

# Navan GDA Cycle Route

## Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

SEPTEMBER 2018



# Navan GDA Cycle Routes

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**APPENDIX A      EIA Screening Checklist**

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1 Introduction

Roughan & O'Donovan-AECOM Alliance (ROD-AECOM) was appointed by Meath County Council to prepare on its behalf an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report in respect of the Navan GDA Cycle Route. The purpose of the EIA Screening Report was to determine whether the preparation of EIA is required for the proposed Navan GDA Cycle Route, hereafter referred to as "the Project".

The findings of the EIA screening assessment are presented in this report.

## 1.2 Proposed Development

The Project is approximately 2.9 km in length. The majority of the route is proposed within the curtilage of existing road ways and footpaths. The route will include land take from St. Michael's School and former convent on Convent Road. It is anticipated that some trees will be removed on Circular Road as part of the works. The route will tie in to a new pedestrian/cycle bridge which will be cantilevered to the existing New Bridge on the Kentstown Bridge. Planning for the new pedestrian bridge has been approved under a separate Part VIII application (Planning Reference: P8/17006). From the bridge, the route will travel south along the Kells Road on a cantilevered boardwalk that will carry a two-way facility as far as Circular Road. The route then follows Circular Road before travelling south along the R161 as far as Beechmount Avenue. The cantilevered boardwalk will be constructed entirely from the existing road. No works will be permitted on the natural bank.

## 1.3 Methodology

This screening assessment has been carried out having regard to the following documents:

- *Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidelines for Consent Authorities Regarding Sub-Threshold Development* (DEHLG, 2003);
- *Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on Screening* (European Commission, 2017); and
- *Guidelines on information to be contained in EIS* (Environmental Protection Agency, 2002).

The following draft guidance document has also been consulted:

- *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*, Draft August 2017 (EPA, 2017)

## 1.4 Screening Conclusions

The Project does not meet the thresholds for which the preparation of an EIAR is a mandatory requirement. The legislative requirements that deem whether an EIA is mandatory for a project are outlined in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2015. Additionally, the thresholds listed in Part 2(13) of Schedule 5 in relation to "*Changes, extensions, development and testing*" are not met as the proposed development will not be "of a class listed in Part 1 or paragraphs 1 to 12 of Part 2 of this Schedule".

In determining whether or not the proposed development should be subject to EIA, the following characteristics, which are listed in Annex III to the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU, were considered:

- (a) The size and design of the whole project;
- (b) Cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects;
- (c) The use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;
- (d) The production of waste;
- (e) Pollution and nuisances;
- (f) The 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;
- (g) The risks to human health (e.g. due to water contamination or air pollution).

The majority of the Project is proposed to be developed within the cartilage of existing roads and footpaths.

The Project will travel through and within two European designated sites within the Project boundary, namely the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA. A Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) pursuant to Regulation 42(1) of the Habitats Regulations and Part XAB: Section 177U (1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) has also been prepared by ROD in July 2018 in accordance with current guidance (DEHLG, 2010). The AA Screening assessed and addressed all issues regarding the construction and operation of the proposed Project in order to inform and allow the competent authority to comply with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

It has been concluded, in view of best scientific knowledge, that the proposed Greenway, on its own or in combination with other plans or projects, does not have the potential to give rise to likely significant effects on any Special Conservation Interests / Qualifying Interests of any Natura 2000 site. Significant effects are not likely to arise as a result of construction works for the proposed Project and direct impacts can be objectively ruled out. The AA Screening concluded that the construction of the proposed extension was “screened out” and a Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment was not required.

The proposed development will be designed and constructed in accordance with the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Environmental Assessment and Construction Guidelines (EACG) and other best practice guidelines. Adherence to these guidelines will ensure that the likelihood of significant environmental effects will be minimised.

This report has been prepared by ROD-AECOM in accordance with published guidance to document the Screening of whether an EIA is required for the Project. It is concluded that an EIAR is not required for the proposed Project. ROD-AECOM recommends that Meath County Council determine that the Project does not have the potential to have likely significant effects on the environment.

## **2. PROJECT BRIEF**

### **Tourism**

Meath County Council is seeking to develop a cycle route through Navan town which will in part provide a safer environmental for recreational cyclists. The route will connect to the M5/M13 Cycle which travels along the River Boyne to Drogheda.

The development of the Project, as part of the overall regional strategy, will attract domestic and international visitors to come, explore and stay in the region.

### **Health**

Commuters, particularly school children using the Project are the key target of the project, together with tourists travelling from nearby towns such as Slane and Drogheda. The Project will provide a safe route for locals to commute by bicycle in a safe and clean environment, and for tourists to travel to Navan.

### **Economy**

The Project will stimulate the local economy by generating a greater number of visiting tourists to Navan. The most recent figures available on cycle tourism show that 173,000 visitors to Ireland in 2011 engaged in cycling during their stay, spending an estimated €200 million.

### **Safety**

The Project will aspire to provide a "premium" cycle route that will offer the highest level of comfort and security for users in line with the best international practice. The route itself is partially segregated from live traffic which greatly improves the safety for cyclists.

This report has been prepared in accordance with published guidance to document the screening in order to determine whether an EIA is required for the Project.

### 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

#### 3.1 Background

This screening concerns a proposed cycleway in Navan. The cycleway forms part of the 2013 Greater Dublin Area (GDA) Cycle Network Plan (CNP) commissioned by the National Transport Authority (NTA). The Project will allow commuters to access the town centre and also link several schools to residential areas.

The purpose of this assessment is to determine whether or not the Project is likely to have a significant effect on the environment and, accordingly, whether or not it is required to be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This report forms part of the overall Part VIII planning application submission for the cycle route project.

#### 3.2 Location

The Project consists of a proposed cycle route in Navan, Co. Meath. The route is shown in Figure 3.1.

#### 3.3 General Layout

The proposed route is approximately 2.9 km in length. The majority of the route is proposed within the curtilage of existing road ways and footpaths. The route will include land take from St. Michael's School and former convent on Convent Road. It is anticipated that some trees will be removed on Circular Road as part of the works. The route will tie in to a new pedestrian/cycle bridge which will be cantilevered to the existing New Bridge on the Kentstown Road. Planning for the new pedestrian bridge has been approved under a separate Part VIII application (Planning Reference: P8/17006). From the bridge, the route will travel south along the Kells Road on a cantilevered boardwalk that will carry a two-way facility as far as Circular Road. The route then follows Circular Road before travelling south along the R161 as far as Beechmount Avenue. The cantilevered boardwalk will be constructed entirely from the existing road. No works will be permitted on the natural bank.



**Plate 3.1 New Bridge, Navan.**

Construction along the route will involve the following elements:

- Construction of new kerb lines for new footpath and for cycle track;
- Earthworks - excavation of portions of existing verge;

- Removal of trees;
- Break-up of redundant road carriageway;
- Construction of footpath;
- Construction of cycle track;
- Relocation of drainage gullies;
- New gullies and gully connections to existing drainage network for certain sections;
- Construction of a cantilevered boardwalk;
- Resurfacing and new lining; and,
- Landscaping.

The majority of works will take place within the existing carriageways. There will be minor works on adjacent land where some trees and vegetation will be removed to facilitate construction of the cycle track. The construction of the route will also require the demolition of a house extension opposite Fulham's Pub on Railway Street. The boardwalk will be constructed as an extension of the existing hard standing. No construction activities will take place on the bank, although the construction of the boardwalk will result in shading of the vegetation immediately adjacent to the existing footpath.

The detailed drawings showing the precise location and layout of the Project are presented in Appendix A.

### **3.4 Ecological Survey**

A survey was undertaken on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018 of the entire route. The main concern during the survey was the presence of invasive species and otter on the banks of the River Boyne. The habitats present between the Kells Road and the River Boyne are described as being scrub containing small trees and shrubs, predominantly sycamore, willow and butterfly bush. Riparian species such as Red Valerian were found closer to the river. The survey did not identify any invasive species or evidence of otter in the area.

### **3.5 Environmental Protection Measures**

A number of environmental protection measures have been incorporated into the design of the Project:

- A Construction Method Statement will be approved by NPWS prior to works.
- The Construction Method Statement and will be read and approved by the Site Foreman before works begin.
- The Works Team will be inducted on the ecological considerations listed in the Construction Method Statement by the Site Foreman and a signed copy will be submitted to the District Conservation Officer of the NPWS.

In addition, the following best practice control measures from Inland Fisheries Ireland have been incorporated into the design of the Project and are, therefore, included within the scope of this Screening assessment:

- IFI (2016) Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries during Construction Works in and Adjacent to Waters. Inland Fisheries Ireland, Dublin.

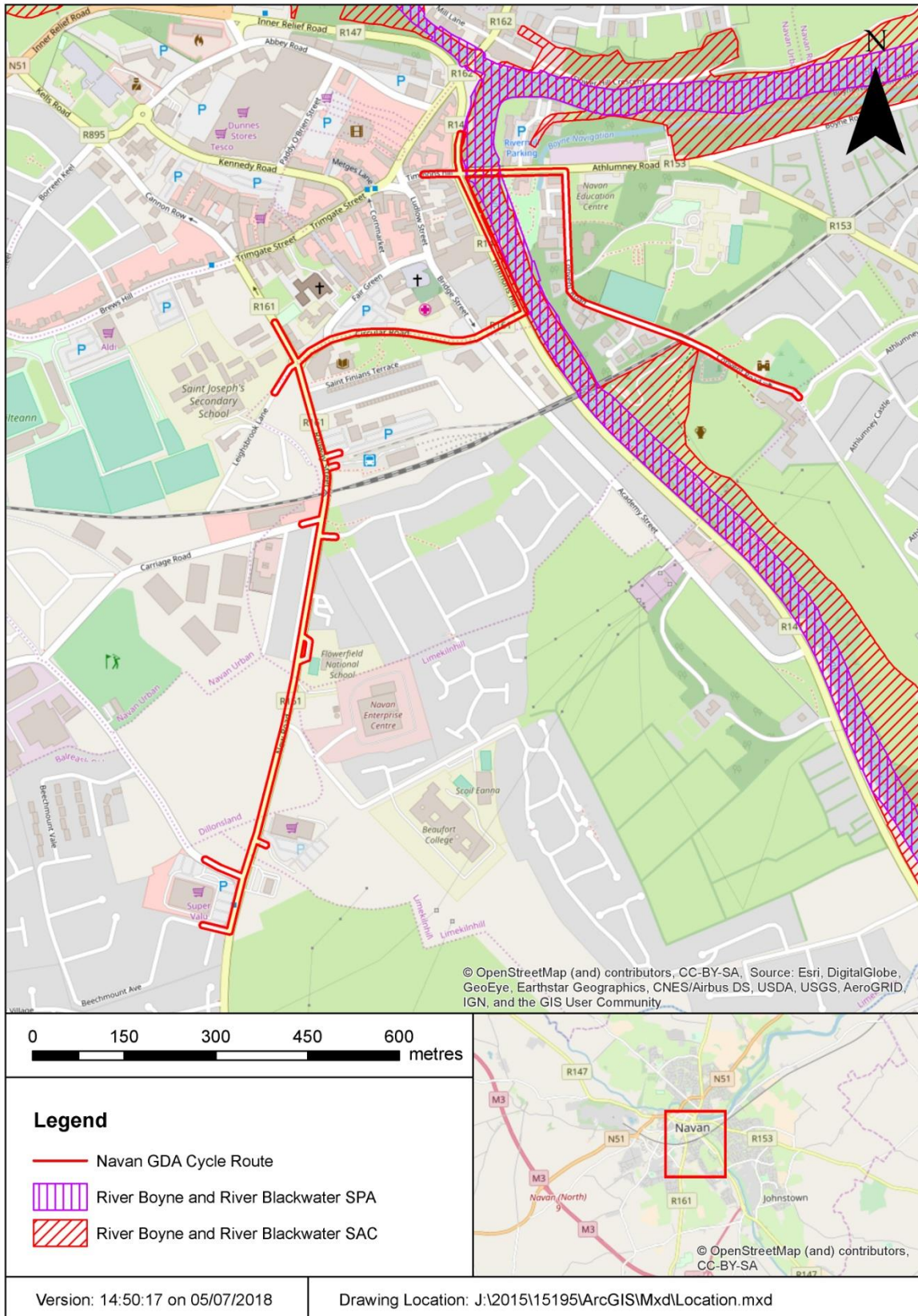
### ***Hydrocarbon usage***



The use of hydrocarbons during the construction process leads to the potential for pollution to enter the wider environment, including adjacent watercourses. Leaks in poorly maintained plant and machinery could lead to hydrocarbon dispersal over works areas and into the wider area. Leaks in fuel storage tanks and spillages during refuelling operations could lead to larger releases of hydrocarbons into the environment.

The use of machinery carries the potential for accidental hydrocarbon contamination of works areas, by fuel spillages or oil leaks, for example. The works will be carried out in accordance with the following measures to avoid such impacts:

- All machinery will be refuelled from mobile tankers on the local/access roads. No refuelling is to take place within 50 m of the SAC/SPA.
- Only dedicated trained and competent personnel will carry out refuelling operations. A spill kit and drip tray shall be on site at all times and available for all refuelling operations. Equipment shall not be left unattended during refuelling. All pipework from containers to pump nozzles will have anti-siphon valves fitted.
- Care will be taken at all times to avoid contamination of the environment with contaminants other than hydrocarbons, such as uncured concrete or other chemicals.



**Figure 3.1      Location of the Project.**

## **4. EIA SCREENING PROCESS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This EIA Screening Report has been prepared by ROD-AECOM on behalf of Meath County Council with the aim of documenting the significant environmental effects, both positive and negative, which the proposed development is likely to have on the receiving environment. The reference documents used to inform the process are listed in Section 1.3.

*Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on Screening* (EC, 2017) provides a flow diagram of the *Steps in Screening* (see Plate 4.1 overleaf) and this is the process generally followed in this Screening Report.

### **4.2 Legislation**

EIA requirements derive from Council Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended by Directives 97/11/EC, 2003/35/EC and 2009/31/EC) and as codified and replaced by Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment and as amended in turn by Directive 2014/52/EU.

The thresholds for mandatory EIA of specific classes of developments are set out in Schedule 5 to the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended).

All projects can be placed into one of the following two categories:

- Those which exceed the relevant thresholds and, therefore, must be subject to EIA; and,
- Those which do not exceed the thresholds (“sub-threshold developments”) and must be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether or not they are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

### **4.3 Methodology**

Screening is the process of deciding whether a development requires an EIA. The mandatory and discretionary provisions of Part 10 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) deem whether an EIA is required for a project.

### **4.4 Mandatory EIA**

The proposed development does not meet the any of the thresholds for mandatory EIA, as set out in Schedule 5 to the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended).

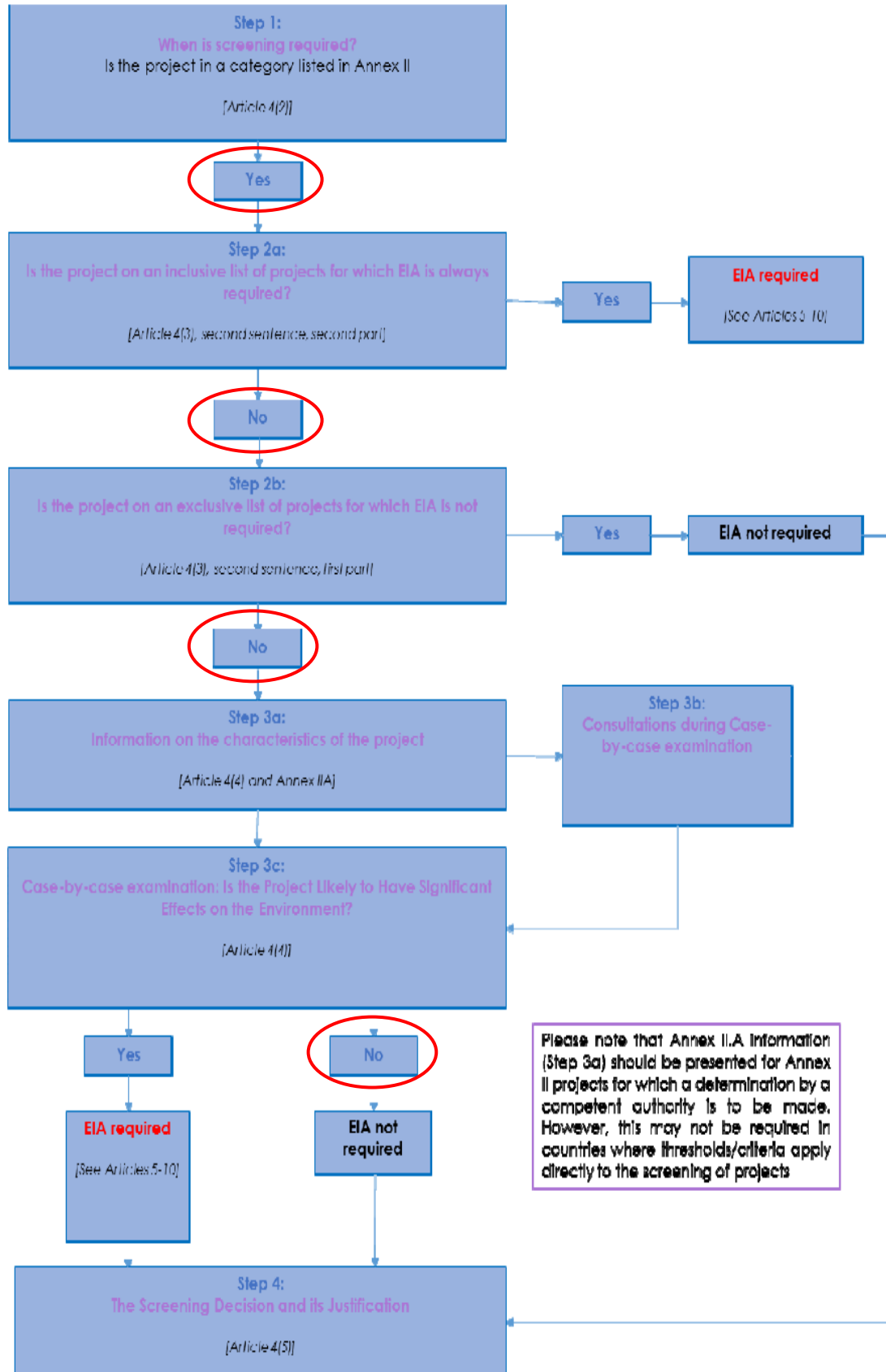


Plate 4.1 Flow Diagram of the Steps in Screening (Source: EC, 2017).

## 4.5 Sub-threshold Development

Where a decision is being made as to whether a proposed development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, regard must be had to the following project characteristics outlined in Annex III of the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU:

- (a) The size and design of the whole project;
- (b) Cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects;
- (c) The use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;
- (d) The production of waste;
- (e) Pollution and nuisances;
- (f) The 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; and,
- (g) The risks to human health (e.g. due to water contamination or air pollution).

Additionally, the screening process can be aided using the checklists contained in the *Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on Screening* (EC, 2017), in particular the “*Screening Checklist*” and the “*Checklist of Criteria for Evaluating the Significance of Environmental Impacts*”. The screening checklist was completed for the proposed development and is contained in Appendix A to this report.

Descriptions of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed expansion are outlined in Sections 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 and in Appendix A.

## 4.6 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

### 4.6.1 Extent of the Impact

The Project is approximately 2.9 km long and includes a mix of segregated cycle lanes, on road cycle lanes and a cantilevered boardwalk. In general the cycle lanes will be 2 m wide. The cantilevered section will be 3 m wide. There will be minor works on adjacent land where some trees and vegetation will be removed to facilitate construction of the cycle track. The construction of the route will also require the demolition of a house extension opposite Fulham's Pub on Railway Street.

### 4.6.2 Transfrontier Nature of the Impact

There are no transfrontier impacts associated with the Project.

### 4.6.3 Magnitude and Complexity of the Impact

**Air Quality and Climate:** The proposed cycle route involves the design and construction of a cycle route through Navan Town. The objective of the project is to provide a facility for cyclists thus having no significant operational impact on air quality and climate. The construction phase of development aims to provide 2 m wide cycle tracks, both on and off road. It is considered that the level of construction traffic required for a project of this scale will not have a significant impact on the local air quality or climate; neither will a construction project of this scale result in any significant generation of dust.

**Noise and Vibration:** At operation an increase in the number of cyclists will have negligible impact on noise or vibration in the local environment. It is also considered that the level of construction traffic and construction operations required for a project of this scale will be short term and will not result in the creation of any significant levels of noise or vibration. Furthermore, works will be carried out in compliance with

BS5228: Part 1 and the European Communities (Noise Emission by Equipment for Use Outdoors) Regulations, 2001 which will ensure a controlled level of noise during construction phase.

**Population and Human Health:** The objective of any population and human health assessment is to examine the potential impact of the construction and operation of the Project on the local community and business activities in the local area.

The development of the Project will pose minor noise and visual impacts to residents living along the route during construction. During the operational stage, the proposed cycle route should have negligible adverse effects on human beings living along the route and will provide a high quality amenity for the local residents.

The opening of the Project in tandem with other cycle facilities in the area will have a beneficial impact on the local economy as it will attract people to the area thereby having a knock on positive economic effect with respect to hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs, recreational tourism, restaurants, etc. Similarly during construction the hiring of local contractors will have a short term benefit on the local economy.

**Soils and Geology:** Due to the scale of the Project and the nature of excavation required, it is not anticipated that there will be any significant impacts to soils and geology as a consequence of the construction or operation of the Project.

**Hydrology:** The principal potential impacts to surface water are associated with discharges to the receiving watercourses, in particular the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA. It is anticipated that there will be no significant effect on hydrology or water quality during the operational phase. During construction there is the potential for pollution of watercourses from sediment loading and associated anthropogenic polluting substances as a result of surface water run-off or spills on site. It is considered that the enforcement of industry best practice pollution prevention measures will remove the likelihood of significant adverse impacts to surrounding watercourses occurring (for example CIRIA Guideline Document C532 Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites and C648 Control of water pollution from linear construction projects).

**Hydrogeology:** Hydrogeological assessment addresses the potential impact of the Project on groundwater features and groundwater flow regime.

As the Project will be constructed on developed land and will not involve significant cut or fill, it is considered that there will be no likely significant impact on the groundwater regime during either construction or operation.

**Biodiversity:** The Project is adjacent to and within two European sites, namely the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA.

Having regard to the location, nature and size of the proposed development, it is considered that the only likely significant risks to biodiversity are accidental pollution of surface waters and potential disturbance to bird species in the SPA as a result of noise impacts during construction. The cantilevered boardwalk will be built over the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA on habitats that is currently low scrub, dominated by non-native species (although not invasive species).

A Habitats Directive 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 Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). This assessment addresses the potential impact the project may have on the Qualifying interests (habitats and species) and Special Conservation Interests (Birds) of the designated sites and the conservation objectives for same. The AA Screening Report concluded that AA is not required in respect of the Project.

**Archaeology, Architecture and Cultural Heritage:** There are a number of recorded monuments and protected structures in Navan. However, due to the nature of the construction and operation of the Project, it is considered that it will not have any significant effect on any of these monuments or structures.

**Material Assets and Land:** Projects may affect material assets if they involve any of the following:

- Acquisition of land;
- Loss of land used by the community;
- Demolition of private property;
- Revaluation of or change in the development potential of adjoining lands / properties.

The Project does not require the demolition of any buildings nor the acquisition or permanent interference with lands used by the community. The land is zoned as Commercial Town or Village Centre in the Navan Development Plan (2013-2019).

**Landscape and Visual Amenity:** As the Project is located principally on existing roads, it is unlikely to have a significant impact on the landscape of the area.

During construction, the presence of plant and machinery will detract from certain views. However, this is considered to be a slight impact which is short-term and easily offset by the benefits accrued at the operational stage.

**Resource and Waste Management:** The key phase with regard to resource and waste management is the construction phase. Due to the small scale of the Project, it is considered that there will not be a significant amount of waste generated during the construction phase and efforts will be made to re-use materials on site where possible, thus minimising waste.

**Interactions:** Whilst there will be interaction between the environmental topics, particularly between population and human health and landscape, noise and vibration and air quality and climate, the small scale and short-term nature of these interactions will not result in significant environmental impacts.

**Overall:** Environmental impacts associated with the proposed development will be minor and short-term and, therefore, significant environmental effects can be ruled out without the necessity for further surveys, investigations and assessments.

#### 4.6.4 Probability of the Impact

During the construction stage, noise nuisances and air pollution may occur.

#### 4.6.5 Duration, Frequency and Reversibility of the Impact

The potential impacts during the development will be associated with the construction stage. These impacts will be temporary, reversible and one-off.

#### 4.6.6 Cumulation with Other Projects

An initial review of plans and projects that may have the potential to result in cumulative impacts has been undertaken. This section considers plans and projects in Navan. Data sources included the following:

- Meath County Council website (planning and roads sections);
- An Bord Pleanála website (planning searches);
- Web search for major infrastructure projects in Navan; and,
- Navan Development Plan (2013 - 2019).

For the purposes of this cumulative assessment small scale and domestic developments were not considered given the urbanised nature of the Project and the fact that these developments would be subject to the stringent planning controls of Meath County Council.

A summary of relevant developments considered in the cumulative assessment are given below:

##### **Construction of a cantilevered pedestrian and cycling bridge along the existing 'New Bridge' (17/006)**

The Navan GDA Cycle Route will use the pedestrian and cycling bridge to cross the River Boyne. The bridge was granted planning permission and is currently under construction. The bridge was subject to AA Screening and ecological assessment which concluded that provided best practice control measures were put in place, there will be no impact on the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC/SPA.

##### **Navan Town Centre - Integrated Public Realm and Movement Plan (17/004)**

Upgrades to public areas in Navan Town including Market Square, Kennedy Plaza, Fair Green and various roads and laneways, the set back of bus stops, new taxi ranks, new pedestrian and cyclist facilities and traffic management within the town. The overall aim for the project is to provide a safer environment and facilitate successful growth of the town. A Natura Impact Statement was provided with the application. The project will provide an overall improvement to the Navan Town environment.

##### **Shared Cycling and Pedestrian Facility Between Navan and Kingscourt along the discussed Navan to Kingscourt Railway Line (P8/13007 and P8/13008)**

Construction of a 3 m wide greenway on an disused railway line. The construction will involve the provision of an unbound surface, access control, fencing, a bridge over the N52 and so ancillary works such as footpath widening to facilitate access.

#### **Conclusion**

Having considered the anticipated overall potential impact with respect to each of these developments, it is considered that there are no likely significant effects on the environment when considered in combination with each other. It is therefore considered that the cumulative impact of the Project in combination with existing baseline actions (the projects listed above) is not significantly worse than any of the individual impacts associated with the construction and operation of the proposed development.



#### **4.6.7 Use of Natural Resources**

While exact quantities of materials required during the construction phase have not been determined at this stage, the amount of aggregates and materials that will be imported to the site during construction will be minor.

#### **4.6.8 Production of Waste**

Excavation works will be required for the construction of foundations. The quantity of waste will be small however and will not cause likely significant environmental effects.

#### **4.6.9 Pollution and Nuisances**

The Project is located within the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA. There is a risk of accidental pollution of surface waters and potential disturbance to bird species in the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA as a result of noise impacts during construction. However, the likelihood and severity of these effects will be minimised through compliance with construction management best practice.

#### **4.6.10 Risk of Major Accidents and/or Disasters**

The risk of accidents associated with this development would not cause unusual, significant or adverse effects of a type that would, in themselves, require an EIA. During the construction stage, the likelihood of an accidental spillage of construction materials into the aquatic environment will be managed through the adoption of strict best practice construction management. During the operational stage, it is anticipated that the risk of accidents and the resulting pollution risks will be reduced due to the new surface water drainage system.

#### **4.6.11 Risk to Human Health**

Temporary negative impacts to human health may be likely during the construction phase due to noise, dust, air quality, visual and traffic impacts. These impacts will be short term in nature and small in scale and are, therefore, not considered to be significant.

### **4.7 Location of Project**

The second criterion included in Annex III of the EIA Directive relates to the geographical location of projects, having regard in particular to:

- (a) The existing and approved land use;
- (b) The relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground;
- (c) The 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 national legislation; Natura 2000 areas designated by Member States pursuant to the Habitats Directive;
  - (vi) Areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation 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.

The following sections address each of the above points.

#### **4.7.1 Existing and Approved Land Use**

The footprint of the Project is largely on existing roads. The existing land use along the route is residential, parklands and the River Boyne. A small portion of the route is proposed as a cantilevered boardwalk over the bank of the River Boyne.

#### **4.7.2 Relative Abundance, Availability, Quality and Regenerative Capacity of Natural Resources**

The Project will have minimum impact on the quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area. All construction material will be imported for the construction of the Project.

#### **4.7.3 The Absorption Capacity of the Natural Environment**

##### **4.6.3.1 Overview**

The Project is located in Navan Town and is surrounded by roads, hard standing and buildings. The route crosses the River Boyne via New Bridge on the Kentstown Road.

Information obtained from the Geological Society of Ireland (GSI) mapping website [www.gsi.ie](http://www.gsi.ie) indicates that the bedrock in the area is dark limestone and shale. The GSI website shows the groundwater vulnerability to be High-Extreme for the proposed site.

##### **4.6.3.2 Watercourses**

The River Boyne, located immediately adjacent to the proposed development, rises near Carbury, Co. Kidare and enters the Irish Sea at Drogheda.

The site is within the catchment of the River Boyne and River Blackwater (the site is close to the confluence of these rivers) and any excess surface water from undrained areas on the site most likely makes its way to the rivers. The River Waterbody Water Framework Directive (WFD) Status for the River Boyne and River Blackwater were poor-moderate in the vicinity of the site between 1997 and 2012.

Preventative measures will be implemented during and post construction in order to reduce the risk of pollution to surface waters.

##### **4.6.3.3 Coastal Zones**

There are no coastal zones in the study area of the Project.

##### **4.6.3.4 Mountain and Forest Areas**

There are no mountains or areas of forestry within the study area of the Project.

##### **4.6.3.5 Nature Reserves and Parks**

There are no nature reserves or parks affected by the Project.

#### **4.6.3.6 Nationally Designated Sites**

There are no National Designated Sites (NHA or pNHA) affected by the Project.

#### **4.6.3.7 European Sites**

The River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC is located within the site. The River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA is located approximately 10 m from the site. It has been concluded that the Project does not have the potential to impact, either directly or indirectly, the Qualifying Interests or Special Conservation Interests of any European site. Consequently, it is clear that there will be no adverse impacts on the Conservation Objectives of any European sites as a result of the Project.

#### **4.6.3.8 Environmental Quality Standards**

There are no known areas in which the environmental quality standards shall be exceeded.

#### **4.6.3.9 Densely Populated Areas**

The location of the Project is in Navan Town. The development is not expected to affect any densely populated areas. It is unlikely that there will be negative impacts to these areas due to the construction of the proposed development due to its small scale and the implementation of best practice guidelines.

There is not likely to be any significant impact on road users as a result of the Project. Construction will be for a short duration and will not impede traffic flow in the town. During operation it is intended that the proposed development will lead to a reduction in vehicular traffic, particularly during peak times.

#### **4.6.3.10 Landscapes and Sites of Historical, Cultural or Archaeological Significance**

There are a large number of architectural and archaeological sites or structures within the study area. No architectural or archaeological sites will be directly affected by the Project and any indirect impacts that arise are not expected to be significant.

#### **4.6.3.11 Designated Focal Points/ Views**

There will be no views, prospects or scenic routes affected by the Project.

### **4.8 Characteristics of the Potential Impacts**

#### **4.8.1 Extent of the Impact**

The proposed development consists a 2.9 km cycleway consisting of 2 m wide cycle paths with a 3 m wide cantilevered boardwalk for a 100 m section between the Kentstown Road Bridge (New Bridge) and Circular Road.

#### 4.8.2 Transfrontier Nature of the Impact

There are no transfrontier impacts associated with the Project.

#### 4.8.3 Magnitude and Complexity of the Impact

**Air Quality and Climate:** The Project involves the design and construction of a high-quality cycling facility through Navan Town. The objective of the project is to provide a facility for cyclists thus having no significant operational impact on air quality and climate. It is considered that the level of construction traffic required for a project of this scale will not have a significant impact on the local air quality or climate; neither will a construction project of this scale result in any significant generation of dust.

**Noise and Vibration:** At operation an increase in the number of cyclists will have negligible impact on noise or vibration in the local environment. It is also considered that the level of construction traffic and construction operations required for a project of this scale will be short term and will not result in the creation of any significant levels of noise or vibration. Furthermore works will be carried out in compliance with BS5228: Part 1 and the European Communities (Noise Emission by Equipment for Use Outdoors) Regulations, 2001 which will ensure a controlled level of noise during construction phase.

**Population and Human Health:** The objective of any population and human health assessment is to examine the potential impact of the construction and operation of the Project on the local community and business activities in the local area.

The development of the Project will pose minor noise and visual impacts to residents and businesses during construction. During the operational stage, the Project will have negligible adverse effects on human beings living along the route and will provide a high quality amenity for the local residents.

The Project will have positive impacts on the local population as it will encourage a move towards sustainable transport and reduce the amount of motorised traffic in Navan Town.

**Soils and Geology:** Due to the scale of the Project and the nature of excavation required, it is not anticipated that there will be any significant impacts to soils and geology as a consequence of the construction or operation of the Project.

**Hydrology:** The principal potential impacts to surface water are associated with discharges to the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA. It is anticipated that there will be no significant effect on hydrology or water quality during the operational phase. During construction there is the potential for pollution of watercourses from sediment loading and associated anthropogenic polluting substances as a result of surface water run-off or spills on site. It is considered that the enforcement of industry best practice pollution prevention measures will remove the likelihood of significant adverse impacts to surrounding watercourses occurring (for example CIRIA Guideline Document C532 Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites and C648 Control of water pollution from linear construction projects).

**Hydrogeology:** Hydrogeological assessment addresses the potential impact of the Project on groundwater features and groundwater flow regime.

As the Project will be constructed on developed land and will not involve significant cut or fill, it is considered that there will be no likely significant impact on the groundwater regime during either construction or operation.

**Biodiversity:** The footprint of the Project consists almost entirely of developed land. The route travels within the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA.

The effects on the receiving environment may include the loss and degradation of habitats within and in proximity to the Project. During construction the mobilisation of sediment and the release of pollutants may result in a reduction in water quality of watercourses that or form part of European sites. Noise and vibration from machines may result in the temporary displacement of fauna. The ambient noise levels in Navan Town centre and the fact that the development will cater for non-motorised traffic will mean that there will be no negative impacts from noise during operation.

A 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 Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). This assessment addresses the potential impact the project may have on the Qualifying interests (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.

**Archaeology, Architecture and Cultural Heritage:** There are a number of recorded monuments and protected structures along the existing railway and within the study area. It is considered that the Project will not have a likely significant effect on any of these monuments or structures however due to the nature of the construction and operation of the project.

**Material Assets and Land:** A construction project may affect material assets if it involves any of the following:

- Acquisition of land;
- Loss of land used by the community;
- Demolition of private property;
- Revaluation of or change in the development potential of adjoining lands / properties.

The majority of the proposed development will be on existing roads. This will involve the acquisition the following pieces of private land:

- Convent Road- South of the railway line the route will require land take from the disused convent and the demolition of disused buildings.
- Convent Road- North of the railway line the route will require land from the school. The boundary and some trees will be removed and set back.
- Railway Road- This demolition of a private house extension is required to accommodate the cycle route.

These changes will involve permanent interference, however the scale is small and the benefits to people including school children will outweigh the loss of private land. These changes are considered to have an overall positive impact on people living locally. The land is zoned as Commercial Town/ Village Centre in the Meath County Development Plan (2016-2022).

**Landscape and Visual Amenity:** The construction of the Project is not expected to have a significant effect on the visual amenity. The

There are no protected views within the area that will be affected by the proposed development and while there may be impacts due to the construction phase, these will be short-term and are not likely to be significant.

**Resource and Waste Management:** The key phase with regard to resource and waste management is the construction phase. Due to the small scale of the Project, it is considered that there will not be a significant amount of waste generated during the construction phase and efforts will be made to re-use materials on site where possible, thus minimising waste.

**Interactions:** Whilst there will be interaction between the environmental topics, particularly between human beings and landscape, noise and vibration and air quality and climate, the small scale and short-term nature of these interactions will not result in significant environmental impacts.

**Overall:** Environmental impacts associated with the proposed development will be minor and short term and therefore, significant environmental effects can be ruled out without the necessity for further surveys, investigations and assessments.

#### **4.8.4 Probability of the Impact**

During the construction stage, noise nuisances and air pollution may occur.

#### **4.8.5 Duration, Frequency and Reversibility of the Impact**

The potential impacts during the development will be associated with the construction stage. These impacts will be temporary, reversible and one-off.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This EIA Screening Report has been prepared in accordance with a methodology that is based on *Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA): Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development* (DEHLG, 2003), *Guidelines on information to be contained in EIS* (EPA, 2002) and *Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on Screening* (EC, 2017). *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, Draft August 2017* (EPA, 2017) was also consulted.

### **5.2 Mandatory EIA**

The proposed Navan GDA Cycle Route does not exceed any of the thresholds outlined in the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, that would trigger a mandatory requirement to prepare an EIAR.

### **5.3 Sub-threshold EIA**

The proposed development is sub-threshold and therefore is assessed in accordance with Article 27 of the European Communities (EIA) Regulations, 1989.

#### **5.3.1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development**

The proposed development will comprise the development of 2.9 km of cycle tracks through Navan Town. This will be mix of segregated cycle routes, on road shared cycle track and a cantilevered boardwalk.

#### **5.3.2 Location of the Proposed Development**

The proposed development is located in Navan Town, Co. Meath.

#### **5.3.3 Characteristics of Potential Impacts**

The majority of the impacts associated with the construction stage will be short term and reversible. The AA Screening Report for the Project concluded that AA is not required.

#### **5.3.4 Potential Significant Effects**

Due to the small scale and short-term construction of the Project, potential significant effects have been ruled out and further detailed assessment is not required.

#### **5.3.5 Conclusion and Recommendations**

Under Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 it is considered that the proposed development does not have potential to have significant effects on the environment for those reasons listed in the previous sections and, as such, it is recommended that an EIAR is not required.

## **APPENDIX A EIA Screening Checklist**



Questions to be Considered	Yes / No / ? Briefly Describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?
<b>Brief Project Description:</b> Development of 2.9 km of cycle tracks through Navan Town		
1. Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the Project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies, etc)?	<b>No</b> Construction of 2.9 km of cycle track with a town centre.	<b>No</b> The small scale of the Project will ensure any physical changes will not result in a significant effect
2. Will construction or operation of the Project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	<b>Yes</b> Land and natural resources will be required.	<b>No</b> The volume of materials required will not be large enough to result in a significant effect.
3. Will the Project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	<b>Yes</b> Concrete, oils, etc will be used during construction.	<b>No</b> Construction best practice and guidance will be followed during construction.
4. Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction, operation or decommissioning?	<b>Yes</b> Small quantities of unsuitable material will be excavated during construction.	<b>No</b> Due to the small scale of quantities excavated during construction, no significant effects are likely to be caused.
5. Will the Project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	<b>Yes</b> The construction phase will produce air pollutants.	<b>No</b> Air pollution levels are not anticipated to exceed permitted thresholds.
6. Will the Project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	<b>Yes</b> The construction phase will create noise and vibration.	<b>No</b> The extent of construction works will be small scale and short term and therefore will not result in significant effects. It is not expected that there will be an increase in noise and vibration during the operation phase in comparison to those at present.

Questions to be Considered	Yes / No / ? Briefly Describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?
7. Will the Project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	<b>Yes</b> Both the construction and operation phases will have risk of pollutants entering surface water and groundwater.	<b>No</b> The Project will be designed and constructed in accordance with best practice guidelines in order to reduce these risks and to remove likely significant effects.
8. Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project which could affect human health or the environment?	<b>Yes</b> Both the construction and operation phases will have risk of accidents which could affect human health or the environment.	<b>No</b> The Project will be designed and constructed in accordance with best practice guidelines.
9. Will the Project result in social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	<b>Yes</b> The provision of cycle facilities will assist in people moving to more sustainable forms of transport.	<b>No</b> The positive social effects resulting from the Project are not likely to be significant.
10. Are there any other factors which should be considered such as consequential development which could lead to environmental effects or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
11. Is the project located within or close to any areas which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the project?	<b>Yes</b> The River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA fall within part of the site. There are no architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage sites on or around the site location that could be affected by the development.	<b>No</b> The Project will be designed and constructed in accordance with best practice guidelines and the extent of works will not be large enough to result in significant impacts. It is considered that the Project will have no direct impact on any national or Natura 2000 sites or recorded monuments or structures.
12. Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, which could be affected by the project?	<b>Yes</b> The River Boyne is located c. 20 m from the Project. This watercourse forms part of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA.	<b>No</b> The proposed development will be designed and constructed in accordance with best practice guidelines and the extent of works will not be large enough to result in impacts to the River Boyne.

Questions to be Considered	Yes / No / ? Briefly Describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?
13. Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, overwintering, migration, which could be affected by the project?	<b>Yes</b> The River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA are within the site and support a range of protected habitats and species.	<b>No</b> Ecological surveys determined that there were no sensitive habitats or species close to the Project which could be impacted by the construction or operation of the project.
14. Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters (or features of the marine environment) on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
15. Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
16. Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	<b>Yes</b> The location of the Project is in Navan Town.	<b>No</b> The Project will enhance public access in Navan Town.
17. Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
18. Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	<b>Yes</b> The Project is in a built up area.	<b>No</b> The extent of works associated with the Project is not of a sufficient scale to result in impacts to surrounding populations.
19. Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

Questions to be Considered	Yes / No / ? Briefly Describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?
20. Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	<b>Yes</b> A 100 m section will involve a cantilevered boardwalk over the existing bank.	<b>No</b> There will be some habitat loss/ degradation due to shading along the Kells Road. This is a narrow strip is level with the existing road and is currently disturbed, therefore the loss is not considered significant. A buffer of >10m will remain between the boardwalk and the river.
21. Are there existing land uses on or around the location e.g. homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining or quarrying which could be affected by the project?	<b>Yes</b> The removal of a number of boundaries and a house extension will be required to accommodate the Project.	<b>No</b> These alterations are minor.
22. Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
23. Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, which could be affected by the project?	<b>Yes</b> The Project is in a built up area.	<b>No</b> The extent of the works will means the local area will not be affected.
24. Are there any areas on or around the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities, which could be affected by the project?	<b>Yes</b> Navan has over 15 schools.	<b>No</b> The Project will improve the access in and around Navan.
25. Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

Questions to be Considered	Yes / No / ? Briefly Describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?
26. Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
27. Is the project location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

