FEHILY TIMONEY

CONSULTANTS IN ENGINEERING, ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE & PLANNING

Ashbourne Skate Park

SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

Prepared for: Meath County Council

comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Date: February 2022

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ASHBOURNE SKATE PARK

SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

REVISION CONTROL TABLE, CLIENT, KEYWORDS AND ABSTRACT
User is responsible for Checking the Revision Status of This Document

Rev. No.	Description of Changes	Prepared by:	Checked by:	Approved by:	Date:
0	Issue for Comment	GL/CW/AM	JK/JON	BG	22.11.2021
1	Issue for Planning	CW/AM	RM	BG	03.02.2022

Client: Meath County Council

Keywords: Meath, Ashbourne, Screening, Appropriate Assessment

Abstract: Report to inform Screening for Appropriate Assessment, Ashbourne Skatepark

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1 INTRODUCTION

Fehily Timoney & Company (FT) were commissioned by Meath County Council to provide consultancy services in respect of the proposed Ashbourne Skate Park, Co. Meath. An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared in respect of the proposed project, as required by Article 6 of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive).

This Appropriate Assessment Screening is part of the submission for the Part 8 Planning Application for the Ashbourne Skatepark development.

The Project Brief identifies the following over-arching objectives for the Ashbourne Skate Park as follows:

- development of a public amenity area as part of the overall development of Ashbourne Linear Park
- to protect and retain existing green infrastructure
- to integrate and connect green spaces and points of interest
- to enhance existing links and develop new links to create a public amenity for the people of Ashbourne

This report is an assessment of the likelihood of the proposed park to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and is based on best available scientific knowledge.

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Legend

Site Boundary

TITLE:	Site Location		
PROJECT:	Ashbourne Skate Park		
FIGURE NO:	1.1		
CLIENT:	Meath County Council		
SCALE:	1:50000	**REVISION:**	0
DATE:	15/06/2021	**PAGE SIZE:**	A3

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N W E S

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1.1 Legislative Context

Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive) provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The Directive requires that where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, while not directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the site, it will be subject to 'Appropriate Assessment' to identify any implications for the European site in view of the site's Conservation Objectives.

Specifically, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states:

> *6(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (Natura 2000 sites) but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.*
>
> *6(4) If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.*

The provisions of Article 6 do not apply where the proposed plan or project is '*connected with or necessary to the management of the site'.* In this case, the proposed Ashbourne Skate Park is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site(s) and as such an assessment as to whether the project would be likely to have significant effects on European Sites must be carried out. This assessment has been termed as 'Report to inform the Screening for Appropriate Assessment' in the transposing national legislation: Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 - 2020 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477/2011) as amended.

This national legislation requires that the Screening for Appropriate Assessment is carried out by the competent authority before consent for a plan or project is given. The competent authority in carrying out the screening assessment, is required to make an examination, analysis, evaluation, findings, conclusions and a final determination as to whether or not the proposed works either alone or in combination with other plans or projects would be likely to have significant effects on the relevant European site(s) in view of their conservation objectives.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Guidance

In the preparation of this assessment regard has been had to the relevant guidance, in particular:

- *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg (EC, 2002);
- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities*. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin (2010);
- *Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. European Commission (2018). Brussels, 21.11.2018 C (2018) 7621 final;
- Office of the Planning Regulator Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.

2.2 Assessment Protocol

The process of determining the likelihood of significant effects from a proposed project on European sites is an iterative process centred around a Source-Pathway-Receptor assessment.

The assessment commences with a description of the project and the associated likely significant environmental effects. The type of impacts which are likely due to the project are identified having regard to the spatial and temporal scale of the project, likely resource requirements and likely emissions. The zone of influence (ZoI) of the project is therefore defined, and the potential source-pathway-receptor (S-P-R) connectivity to any European Sites and their qualifying interests (QI) / special conservation interests (SCI) are identified.

The potential for in-combination effects with other plans and projects is also assessed having regard to the identified impacts of the project.

The likelihood of significant effects on the European Sites within the ZoI is determined having regard to the sensitivity of the European site to the impacts associated with the project on its own and in combination with other plans and projects. Having regard to the European Commission Communication on the Precautionary Principle (EC, 2000), where the likelihood of significant effects cannot be demonstrated on the basis of scientific evidence (e.g. through quantifiable cause and effect relationship), the precautionary principle is adopted and significant effects are assumed.

Where significant effects are determined to be likely, or where there is uncertainty regarding the likelihood of significant effects, the project will be required under law to be subjected to Appropriate Assessment.

2.3 Information Consulted in the Preparation of this Report

A desk study was conducted and comprised a review of the following publications, data and datasets:

- National Parks and Wildlife Service – online European site network information, including site conservation objectives www.npws.ie;
- National Parks and Wildlife Service – Information on the status of EU protected habitats in Ireland (Article 17 Reports);
- National Biodiversity Data Centre – www.biodiversityireland.ie;
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (on-line map-viewer);
- Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government – online land use mapping www.myplan.ie/en/index.html;
- Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government- EIA Portal https://www.housing.gov.ie/planning/environmental-assessment/environmental-impact-assessmenteia/eia-portal;
- Water Framework Directive website – www.catchments.ie;
- Ordnance Survey of Ireland – Mapping and Aerial photography www.osi.ie;
- Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland https://bsbi.org/maps; and
- BirdWatch Ireland breeding and wetland bird surveys.

3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROJECT AND IDENTIFICATION OF IMPACTS

3.1 Project Overview

The proposed project comprises the development of a public amenity area and skate park as part of the overall development of Ashbourne Linear Park. The aim of the Ashbourne Linear Park project is to protect and retain existing green infrastructure, integrate and connect green spaces and points of interest, enhance existing links and develop new links to create a public amenity for the people of Ashbourne.

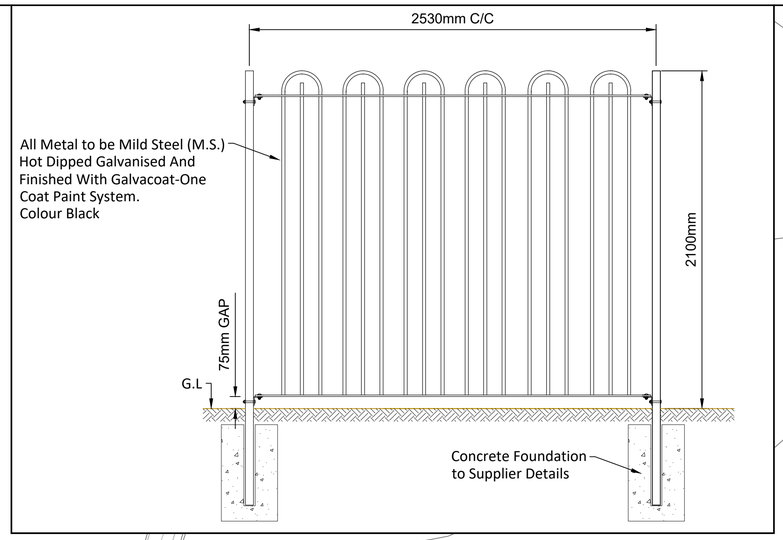
The location of the site is shown in Figure 1.1. The proposed site layout map is shown in Figure 3.1.

The development of the public amenity area and skate park includes the following:

- Construction of a Pedestrian footbridge crossing the Broad Meadow River.
- Development of a “Plaza style” skate park recreational facility.
- Construction of a Carpark and associated entrance way
- Construction of Internal Footpaths.
- Installation of a Riverside Boardwalk/Walkway
- Installation of Street Furniture and public lighting
- Soft Landscaping works

The development works will also require the following temporary works

- Installation and removal of a Temporary Access Road and Craneage Hardstanding area.



TYPICAL RAILING DETAIL 1

Scale 1:75

PLAN

Scale 1:750

Legend

- Site Boundary
- +64.750 — Proposed Design Level - Subject to Section 50 Application and Detailed Design
- * — Potential Area for Compensatory Flood Plain (Subject to Detailed Design and Section 50 Application)
- SuDS Paving System
- Proposed Bike Rack
- Existing Water Feature
- Proposed Landscape Screening
- Proposed Upgrade of Existing Fence to Bow Top Railing as per Typical Detail
- Proposed Gate

0m 8m 15m 23m 30m 38m 45m 53m 60m 68m 75m

Scale 1:750

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Rev.	Description	App By	Date
A	Issue For Comment	JON	15.07.21
B	Issue For Planning	JON	19.08.21

PROJECT: **ASHBOURNE SKATE PARK**

CLIENT: **MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL**

SHEET: **SITE LAYOUT**

Date: 15.07.21

Project number: P20-343

Scale (@ A1-): 1:750

Drawn by: NS

Checked by: GL

Drawing Number: **P20-343-0100-0002**

Rev: **B**

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Wednesday 1 December 2021

3.1.1 Construction Phase

The following section provides details regarding the proposed construction phase of the development.

Overview

The proposed works programme is estimated at 24-32 weeks.

All works will take place during the hours of daylight.

There will be two access points to the site. Access to the site south of the Broad Meadow River will be via the existing entrance located to the east of the site onto the Churchfields road. Access to the site north of the Broad Meadow River will require the construction of a new temporary access road to the northern boundary.

Footbridge

The construction of the proposed footbridge will require the construction of two bridge abutments and two bridge piers onsite. The steel pedestrian bridge, constructed offsite, will be craned into position. The construction sequence of the pedestrian footbridge is as follows:

- Installation of Temporary Access Roads and Craneage pad locations.
- Excavation of ground for pier and abutment foundations.
- Placing of formwork and steel reinforcement.
- Pour foundation, piers and abutments.
- Craneage of 3 no. bridge sections.
- Backfilling and compaction of soil.

Two piers are required for the bridge proposed. Typical pier structures[1] comprise of a 2500mm x 2500mm x 600mm deep RC pad footing foundation supporting a 450mm diameter RC pier supporting a 500mm x 500mm RC capping beam. Depth of excavation approximately 1500mm.

The abutment structures comprise of a 9000mm x 2500mm x 500mm deep RC pad footing supporting a 500mm thick RC abutment wall. Depth of excavation approximately 2500mm.The construction of the piers will comprise of a discrete excavation on the banks of the river. No in-stream works are proposed. The distance from the edge of the excavation to the river will be 0.5m – 1.0m approximately. The excavated materials will be removed and stockpiled onsite for backfilling and landscaping. The formwork will be erected, and steel reinforcement added, prior to the pouring of the concrete.

The timber formwork will form a discrete containment vessel for the poured concrete, in the extremely unlikely event of a formwork failure the poured concrete will be retained within the foundation excavation.

The excavated soil will be used to backfill about the pier. All vehicles will be serviced and maintained daily to ensure that there are no leakages. Spill kits are to be present on site. The proposed bridge works will also be subject to the approval of IFI.

Photo 1: Excavated Ground and Steel Reinforcement (Pier)

Photo 2 :Pier Structure: Backfilled

Photo 3: Excavated Ground and Steel Reinforcement (Abutment)

Photo 4: Abutment Structure:

Temporary Access Road

The construction sequence of the temporary access road and craneage pads is as follows:

- Stripping of topsoil.
- Placement of separation geotextile.
- Laying sub-base material – Clause 6F1 or similar.
- Laying base material – Clause 804 or similar.

Approximately 200 linear meters of temporary access road is required for the proposed development. This will require the importation of approximately 240m^3 of sub-base (Clause 6F1) material and 80m^3 of base course material (Clause 6F1). A temporary craneage pad will be constructed to the north of the site.

Photo 5: Typical Temporary Access Road Construction

Photo 6: Typical Temporary Access Road

It is proposed upon completion of the bridge works the majority of the access roads constructed will be removed with the materials being reused elsewhere within the works (footpath or carpark works) or elsewhere offsite.

Skate Park

The construction sequence of the plaza style skate park is as follows:

- Stripping of topsoil.
- Laying sub-base material.
- Lifting and positioning of precast concrete and metal components.
- Pouring of Concrete base to areas between precast components
- Surface finishes to poured concrete base i.e. power floating

The skate park is approximately 500m^2, requiring a depth of excavation of approximately 500mm. This will require the importation of 150m^3 of sub-base stone material and 100m^3 of concrete.

Photo 7: Lifting and Position of Precast Concrete Components[2]

Photo 8 :Typical Skate park[3]

Car-Park

The construction sequence of the car-park is as follows:

- Excavation of ground.
- Preparation of sub-grade material.
- Laying sub-base and drainage.
- Laying bedding course.
- Laying cellular structural reinforcement and infill.

[2] Images: Kilkenny Now - https://kilkennynow.ie/wow-kilkennys-new-skate-park-emerges-from-rubble-of-old-brewery-site/
[3] As per Ashbourne Linear Park Phase 1 design

The proposed car park is 364m^2, requiring a depth of excavation of approximately 400mm. This will require the importation of 91m^3 of sub-base stone material, 18.2m^3 of bedding sand material and 36.4m^3 of gravel infill material.

Photo 9: Typical SUDS Cark-Park Construction

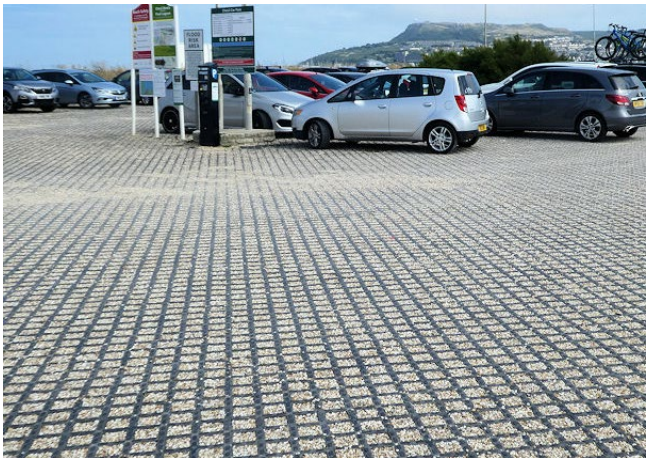
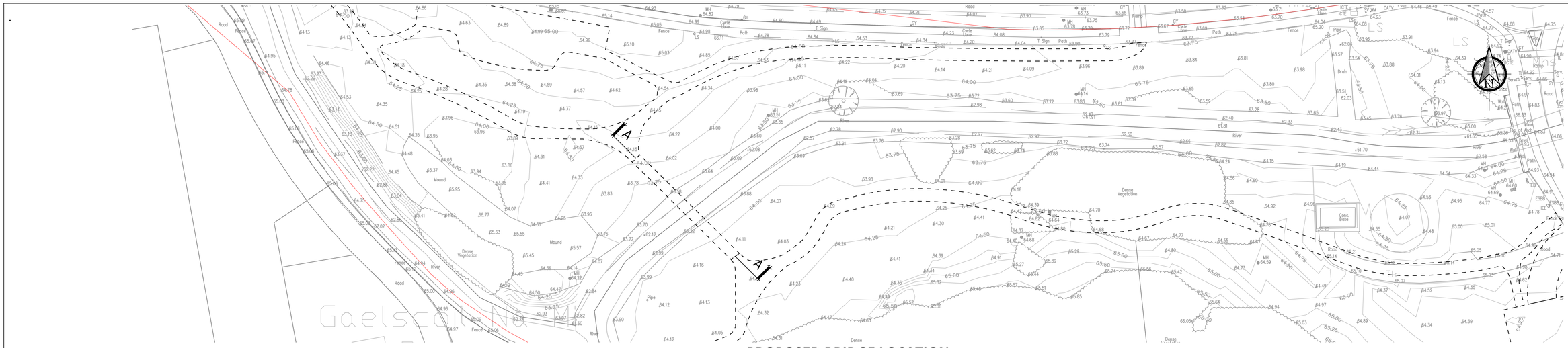
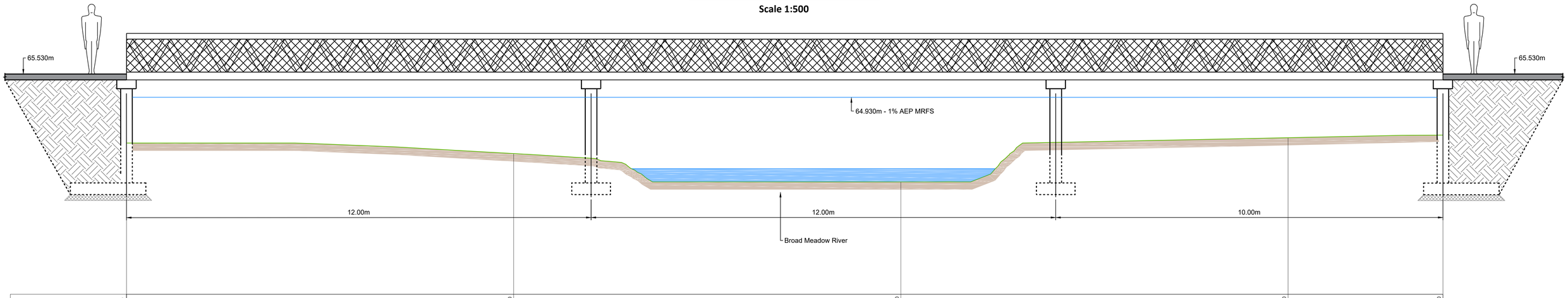


Photo 10: Typical SUDS Cark Park



PROPOSED BRIDGE LOCATION

Scale 1:500



Chainage	0.000	10.000	20.000	30.000	34.000
Extg Ground Level	63.901	63.629	62.899	64.038	64.106

PROPOSED BRIDGE SECTION

Scale 1:50

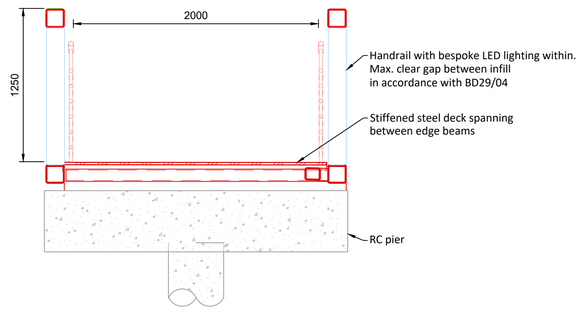
Notes

Warren steel girder truss finish in RAL 5008 Grey Blue to match existing pedestrian bridge.

Final bridge design subject to Section 50 approval.

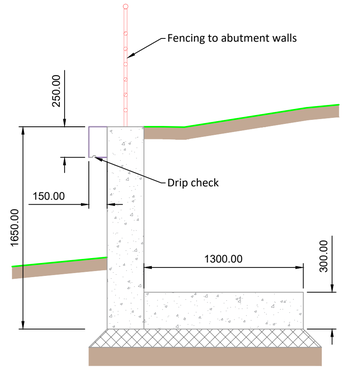
Foundation subject to detailed geotechnical design.

Bridge works subject to Inland Fisheries Ireland Consultation and approval.



TYPICAL DECK SECTION

Scale 1:25



TYPICAL WING WALL SECTION

Scale 1:25

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Rev.	Description	App By	Date
A	Issue for Comment	JON	15.07.21
B	Issue For Planning	JON	19.08.21
C	Issue For Planning	JON	01.02.22

PROJECT	ASHBOURNE SKATE PARK
CLIENT	MEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
SHEET	Bridge Details
Date	15.07.21
Project number	P20-343
Scale (@ A1-)	As Shown
Drawn by	NS
Drawing Number	P20-343-0400-0001
Rev	C
Checked by	GL

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Tuesday 1 February 2022

Footpath

The construction sequence of the footpaths is as follows:

- Stripping of topsoil.
- Laying sub-base material.
- Lay timber edge.
- Lay base course material.
- Laying bituminous surface course material.

There is approximately 550 linear meters of footpath in the proposed development. The footpath requires a depth of excavation of approximately 300mm. This will require the importation of 220m^3 of sub-base material, 55m^3 of base course material and 55m^3 of bituminous tarmacadam. Approximately 1,100 linear meters of timber edging will also be required.

Photo 11: Typical Footpath Construction

Photo 12: Typical Footpath

Riverside Walkway

The construction sequence of the riverside walkway is as follows:

- Installation of elevated foundations
- Construction of boardwalk structure.

The proposed riverside walkway runs for approximately 50m along the bank of the Broad Meadow River. The boardwalk construction will be either a wooden or recycled plastic super structure. The proposed superstructure will be supported on discrete screw piles or cast in placed post foundations.

Photo 13: Typical Boardwalk Structure[4]

Screw pile foundations are installed by a rotary drill attached to the front of a standard excavator, the install is relatively quick and requires no excavation. Cast in place post foundations require the excavation of a small diameter (300mm -500mm) hole within the embankment to a depth of approximately 500-750mm. A post is then installed within the excavation and concrete is poured around it. Each foundation will require 0.03m^3 – 0.15m^3 of concrete per individual footing.

Photo 14: Screwpile Foundation for Walkway[5]

Photo 15: Typical Cast In Place Concrete Post[6]

4 Imagery: Roughan O'Donovan - https://www.rod.ie/projects/boyne-greenway

[5] Source: https://trends.archiexpo.com/techno-pieux-inc/project-61493-237024.html
[6] http://www.milmarpolebuildings.com/pole-barn-foundation-options/

Street Furniture and Lighting

The proposed development will also include the installation and erection of street lighting and street furniture.

Photo 16: Typical Street Furniture

Photo 17: Typical Street Lighting Column

Landscaping

The proposed development will also comprise of landscaping areas including shrubs, hedges, trees, and grasses. Landscaping works will require the creation of excavation or rotavating of planned areas followed by the targeted planting of trees, shrubbery and flowers as appropriate

Landscape planting will be designed by a landscape architect and detailed design stage and will focus on planting of native Irish trees and shrubbery as appropriate. Planting will focus of the creation of a diverse range of habitats.

Table 3-1 outlines the distance from the proposed project elements to the Broad Meadow River.

3.1.2 Operational Phase

There will be no operational activities associated with this site other than ongoing landscaping maintenance. The landscaping maintenance includes litter control, weeding, pruning and trimming of shrubs, hedges and trees, mulching and grass cutting.

Table 3-1: Project Elements Distance to Broad Meadow River

Project Element	Distance (m)
Skate Park	29.5
Footbridge Pier Foundations	0.5
Footbridge Abutment Foundations	11.0
Car Park	37.0
Cranage Pad	15.00
Riverside Boardwalk	2.5

Project Element	Distance (m)
Footpath	8.5

3.2 Baseline Environment

The proposed site comprises approximately 2.9 hectares of land situated in a suburban area, 0.98km south-west of Ashbourne town centre. It borders a housing estate to the south, as well as a local town road to the north. The lands within the site are low-lying, with a predominantly flat topography. Lands bordering the adjacent housing estate to the south-east are slightly elevated in parts. The site contains several semi-natural habitats, with elements of dry meadows, wet grassland, scrub, several mature native trees as well as two lowland depositing streams, the previously mentioned Broad Meadow River and the Dunshaughlin Stream which runs from the northwest corner, flowing in a south-easterly direction and joining the Broad Meadow River in the southwest of the site.

National Guidance (DEHLG, 2010) states that screening for Appropriate Assessment should be carried out for any European Site(s) within the likely 'Zone of Influence' (ZoI) of a plan or project. CIEEM (2018) defines the ZoI as *"… the area over which ecological features may be affected by biophysical changes as a result of the proposed project and associated activities*."

In defining the ZoI, as a precautionary approach, a site buffer of 15km was first applied to identify sites which may be affected by the proposals; these were then assessed on a case-by-case basis having regard to the likely spatial and temporal biophysical changes associated with the likely impacts of a park development at this location (which was determined with reference to relevant published literature and guidance documents), and aided by the EPA's Appropriate Assessment tool to determine hydrological pathways (https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/AAGeoTool).

The lands proposed for development for the skate park are fully outside of any area designated as a European site and there is no direct connectivity to any European Site. The Broad Meadow River which flows through the site, deposits into the Malahide Estuary SAC, some 13.7km to the southeast (straight-line distance) and 15.4km downstream and presents a direct hydrological link to the Malahide Estuary SAC and the Malahide Estuary SPA (14.1km to the east of the proposed park).

Two further European sites are within 15km of the project: Rogerstown Estuary SAC (14 km east of the site) and Rogerstown Estuary SPA (15km east of the site). As there is no functional link between the site of the proposed park and these European sites, no further mention will be given to these sites.

Malahide Estuary SAC is an internationally important wetland site and has been designated for: Mudflats and sandflats, Atlantic and Mediterranean salt meadows, salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand, shifting dunes (white dunes) and fixed coastal dunes (grey dunes).

The conservation objectives for Malahide Estuary SAC are:

- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide in Malahide Estuary SAC.
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand in Malahide Estuary SAC.

- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco Puccinellietalia maritimae*) in Malahide Estuary SAC.
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) in Malahide Estuary SAC.
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ('white dunes') in Malahide Estuary SAC.
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes') in Malahide Estuary SAC.

Site-specific attributes and targets have been set out in the Conservation Objectives Report (NPWS, 2014b) for the achievement of the conservation condition. Table 3-2 sets out the qualifying interests of the site and the known threats and pressures on the achievement of the conservation targets for the site.

Table 3-2: Malahide Estuary SAC Conservation Information

Qualifying Interests	Threats (occurs: I = inside the site, O = outside the site and B = both inside and outside the site)
• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) • Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) • Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand • Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes • Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)	High Risk Threats: • D01.05 Bridge, viaduct (i) • J02.01.02 reclamation of land from sea, estuary and marsh (i) • G01.02 Walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles (i) • G01.01 Nautical sports (i) • G01.03 Motorised vehicles (i) Medium risk threats: • A08 fertilisation (o) • I01 invasive non-native species (i) • D01.02 Roads, motorways (o) • G02.01 Golf course (o) • E01 Urbanised areas, human habitation (o) Low risk threats: • F03.01 Hunting (i)

Path: R:\Map Production\2021\P20-343\Workspace\P20_343_GIS_Fig3-2_HabitatMap_A3.mxd

Legend

- Site Boundary

Habitats

- BL3, Buildings and Artificial Surfaces
- ED2, Spoil and bare ground
- GS2, Dry meadows and grassy verges
- GS4, Wet Grassland
- WS1, Scrub
- WS1/WL2, Scrub/Treelines
- FW2, Depositing/Lowland Rivers

N
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0 25 50 100 Meters

TITLE:	Habitat Map		
PROJECT:	Ashbourne Skate Park		
FIGURE NO:	3.2		
CLIENT:	Meath County Council		
SCALE:	1:1500	**REVISION:**	0
DATE:	14/06/2021	**PAGE SIZE:**	A3

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Malahide Estuary SPA is an internationally important wetland site of high importance to wintering waterfowl and supports a particularly good diversity of species. The site is noted as supporting various breeding waterbirds, internationally important numbers of wintering waterbirds, and as providing important feeding and roosting areas for waders. There are also nationally important populations of various waterfowl and wader species.

The Conservation Objective for the site is to 'maintain the favourable conservation condition' for all of the Special Conservation Interest bird species and their supporting wetland habitats. Site-specific attributes and targets have been set out in the Conservation Objectives Report (NPWS 2013) (https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004025.pdf) for the achievement of the conservation condition. These mainly relate to the maintenance of a stable population and no significant decrease in distribution of the species within the SPA. Table 3-3 sets out the Special Conservation Interests of the SPA.

Table 3-3: Malahide Estuary SPA Conservation Information

Special Conservation Interests	Threats (occurs: I = inside the site, O = outside the site and B = both inside and outside the site)
• Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) • Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) • Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) • Pintail (*Anas acuta*) • Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) • Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) • Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) • Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) • Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) • Knot (*Calidris canutus*) • Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) • Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) • Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) • Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) • Wetland and Waterbirds	High risk threats: • G01.01 nautical sports (i) • J02.01.02 Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh (i)(o) • E01 urbanised areas, human habitats (o) • J02.01.02 Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh (o) • D01.01 Paths, tracks, cycling tracks (i) Medium risk threats: • D01.05 Bridge, viaduct (o) • D01.04 Railway lines, TGV (o) • I01 Invasive non-native species (i) • G01.02 walking, horse riding, non-motorised vehicles (i) • A08 fertilisation (o) • E02 industrial or commercial areas (o)

NBDC records indicate 49 protected species of bird have been recorded within the 10 km grid square O05 (in which the proposed development lands are located).

Those which are Red listed on the Birds of Conservation Concern Ireland (2020-2026) or Annex I listed in the Habitats Directive are listed below:

- Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)
- Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)
- Redwing (*Turdus iliacus)*
- Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)
- Common Redshank (*Tringa tetanus*)
- Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) were spotted on site during the ecological walkover in June 2021

Of these, the following are special conservation interests of the SPA: Golden Plover, Redshank, Snipe (not named but as a wader it belongs to the waterbirds).

However, the records have been documented at a 10km grid scale, and as such the information is non-specific to the area under consideration for the SDLR which is located in an urban setting.

3.3 Source Pathway Receptor Assessment

The OPR (2021) Practice Note PN01 recommends that the zone of influence of a project should be considered using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model.

European sites which may potentially be significantly affected by the proposed skate park are identified using the 'source-pathway-receptor' (S-P-R) conceptual model. The S-P-R model is a standard tool in environmental assessment to determine links between sensitive features and sources of impacts. In order for an effect to occur, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence of one of the elements of the mechanism means there is no likelihood for the effect to occur e.g., if there is no ecological pathway or functional link between the proposed development and the European site, there is no potential for impact and as such no potential for significant effects.

It is important to note that an impact may occur without having a significant effect. An impact is essentially the 'source' in the S-P-R assessment. It is the biophysical change caused to the environment by the project e.g., increase in sediment runoff due to ground disturbance. For the effect to be significant, the Qualifying Interests / Special Conservation Interests of the European site must be sensitive to the biophysical change.

Having regard to the 'Habitats directive assessment review package' set out in the guidance document 'Assessment of Plans and Projects significantly affecting European Sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC', (European Commission, 2001), the likely impacts of proposed works are set out relative to the following project features:

- Size and scale;
- Land-take;
- Physical changes to the environment;
- Resource requirements;
- Emissions, wastes and residues;
- Transportation requirements;
- Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning.

The source-pathway-receptor connectivity between these impacts and European sites is set out for the proposed park in Table 3-4.

Table 3-4: Source-Pathway-Receptor

Source		Pathway	Receptor	S-P-R connectivity
Potential Land-take & Scale of Development & physical change to the environment	The development of the skate park in Ashbourne is a relatively small development, encompassing 2.9 hectares of semi-natural habitat in a sub-urban environment. The land is already in use as a park and there is heavy footfall by pedestrians and dogs.	The proposed skate park is located wholly outside of any European Site. There will be no direct land take or physical change to any European site. Bird species of the Malahide Estuary SPA are coastal species and as such the lands which will be disturbed or lost in association with the development of the skate park located in an urban setting are not of significant value to these species. An examination of the Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCO) for the SPA shows no known roost locations for wintering SCI birds in close proximity to the lands which are under consideration for skate park. The distance of 14.1 km makes it unlikely for birds from the SPA to use the area for foraging.	Birds qualified as conservation objective in the SPA, only species that have been recorded within the 10km square the proposed site is located in, are discussed here (as provided by the National Biodiversity Data Centre): Common Redshank mostly forage in the muddier sections of mud flats and roost intertidally and supratidally, however there have been Redshank observed irregularly roosting and feeding terrestrially also. There has been one recorded sighting within the 10km square the study site is included in. This was as part of the *First Atlas of Wintering Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1981/82-1983/84.* European Golden Plover most often feed terrestrially in winter on agricultural and arable grasslands and feed on a variety of invertebrates. They also feed and roost intertidally, but have been observed roosting terrestrially on occasion.	S-P-R <u>NO</u> connectivity identified between the proposed skate park development and the Malahide Estuary SPA and the Malahide Estuary SAC through a biological link (effect on birds), as the birds from the SPA are unlikely to use the site according to available data.

Source		Pathway	Receptor	S-P-R connectivity
			There are seven records of Golden Plover sightings within the 10km square the study site is included in. Five of these sightings can be traced to 2 km squares a few km to the north east of the study area. Of the remaining two sightings, one was recorded in the 10 km in grid as part of *the First Atlas of Wintering Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1981/82-1983/84* surveys and one as part of the 2007-2011 Bird-Atlas surveys.	
Potential Resource Requirements	There will be no resources required from European Sites.	None	None	No S-P-R connectivity
Potential Emissions	**Noise Emissions** Noise, vibration, lighting and human presence, presence of during construction activities and general usage of the park.	The park is so far removed from the SPA (14.1km) and SAC (13.7km) that any noise, vibration and lighting emissions would not affect these European sites.	SCI species of the SPA are not using the site, which is not of suitable quality for coastal birds.	S-P-R <u>NO</u> connectivity identified between the proposed development and the Malahide Estuary SPA or the Malahide Estuary SAC through a biological link (effect on birds).
	Water Emissions The proposed construction works could result in some silt sediment and concrete/hydrocarbon emissions into waterways due to the proposed pedestrian bridge across the Broad Meadow River.	Very distant and remote hydrological link to the Malahide Estuary and two European Sites: The Malahide Estuary SAC (site code 000205, 13.7km – SE) and the Malahide Estuary SPA (site code 004025, 14.1km – E).	Malahide Estuary SPA is designated for a number of bird species (see Table 3-3 for list). A significant effect on these protected ecosystems caused by the construction of a bridge across the Broad Meadow River is however considered to be unlikely.	No S-P-R for a significant effect exists due to small scale of the project, distance from the river and the considerable distance (approximately 15.4km downstream) to these estuarine European sites (the Malahide Estuary SPA or the

Source		Pathway	Receptor	S-P-R connectivity
		These European sites are approximately 15.4km downstream from the proposed park. This is a considerable distance to the European Sites which are located in an estuary with a considerable dilution factor.	The small scale of the project, setback distance from the river and minimal amount of concrete used, makes it unlikely that emissions produced would reach or have a significant effect on the receptor sites located approximately 15.4km downstream from the proposed park.	Malahide Estuary SAC).

3.4 Potential Cumulative Impacts

In considering whether the proposed park, by itself or in combination with other plans and projects, has the potential to affect the conservation objectives of the European sites with S-P-R linkage to the proposed development, the following were considered:

- Meath County Council Planning Enquiry System (www.meath.ie/council/council-services/planning-and-building/planning-permission/view-or-search-planning-applications)
- Permitted plans and projects in the vicinity of the development and along the Broad Meadow River
- Proposed plans and projects in the vicinity of the development and along the Broad Meadow River

Proposed plans and projects in the vicinity

A planning search was carried out in July 2021 using the online planning enquiry system at: http://www.eplanning.ie/MeathCC/searchtypes and https://planning.agileapplications.ie/fingal for the townlands overlapping and abutting the proposed development site (listed below) and along the Broad Meadow River. The planning application references below belong to Meath Co. Council and Fingal Co. Council.

The townlands encompassing the proposed development site and surrounding area are:

- Ashbourne
- Curragha
- Oldtown

A small number of domestic developments and a single housing development (**Planning Application Reference: F17A/0357)** as well as a development of four poultry houses (**Planning Application Reference: F17A/0746**) and a Golf Club (**Planning Application Reference: AA181432)** are permitted within 5 km of the proposed Skate Park. The small scale of these projects precludes large-scale cumulative effects. The watercourses closest to the above-mentioned developments do not connect to the Malahide Estuary, a cumulative impact on the Malahide Estuary SPA and Malahide Estuary SAC by these developments can therefore be ruled out.

Along the Broad Meadow River there are a small number of domestic and single housing developments and a few larger developments within a few hundred metres of the river. Two adjacent housing developments comprising of a combined 188 housing units have been permitted in 2018: (**Planning Application References: F17A/0666 and F17A/0687),** an access road to these developments has also been permitted: (**Planning Application Reference: F17A/0687).** A hotel extension comprising 63 bedrooms has also been granted in 2018 within 100m of the Broad Meadow River: (**Planning Application Reference: F17A/0639).** In Rowlestown, permission was granted for two housing developments withing 100m of the Broadmeadow River. These are an application for 9 two story houses in 2019 (**Planning Application Reference: F19A/0490)** and an application for 26 two story houses in 2020 (**Planning Application Reference: F19A/0490).** As no impacts from the Skate Park have been determined on the Malahide Estuary SPA or the Malahide Estuary SAC, there are consequently no likely significant cumulative effects of the Skate Park development with other plans or projects.

4 CONCLUSION

This assessment, based on the available scientific information and best scientific knowledge, demonstrates that:

The development, alone and in combination with other plans and projects, are un-likely to have significant effect(s) on the Malahide Estuary SAC 000205 and the Malahide Estuary SPA 004025 (or any other European site), when considered in light of the conservation objectives of those European sites. No Source-Pathway-Receptor for a significant effect exists due to small scale of the project, distance from the river, the minimal amount of concrete used, and the considerable distance (approximately 15.4km downstream) to these estuarine European sites.

For these reasons we therefore submit that the competent authority can determine that, in view of best scientific knowledge, an appropriate assessment is not required in order to ascertain if the proposed skate park, in combination with other plans and projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of a European site.

Mitigation measures to reduce or avoid a significant effect where not considered within this screening for appropriate assessment to reach this conclusion.

5 REFERENCES

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Office of the Planning Regulator (2021). Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management

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