agricultural site Mr. Pat Rooney (P1091-01) located ca. 3.4km West of the works.</p>

	<p>It is considered that cumulative impacts with other existing and/or approved projects are not likely to cause significant negative effects on the environment</p>
<p>(c) nature of any associated demolition works</p>	<p>There are no associated demolition works associated with this project.</p>
<p>(d) use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity</p>	<p>The project does not include the extensive use of natural resources.</p> <p>No negative impacts arising from the use of land or soil are anticipated</p>
<p>(e) production of waste</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that significant quantities of waste will be generated as a result of road use activities.</p>
<p>(f) pollution and nuisances</p>	<p>Potential noise, light, air quality and water pollution impacts are anticipated.</p> <p>The release of suspended solids into the watercourse is unlikely to occur during periods of rainfall, the works are located ca. 110m from the closest watercourse, the Broadmeadow River.</p> <p>The inadvertent deposition of hazardous material is unlikely to lead to the pollution of soil, water courses and groundwater bodies.</p> <p>Dust, Noise and Vibration will be generated from HGV traffic entering and exiting the site and by 360° excavators and dozers during soil extraction.</p> <p>Significant negative effects on the environment are not likely to arise due to pollution or nuisance due to the nature and scale of the project and the mitigation measures proposed.</p>
<p>(g) risk of major accidents, and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge</p>	<p>Standard construction practices will be employed throughout the construction phase and a Construction Environmental Management Plan shall be adhered to.</p> <p>A review of PFRA and CFRAM maps for the area confirms that the travel scheme facility is outside lands at risk from fluvial pluvial or coastal flooding.</p> <p>OPW maps indicate a 0.1%, 1% and 10% AEP on the surrounding lands of the Broadmeadow River located ca. 110m N from the closest point of the works. It is not anticipated that this will affect the location of the proposed works.</p>

(h) risks to human health (e.g. due to water contamination or air pollution)	The potential impacts due to risk of accidents and/or disasters are anticipated to be negligible given the nature of the proposed development including standard procedures that will be applied.
	The risks to human health are anticipated to be negligible given the nature of the proposed development including standard procedures that will be applied to avoid effects.

5.2 Location of the proposed development

Table 5.2. Section 7 Criteria to determine the characteristics of the site environs.

Section 7 Criteria	Information
(a) existing and approved land use	The existing use of the regional road (R125) consists of a road of two opposing lanes of undivided traffic that leads back along the R125 towards Ashbourne, to the existing speed limit gateway. The frontage of the road consists of residential dwellings and agricultural land.
(b) relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground	<p>The Broadmeadow_08 river is located ca. 110m north of the site boundary. The Broadmeadow River currently has a 'Poor WFD status' according to EPA maps and is deemed as being 'At Risk' of not achieving good status in accordance with the Water Framework Directive. Construction activities are not deemed to pose a risk to the nearest river water receptors.</p> <p>The site overlies a locally important aquifer with a GW vulnerability classed as 'Moderate'.</p> <p>There are no wells located within the site boundary or in the immediate environs of the site. The closest being a borehole well located ca. 1.75km Southeast of the site, according to GSI maps. The use of this well is for domestic purposes only. Construction activities are not deemed to pose a risk to this nearest well receptor.</p> <p>General housekeeping and measures to prevent nuisances at the site will be outlined in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and the Environmental Operation Plan (EOP).</p> <p>Following the implementation of the above measures, impacts to soil, land and biodiversity are not anticipated as a result of the proposed development.</p>

<p>(c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:</p>	
<p>i. wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths</p>	<p>The proposed development is not located close to wetlands, coastal zones, mountains and forest areas, nature reserves or parks.</p>
<p>ii. coastal zones and the marine environment</p>	<p>The proposed development site is not hydrologically connected to the marine environment.</p>
<p>iii. mountain and forest areas</p>	<p>The proposed development site is not within or directly connected to any mountain or forest areas.</p>
<p>iv. nature reserves and parks</p>	<p>The proposed development is not within or directly connected to any nature reserves or parks.</p>
<p>v. areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive</p>	<p>The AA screening report which accompanies this application identified 4 no. designated sites within 15 km of the proposed development. All sites were eliminated during stage 1 of the screening process on the basis of there being no hydrological connectivity between the proposed development and the designated area.</p> <p>This report concluded the nature and scale of the proposed activities at this site posed no significant impacts upon the Natura 2000 site identified.</p>
<p>vi. areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure</p>	<p>The site is not located within such an area.</p>
<p>vii. densely populated areas</p>	<p>The site is located in an area of a mixed land uses with residential, commercial and agricultural uses. They are situated in an area with a population density of 49.83 per km². The proposed bus stop works can be considered minor in nature, hence significant impacts in the local population are unlikely.</p>
<p>viii. landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance</p>	<p>There are no archaeological heritage feature located within, or in the immediate environs of the subject development works. The closest feature being a ringfort (Ref no. ME045-010) located ca. 290m West of the works.</p> <p>There are 3 no. other historical features noted to the east of the site: Holy well (ME045-062), Church (ME045-018), graveyard (ME018002) however they are not within the vicinity and will therefore</p>

	<p>not be affected by the proposed works. They are all located to the east of the site.</p> <p>The works are not within an archaeological area of importance.</p> <p>There are no geological heritage features located within, or in the immediate environs of the subject development site.</p> <p>Impacts to visual (geological), historical, cultural or archaeological features are not anticipated as a result of the proposed development.</p>
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5.3 Characteristics of Potential Impacts

Table 5.3. Section 7 Criteria to determine the likely significant effects on the environment of the proposed development

Section 7 Criteria	Information
<p>(a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),</p> <p>(b) nature of the impact</p>	<p>The site is located in a sparsely populated area of low environmental sensitivity. Some slight impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed activity however the extent of these is anticipated to be localised hence significant impacts are not envisaged.</p>
<p>i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health</p>	<p>Potential impacts identified to the local population included noise, dust and traffic. Given the mitigation measures proposed, the systems and practices in place and the low population density within the surrounding environs, impacts to human health are anticipated to be slight.</p>
<p>ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</p>	<p>The release of suspended solids into a watercourse are unlikely to occur during periods of rainfall due to the distance of the nearest water receptor.</p> <p>The inadvertent deposition of hazardous material may lead to pollution of water courses and groundwater bodies.</p> <p>The site and immediate environs are not prone to flooding, The existing road already in place does not exacerbate the risk of flooding elsewhere in the catchment, and it is not anticipated the upgrade of the road to incorporate bus stops on the R125 will exacerbate the risk of flooding.</p> <p>Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been carried out for the proposed development in order to address the potential impact on Natura 2000 sites including Special Areas of</p>

	<p>Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). This assessment addresses the potential impact the project may have on the Qualifying interest (habitats and species) and Special Conservation Interests (Birds) of the designated sites and the conservation objectives for same. The AA Screening Report recommended that AA is not required in respect of the Project. There are no impacts and effects to Natura 2000 sites predicted to occur as a result of the proposed development.</p> <p>Overall, the residual effects from an ecological perspective are not anticipated to be significant and impacts to biodiversity, flora and fauna is anticipated to be slight.</p>
iii. Land and Soil	<p>The inadvertent deposition of hazardous material may lead to pollution of soil both on-site and at neighbouring sites.</p> <p>This risk is mitigated by a rigorous waste acceptance procedure, highly trained members of staff and good housekeeping practices.</p>
iv. Air & Climate	None identified or likely.
v. Material Assets, landscape and cultural heritage including architectural aspects	<p>The development does not require any acquisition of privately owned lands, any loss of land / property used by the community or any demolition of property.</p> <p>The development will not give rise to a revaluation of or change in the development potential of adjoining lands / properties.</p> <p>The construction of the Project is not expected to have a significant effect on the visual amenity. There are no protected views within the area that will be affected by the proposed development.</p> <p>It is not considered that any elements of the development proposals will cause any direct or visual impacts with respect to previously recorded and/or extant archaeological monuments or architectural heritage features.</p>
vi. The interrelationship between the environmental topics	<p>Interaction between soil, ground and surface water receptors and by extension, sensitive aquatic and terrestrial habitats were considered.</p> <p>Mitigation measures implemented are expected to reduce the residual impacts associated with such to slight/negligible.</p>
(c) transboundary nature of the impact	There are no transboundary impacts associated with this project.
(d) intensity and complexity of the impact	
i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health	Impacts during construction stage anticipated to be slight and temporary in nature and will have a low intensity type impact.

ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	Impacts during operation stage anticipated to be slight and permanent in nature and will have a low intensity type impact.
iii. Land and Soil	
iv. Air & Climate	None identified or likely.
v. Material Assets, landscape & cultural heritage including architectural aspects	None identified or likely.
vi. The interrelationship between the environmental topics	Interaction between soil, ground and surface water receptors and by extension, sensitive aquatic and terrestrial habitats were considered. Mitigation measures implemented are expected to reduce the residual impacts associated with such to slight/negligible.
(e) Probability of the impact	
i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health	Negative impacts associated with the construction stage are certain and temporary. Negative impacts associated with the operation stage are possible, but unlikely and long-term.
ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	Impacts during construction stage are possible. Impacts during operation stage are possible.
iii. Land and Soil	Impacts during construction stage are possible, but unlikely. Impacts during operation stage are possible, but unlikely.
iv. Air & Climate	No significant impact identified or likely.
v. Material Assets, landscape & cultural heritage including architectural aspects	Negative impacts associated with the construction stage are certain and temporary.
vi. The interrelationship between the environmental topics	None identified or likely.
(f) Expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact	
i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health	Construction stage impact and nuisances will be temporary. Effects associated with the operational phase are anticipated to be long-term.
ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	Construction stage impact and nuisances will be temporary. Operational phase impacts on Flora, Fauna, surface water, groundwater and biodiversity are anticipated to be significant and long-term in the absence of mitigation measures.
iii. Land and Soil	Construction stage impact and nuisances will be temporary. Operational phase impacts on Flora, Fauna, surface water, groundwater and biodiversity are anticipated to be slight and long-term.
iv. Air & Climate	Construction stage impact and nuisances will be temporary.

	No impacts identified by operational stage.
v. Material Assets, landscape & cultural heritage including architectural aspects	The potential impacts during the development will be associated with the construction stage. No impacts identified by operational stage.
vi. interrelationship between the environmental topics	Interaction between soil, ground and surface water receptors and by extension, sensitive aquatic and terrestrial habitats are anticipated to be long-term but unlikely.
(g) cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment	It is considered that cumulative impacts with other existing and/or approved projects are not likely to cause significant effects on the environment.
(h) possibility of effectively reducing the impact	<p>A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and an Environmental Operating Plan (EOP) will be submitted by the main contractor to the local authority for approval and will include the following features designed to ensure maximum protection for the environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any excavations and/or vegetation removal will be minimised during construction and/or maintenance works. • Excavated material will not be stored immediately adjacent to watercourses. • Disturbance to natural drainage features should be avoided during the construction and/or maintenance. • Construction machinery should be restricted to public and or site roads. As a general rule machinery should not be allowed to access, park or travel over areas outside the footprint of proposed development. • Suitable prevention measures should be put in place at all times to prevent the release of sediment to drainage waters associated with construction areas and migration to adjacent watercourses to reduce erosion and silt-laden runoff, create, where possible, natural vegetation buffers and divert runoff from exposed areas, control the volume and velocity of runoff, and convey that runoff away from watercourses. • Where necessary drainage waters from construction areas should be managed through a series of treatment stages that may include swales, check dams and detention ponds

along with other pollution control measures such as silt fences and silt mats.

- Where vegetation removal associated with treelines, hedgerows, individual mature trees, scrub or woodland is required, this shall only be undertaken outside the breeding bird season, between March and August inclusive.
- Where extensive areas of ground are to be exposed during route construction or maintenance dust suppression should be undertaken during periods of dry weather.
- All chemical substances required during construction and/or maintenance works will be stored in sealed containers.
- Any refuelling or lubrication of machinery will not be undertaken within 50m of a watercourse.
- Spill kits will be required on site during construction and/or maintenance works.
- Ensure non-native, invasive species do not occur at construction/maintenance areas, or if occurring, are not spread as a result of works. The NRA Guidance on invasive species, outlined above will be adhered to as well as the preparation and implementation of a site specific Invasive Species Management and Control Plan.
- Disseminate information on sensitive ecological receptors, such as sensitive habitats, breeding birds etc. occurring adjacent to or in the wider area. This information will aim to educate recreational users on the conservation status and sensitivities of such receptors to encourage responsible usage of the area.

6 Conclusion

The construction and operation of the proposed bus stop works does not trigger any thresholds for mandatory EIA/EIAR as set in EU Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended and transposed into Irish Law by the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2023*.

In addition, the development does not trigger any thresholds for mandatory EIA/EIAR as set in the legislative requirements of **Section 50** of the *Roads Act, 1993 (as amended)* and **Article 8** of the *Roads Regulations, 1994*.

This EIA Screening Assessment has determined that the characteristics of the proposed development are considered not significant, detailed as follows:

- the scale and nature of the proposed bus stop works; Works will construct 2 no. bus stops, one on either side of the R125 (approximate length 100m) and include associated interconnecting footpath infrastructure, including an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing, and associated public light, drainage, boundary treatments, and surfacing works.
- The proposed development is noted as being located within a Zone of Archaeological Potential, impacts to archaeological features are not anticipated as a result of the proposed development and a mandatory EIA is not triggered, however, as per the *SEA Environmental Report for the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027*, developments proposed within designated Zones of Archaeological Potential and in sites on or abutting Monuments identified by the Sites and Monuments Record, the Council will refer applications for proposed developments to National Monuments Service of the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, to ascertain their requirements and consider their response.
- The works of the proposed bus stops are not located within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). Impacts to architectural features are not anticipated as a result of the proposed development and criteria for a mandatory EIA is not met.
- The mitigation measures that will be implemented as part of the construction phase in the form of CEMP and, detailed in **Table 5.3**.
- The best practice procedures to be implemented at the site during the operational phase in accordance with EPA Best Practice Guidelines, listed in **Table 5.1**.

Given the scale and nature of the proposed development the overall risk posed to the environment is considered to be low and there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and an EIA is not required [Article 120(1B)(i)].

The information provided in this EIA Screening Report can be used by the competent authority, Meath City Council, to assess whether an EIA is required for the proposed development relating to the proposed development as no significant effects are anticipated.

The overall conclusion for this screening exercise is that having considered the appropriate statutory criteria, Environmental Impact Assessment is not required for the proposed development.

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Appendix A

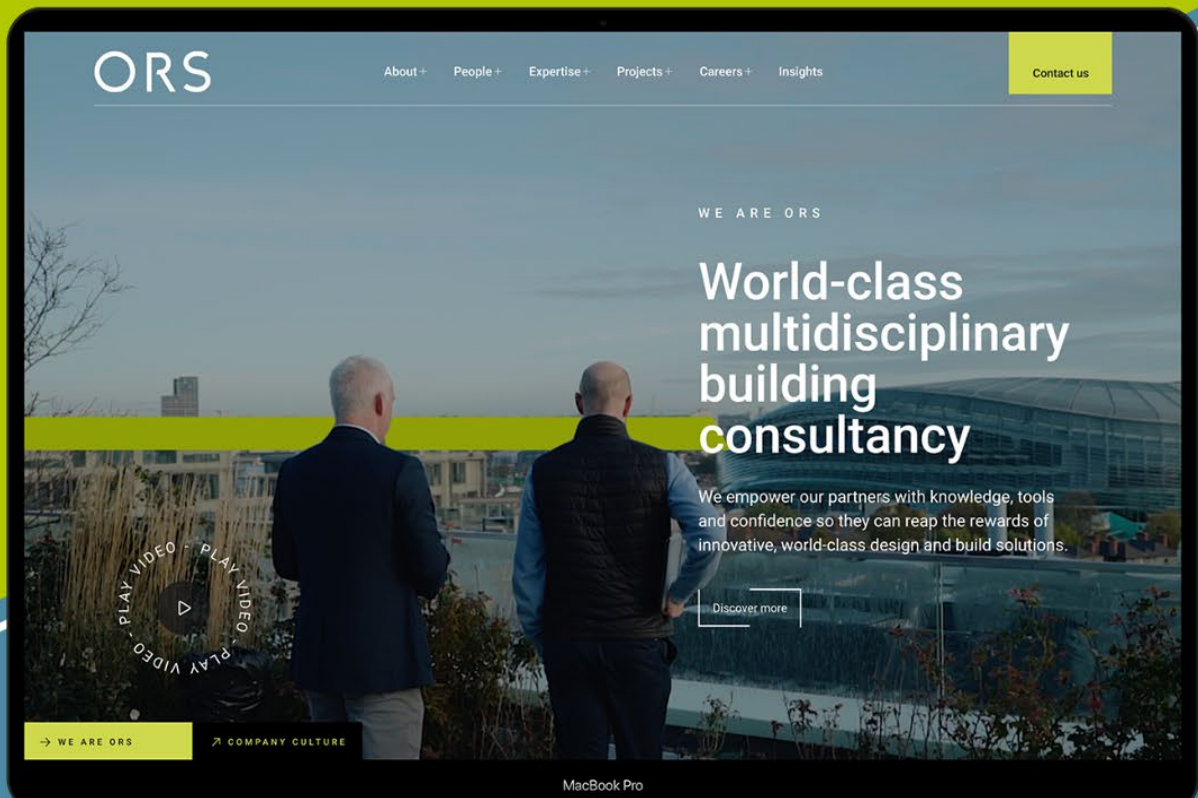
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