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**EIA Screening Report – Greenway  
Associated Works, 850m Long 2m Wide  
Footpath & Car Park, Site 3, Poles  
Cross, Co. Meath**

## Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

Greenway Associated Works – 850m Long 2m Wide Footpath & Car Park, Site 3, Poles Cross, County Meath

### Document Control Sheet

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) preliminary examination exercise has been prepared in support of a Part 8 Application for the proposed construction of an 850m long, 2m wide footpath and a 19 no. space car park located at Poles Cross, in support of the Boyne Valley Lakelands County Greenway, which itself forms a strategic part of Transport Infrastructure Ireland's National Greenway Strategy. The purpose of this exercise is to determine if an Environmental Impact Assessment is required for the consideration of the proposed footpath and car park aspects of the development located at Poles Cross.

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

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

The focus of the proposed "Greenway Associated Works" is to complement the existing greenway infrastructure with services and amenities that will;

- 1. Enhance user experience by providing quality car parking facilities at selected Greenway access points along the route;**
- 2. Provision and upgrade of footpath infrastructure linking adjacent town/village/residential communities to the Greenway access points providing safe access and egress for pedestrians/cyclists."**

The project located at Poles Cross consists of the following proposed works;

- 1. Construction of a new 850m long, 2m wide footpath to the west and east of the Poles Cross Greenway crossing point along the R162 road.*
- 2. Provision of a 19 no. space car park immediately east of the Poles Cross Greenway access point, on the northern side of the R162.*

For the purposes of this EIA Screening report only the 850m long, 2m wide footpath and car park aspects of the development proposed were assessed for the Part 8 Application process.

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

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

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

## 2 EIA Screening Methodology

### 2.1 Legislative Requirement for EIA

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

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

1. The type of projects subject to assessment
2. The main obligations of developers
3. The content of the assessment
4. The participation of competent authorities

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

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

### 2.2 Project Categorisation

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

The proposed footpath and car park aspects of the development at Site 3 are applicable to Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2023 article 80(1)(k):

- *any development other than those specified in paragraphs (a) to (j), the estimated cost of which exceeds €126,000, not being development consisting of the laying underground of sewers, mains, pipes or other apparatus.*



Article 80(C):

- *This Part shall also apply to development which is carried out within the functional area of a local authority that is a planning authority, on behalf of, or in partnership with the local authority, pursuant to a contract with the local authority.*

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

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

- 1. Part 1 Activities** – consists of activities which have significant effects on the environment. Proposed developments which exceed the relevant thresholds in Part 1 are subject to a mandatory EIA. Part 1 sub-threshold developments require screening in cases where the same class of development is not listed in Part 2 with a lower mandatory threshold.
- 2. Part 2 Activities** – do not necessarily have significant effects on the environment in every case; Proposed developments which exceed the relevant thresholds in Part 2, as defined by the Irish State are subject to a mandatory EIA. For all sub-threshold developments listed in Schedule 5, Part 2, where no EIAR is submitted or EIA determination requested, a screening determination is required to be undertaken by the competent authority unless, on preliminary examination it can be concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Article 8 of S.I. No. 119/1994 Roads Regulations ,1994 (The prescribed types of proposed road

development for the purpose of subsection (1)(a)(iv) of Section 50 of the Roads Act, 1993 to 2007 (as amended)).

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

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

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

## 2.3 Project Screening Determination

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

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

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

## 2.4 Determination of the EIA Requirement for Sub-Threshold Projects

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

### 1. Characteristics of the project

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

### 2. Location of proposed project

- a. the existing and approved land use,
- b. relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources



- (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,
- c. absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:

*(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths*

*(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment*

*(iii) mountain and forest areas*

*(iv) nature reserves and parks*

*(v) areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive*

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

*(vii) densely populated areas;*

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

### **3. Characteristics of potential impacts**

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

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

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

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

### **1. Description of the proposed development (Outlined in Section 3)**

- Description of the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development and, where relevant, of demolition works.

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

## 3 Description of the Proposed Development

### 3.1 Introduction

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 outlines the approach to climate change adaptation and greenhouse gas mitigation, as required by the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

It is an objective of the Plan as stated in **Chapter 10: Climate Change Strategy**;

- **MOV OBJ 32:** *To continue the development of a network of Greenways in the County in accordance with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sports Strategy for Future Development of Greenways.*

The characteristics of the proposed footpath and car park aspects of the development at Site 3 are described in the following section. The development site is assessed in **Section 5** in order to determine whether a mandatory EIA is necessary.

#### 3.1.1 Site Description

The proposed works are located ca. 3.5km south of Kingscourt town, at the Poles Cross Greenway crossing point along the R162 regional road, County Meath. The proposed works consist of:

1. *Construction of a new 850m long, 2m wide footpath to the west and east of the Poles Cross Greenway crossing point along the R162 road.*
2. *Provision of a 19 no. space car park immediately east of the Poles Cross Greenway access point, on the northern side of the R162.*

The proposed works are surrounded by agricultural lands and bounded to the southwest by commercial properties. An unnamed stream is located ca. 220m south of the proposed development works which is hydrologically connected to Newcastle Lough ca. 900m southeast of the proposed development. According to the NPWS Newcastle Lough is a Statutory Nature Reserve (SNR) as per S.I. No. 602/2018 - Nature Reserve (Newcastle Lough) Recognition Order 2018.

A map of the proposed development works can be seen in **Figure 3.1** overleaf.



Figure 3.1: Site location plan

3.1.2 Planning Description

The proposed site layout of the proposed works, from east to the northwest can be seen in Figure 3.2 to Figure 3.8 overleaf.

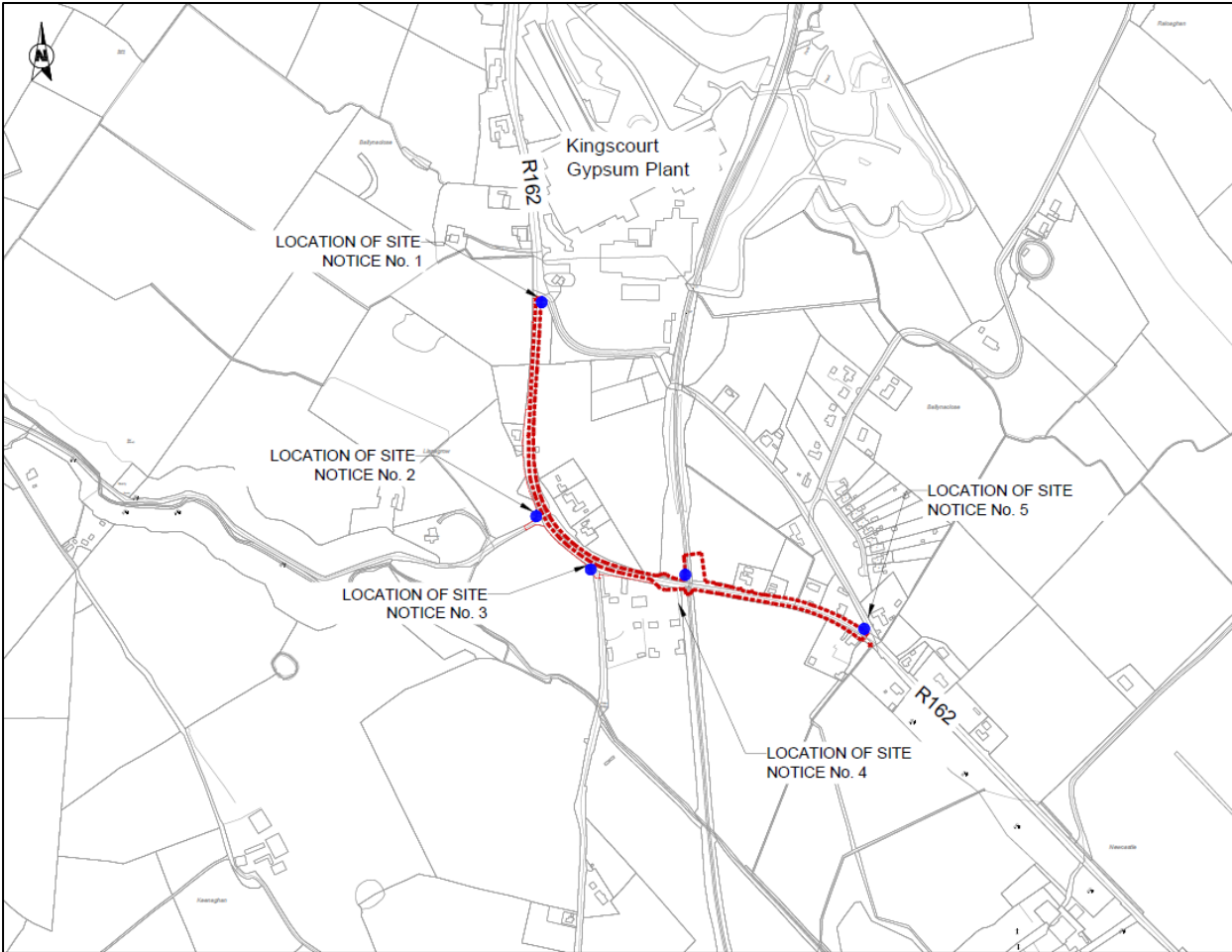


Figure 3.2: The proposed part 8 extents (cropped)



Figure 3.3: The proposed part 8 extents, east of the Greenway access point (cropped)





Figure 3.4: The proposed part 8 extents, parking lot layout (cropped)



Figure 3.5: The proposed part 8 extents, west of the Greenway access point (cropped)

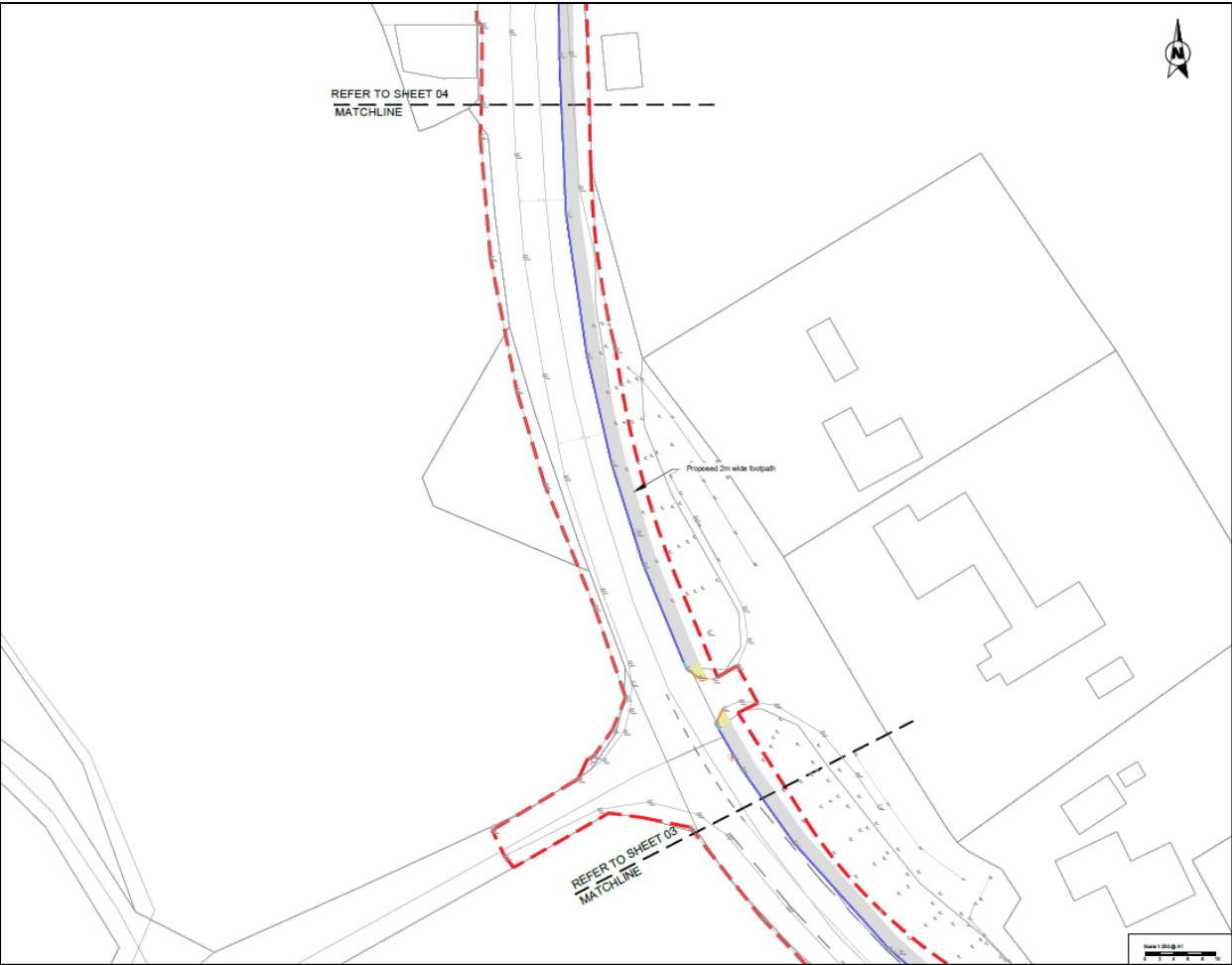


Figure 3.6: The proposed part 8 extents, northwest of the Greenway access point (cropped)

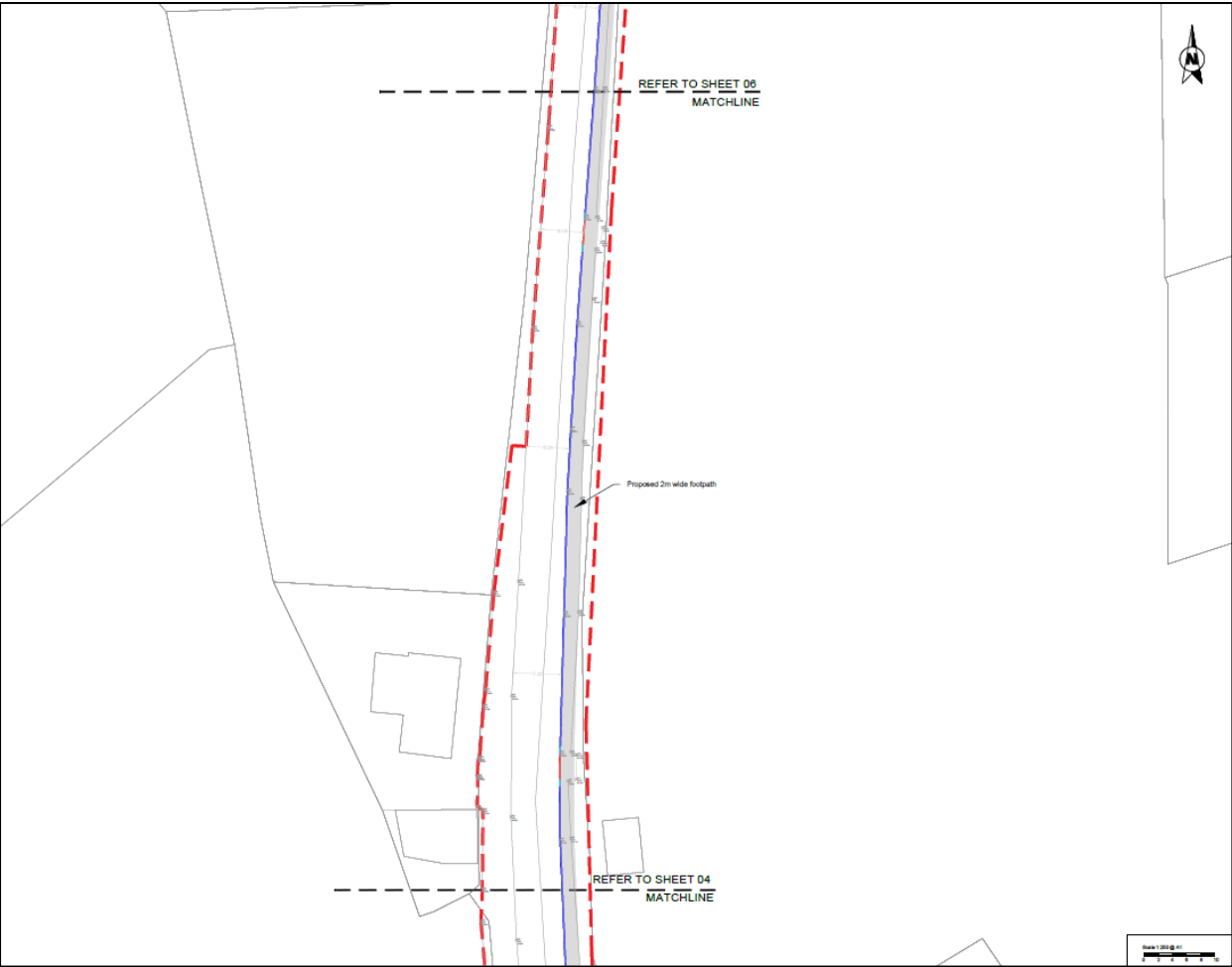
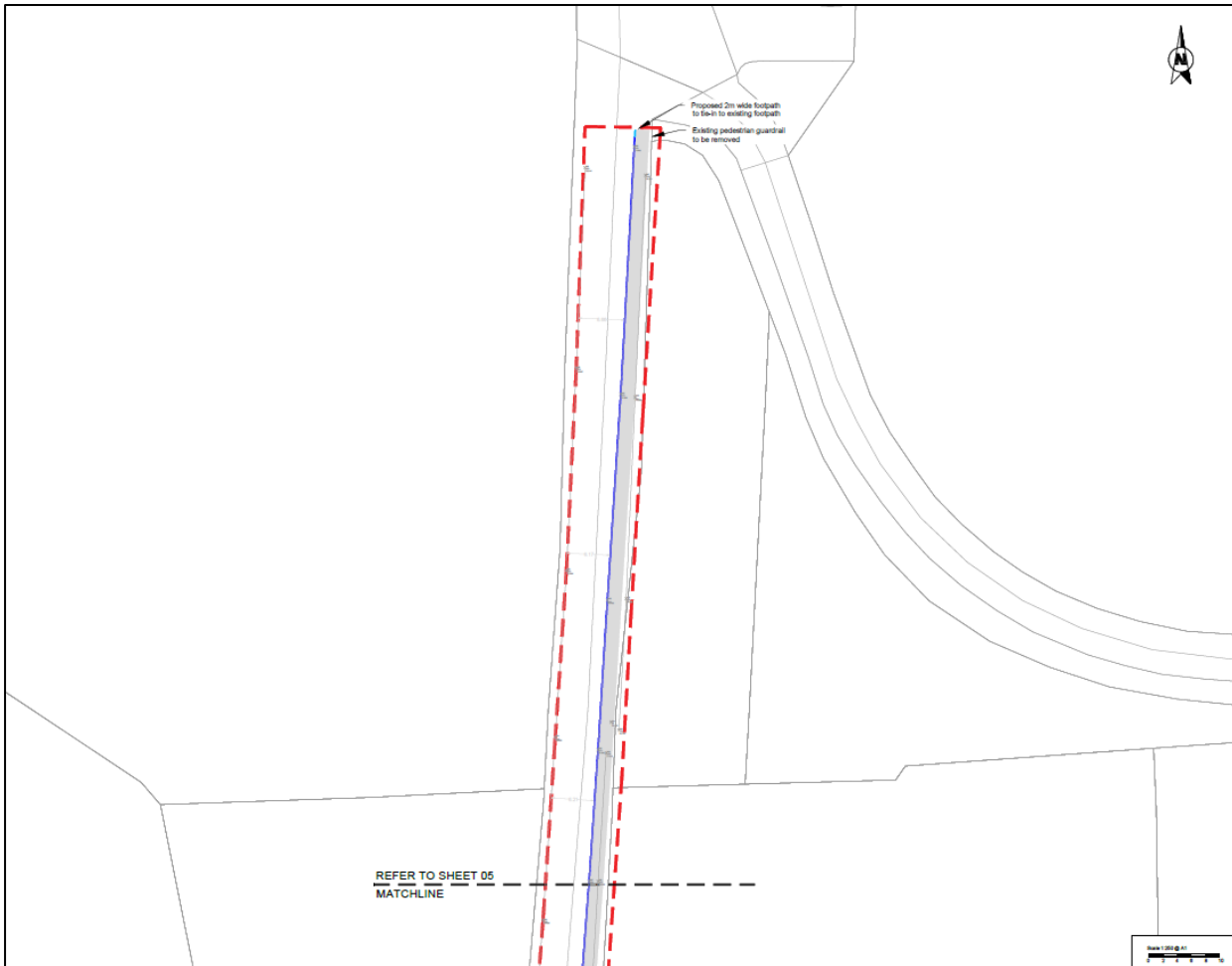


Figure 3.7: The proposed part 8 extents, northwest of the proposed development - continued (cropped)



**Figure 3.8: The proposed part 8 extents, northwest of the proposed development - continued (cropped)**

The proposed development shall include the following elements;

1. *Construction of a new 850m long, 2m wide footpath to the west and east of the Poles Cross Greenway crossing point along the R162 road.*
2. *Provision of a 19 no. space car park immediately east of the Poles Cross Greenway access point, on the northern side of the R162.*

**Additional works:**

- Relocation of utility services at all locations (Where necessary)

**3.1.3 Population**

The site is located within the Carricleck electoral division, county Meath. The division is a settled rural area 18.1km<sup>2</sup> in size, with a total population of 457 people in 2022 and a population density of 25.25 per km<sup>2</sup>.

### 3.1.4 Hydrology and Topography

The proposed site is located within the Newry, Fane, Glyde and Dee Hydrometric Area (06) and Catchment (06). The development is located within the Dee Sub-Catchment (010) and Dee Sub-Basin (020).

The principal hydrological features within the vicinity of the site are an unnamed stream (EPA\_Name: Dee), located ca. 220m south of the proposed works and Newcastle Lough, located ca. 900m southeast of the site. The unnamed stream flows in a southeasterly direction and is hydrologically connected to Newcastle Lough. The stream is joined by an unnamed stream (EPA\_Name: Kilmainhamwood) ca. 630m south of the development site, prior to adjoining Newcastle Lough ca. 900m to the southeast of the site. Newcastle Lough is a Statutory Nature Reserve (SNR) which contains a number of wet grassland and woodland habitats and an association of diverse flora and fauna of scientific interest. An unnamed stream (EPA\_Name: Ballynaclose) is located ca. 650m northeast of the site, adjacent to the Gypsum Industries (Ireland Limited) plant.

The Water Framework Directive aims to achieve good status for all rivers, lakes and transitional and coastal waters in the EU. Achieving good ecological status for surface waters is critical to this. According to the EPA maps, both of the unnamed streams south of the proposed development have a 'Good' WFD status and are 'Not at Risk' in accordance with the Water Framework Directive. This indicates the rivers ecological status and chemical status are good. The unnamed stream to the northeast has a WFD status of "Good" and is "At Risk" in accordance the Water Framework Directive. Newcastle Lough is not currently monitored under the WFD according to EPA maps.

EPA Maps were consulted to determine if any WFD River Network Routes designated as Designated Salmonid Waters under S.I. No. 293/1988 - European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations 1988 existed in the surrounding areas of the site. None of the aforementioned streams or Newcastle Lough were included in the register, therefore no adverse impacts from the site are envisioned for salmonid habitats.

The ground level at the proposed site of the car park is a uniform 63m AOD. The elevation where the Greenway crosses the R162 road is 63m AOD. The road gradually rises to the west to an elevation of 82m AOD before falling to 80m AOD to the northwest of the R162 where the footpath is set to terminate. Towards the east of the greenway crossing point there is a slight increase as the road climbs to an elevation of 65m AOD where the footpath is set to terminate. A slight gradient exists to the south, towards the nearest water receptor which occurs at an elevation of 58m AOD and occurs ca. 220m to the south.

### 3.1.5 Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology

Teagasc soil mapping indicates that subsoils at the development site consist of till derived from Lower Paleozoic sandstone and shale, with a clayey texture. The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) bedrock database indicates that soils of the proposed car park site and the eastern extent of the footpath are underlain at depth by the Kingscourt Gypsum Formation, which consists predominantly of mudstone with gypsum and anhydrite units. The soils of the western extent of the footpath are underlain at depth by the Clontail formation, which consists



predominantly of calcareous red-mica greywacke.

According to GSI groundwater maps, the site overlies a poor aquifer, of bedrock which is generally unproductive except for local zones. The groundwater vulnerability of a significant portion of the western and all of the central extent of the site is described as “Extreme” and the permeability of the subsoil is not mapped. The groundwater vulnerability of the eastern extent of the proposed footpath is described as “High”. The eastern extent and a portion of the northwestern extent of the proposed footpath is described as having subsoil of moderate permeability.

No groundwater source protection zones or protected hydrological features such as holy wells or springs are located within the boundaries or the immediate vicinity of the of the proposed site.

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

### **3.1.6 Designated Areas**

There are no designated areas (SPAs, SACs or NHAs) detected within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development according to the EPA and National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) site maps. The nearest designated areas to scheme include:

- Breakey Loughs (pNHA) (001558) located *ca.* 4.67km west of the site.
- Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally) SAC (000006) located *ca.* 13.14km southwest of the site.
- Mentrim Loguh pNHA (001587) located *ca.* 12.97km east of the site.
- Ardee Cutaway Bog pNHA (001454) located *ca.* 13.9km east of the site.
- Corstown Loughs pNHA (000552) located *ca.* 10.23km east of the site.
- Reaghstown Marsh pNHA (001828) (2 sites) located *ca.* 10.87km east of the site.
- Ballyhoe Lough pNHA (001594) located *ca.* 6.48km northeast of the site.
- Monalty Lough pNHA (001608) located *ca.* 13.44km northeast of the site.
- Spring and Corcrin Loughs pNHA (001671) located *ca.* 14.11km southwest of the site.
- Lough Naglack pNHA (000561) located *ca.* 12.38km northeast of the site.
- Lough Fea Demesne pNHA (000560) located *ca.* 11.34km northeast of the site.
- Nafarty Fen pNHA (002077) located *ca.* 13.69km northeast of the site.

### **3.1.6.1 Statutory Nature Reserve – Newcastle Lough**

The site is located ca. 900m northwest of Newcastle Lough, a privately owned Statutory Nature Reserve. The site has been designated as such under the Nature Reserve (Newcastle Lough) Recognition Order 2018.

According to the NPWS site the Lough has excellent water quality with a high diversity of aquatic invertebrates. The site contains stocks of coarse fish, pike and brown trout. The site has a diverse range of habitats including reedbeds, wet grassland and wet woodland and an associated variety of plant and animal species. Otter, badger, pine marten and six species of bat have previously been recorded at the site. Other noteworthy species include kingfisher and crayfish.

The objective for which the land is to be used or managed as a nature reserve is to maintain and enhance the diversity of the habitats and species on the land.

### **3.1.7 Flood Risk**

OPW Flood maps indicate 0.1%, 1% and 10% AEP flood extents are not predicted to occur within the boundaries of the development site. OPW Flood maps indicate no risk of coastal or groundwater flooding within the boundaries of the works. OPW maps indicate that no past flood events were recorded within the boundaries or within the vicinity of the proposed works.

The proposed development site is not located on ADS benefitted lands.

### **3.1.8 Cultural Heritage**

There are no historic features located within the boundaries or the immediate vicinity of the proposed developments. The closest site is a ringfort / rath (ME002-047) located ca. 420m west of the site, however this is not located within the boundaries or the immediate vicinity of the proposed developments and is thus unlikely to be affected by the proposed development.

### **3.1.9 Landscape**

The landscape adjacent to the west of the proposed parking lot site is described as agricultural and further differentiated as pastures.

The proposed works are located along the existing R162 road. The road itself is occupied by 2 opposing lanes of undivided traffic will not significantly alter the character of the road or the landscape in the immediate vicinity of the development. The lands adjacent to the site are occupied by agricultural lands, commercial units and residential units. The development will not significantly alter the character of the surrounding landscape.

### **3.1.10 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna**

The Breakey Loughs (pNHA) is the closest designated site to the proposed development. No qualifying interests are available on the NPWS maps for this proposed site. The closest site for which qualifying interests are available is the Kilconny Bog (Cloghbally) SAC (000006) located ca.13km southwest of the development site. The qualifying interests of the SAC are active

raised bogs and degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration.

Newcastle Lough contains stocks of coarse fish, pike and brown trout. The site has a diverse range of habitats including reedbeds, wet grassland and wet woodland and an associated variety of plant and animal species. Otter, badger, pine marten and six species of bat have previously been recorded at the site. Other noteworthy species include kingfisher and crayfish.

The works will be confined to a stretch of the R162 road to the south of Gypsum Industries (Ireland Limited) to the east of the Greenway crossing point at Poles Cross. The proposed footpath and car park will require alteration of the road surface and margins as well as the alteration of the landscape at the current site of the proposed car park. The effect of this will be minimal.

## 3.2 Environmental Management Measures

The construction and operational phases of the proposed developments will consist of similar nuisance-generating activities in terms of plant and vehicle movements. Once in the operational phase it can be expected that there will be no plant movement on the project and therefore no nuisance-generating activities. It can be concluded that the operational phase impacts will not be significant.

Best management measures have been presented for the development site. The following mitigation measures shall apply only to the construction phase and not the operational phase of each of the development site.

### 3.2.1 Noise

A preliminary risk assessment was carried out for the proposed site locations in accordance with the Air Quality Monitoring and Noise Control Unit's Good Practice Guide for Construction and Demolition, produced by the London Authorities Noise Action Forum, July 2016. This assessment considered factors relating to the proximity of the sites to sensitive receptors and rated the level of nuisance anticipated with scheduled work practices.

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

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

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

1. All site staff shall be briefed on noise mitigation measures and the application of best

practicable means to be employed to control noise.

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

### **3.2.2 Dust and Air Quality**

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

Control Measures are outlined as follows:

1. Soil will not be exposed until a replacing capping layer is almost ready to be placed. This is to ensure that soil is left exposed for the minimum amount of time possible.
2. Material stockpiles will be strategically placed to reduce wind exposure. Materials will be ordered on an "as needed" basis to reduce excessive storage.
3. Appropriate dust suppression will be employed to prevent fugitive emissions affecting those occupying neighbouring properties or pathways.
4. Restrict vehicle speeds to 15 kmph on-site as high vehicle speeds cause dust to rise.
5. Covers are to be provided over soil stockpiles when high wind and dry weather are encountered if required.
6. All consignments containing material with the potential to cause air pollution being transported by skips, lorries, trucks or tippers shall be covered during transit to and from the works.
7. Street and footpath cleaning shall be undertaken during the demolition and ground works phase to minimise dust emissions.
8. No materials shall be burned on-site.

### **3.2.3 Surface Water Run Off**

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

construction phase:

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

With regards to the operational phase of development surface water runoff will be attenuated through design features. The surface water drainage for the footpath is likely to comprise of small soakaways in the adjacent grass verge. The surface water drainage for the car park is likely to comprise a permeable surface and swale in the south-eastern corner of the car park which will allow percolation of water through the car park surface.

### **3.2.4 Construction Project Manager**

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

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

### **3.2.5 Resident Engineer**

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

1. Performing or coordinating site inductions.
2. Monitoring the performance of subcontractors.
3. Monitoring the performance of the traffic management plan.

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

### **3.3 Awareness and Training**

#### **3.3.1 Environmental Induction**

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

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

#### **3.3.2 Toolbox Talks**

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

### **3.4 Environmental Incidents and Complaints Procedure**

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



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

## 4 Initial EIA Screening

### 4.1 Project Categorisation

A detailed description of the proposed development is outlined in **Section 3.1**. With respect to the Part 8 Application, in terms of the different categories of development listed in **Schedule 5** of the of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2022*, there are two aspects of the development which could bear relevance to the thresholds outlined in **Part 1** and **2** of Regulations:

1. *Construction of a new 850m long, 2m wide footpath along the northern/eastern side of the R162 road.*
2. *Provision of a 19 no. space car park immediately east of the Poles Cross Greenway access point, on the northern side of the R162.*

#### 4.1.1 Part 1 Activities

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

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

#### 4.1.2 Part 2 Activities

Considering the categories listed in **Part 2** of the Regulations, there is no class set out under **Schedule 5** in relation to the provision of realignment, upgrade to a public footpath or the establishment of active travel infrastructure. Under the provisions of **Schedule 5**, the closest type of project to the subject development is for the provision of “*all private roads which would exceed 2,000 metres in length*”, as per Item 10 (dd) of the Schedule and “*construction of a car-park providing more than 400 spaces, other than a car-park provided as part of, and incidental to the primary purpose of, a development*” as per Item 10 (b)(ii) of the Schedule.

In relation to the threshold set in Category 10 (dd) the active transport works are an upgrade / alteration of the existing R162 public road and not the construction of a new private road, the proposed footpath it will be an approximate length of 850m and 2m wide. As a result, EIA is not required for the project based on this category.

In relation to the threshold set in Category 10 (b)(ii), the works include the construction of a 19 no. space car park, which is below the threshold limit of 400 spaces. As a result, EIA is not required for the project based on this category.

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

### 4.1.3 Section 50 of the Roads Act, 1993 to 2007

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*(ii) land established or recognised as a nature reserve within the meaning of section 15 or 16 of the Wildlife Act 1976 (No. 39 of 1976),*

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

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

The proposed works are limited to the reallocation of the existing road space. It is not proposed to develop a new road, nor the widening or realignment of an existing road and will not consist of four or more lanes. The works proposed in **Site 3** will take place on the R162 only, extending to the east and west of the Poles Cross Greenway Crossing Point. The site abuts a mixture of land uses with agricultural lands and commercial and residential units in the surrounding area. The scheme, therefore, does not trigger any of the sub-threshold criteria for EIA as per **Section 50** of the Roads Act, 1993 to 2007 (as amended) and **Article 8** of the Roads Regulations, 1994.

## **4.2 Project Screening Determination**

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

## 5 EIA Screening

Schedule 7 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2023* outlines specific criteria for the determination of EIA requirements for sub-threshold projects, summarised in **Section 2.4** of this report. Specific aspects of the project are screened against these criteria in **Tables 5.1 to 5.3** below.

### 5.1 Characteristics of Proposed Development

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

Schedule 7 Criteria	Information
<b>(a) size and design of the whole of the proposed development</b>	<p>The proposed works include the provision of a 19 no. car park and the installation of an 850m footpath at the greenway access point along the R162 in Poles Cross, County Meath.</p> <p>The size and design of the project is not likely to cause significant negative effects on the environment.</p>
<b>(b) cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects</b>	<p>A review of existing and previous planning applications under consideration by Meath County Council indicates that developments in the vicinity of the development sites are mainly of a minor nature, consisting primarily of applications for extensions, refurbishments, change of use or retention works to commercial and residential and units. There are no planning projects awaiting approval in the immediate vicinity of the proposed pedestrian and cycling infrastructure works.</p> <p>The closest IPC or IE licenced sites to the development sites include College Proteins Unlimited Company (P0037-04), located ca. 3.8km SE and John O'Rourke &amp; Sons Limited (P0147-01), located ca. 4.1km SE the site.</p> <p>It is considered that cumulative impacts with other existing and/or approved projects are not likely to cause significant negative effects on the environment</p>
<b>(c) nature of any associated demolition works</b>	<p>There are no associated significant demolition works associated with this project.</p>
<b>(d) use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity</b>	<p>The project does not include the extensive use of natural resources.</p> <p>No negative impacts arising from the use of land or soil. are anticipated</p>
<b>(e) production of waste</b>	<p>It is not anticipated that significant quantities of waste will be generated as a result of road use or excavation activities.</p>
<b>(f) pollution and nuisances</b>	<p>The release of suspended solids into the watercourse is unlikely to occur during periods of rainfall given the proximity of the site to the nearest water receptor, the character of the</p>

	<p>surrounding environment, the mitigation measures and design elements of the scheme which are outline is <b>Section 3.2.3</b> of this report. The site is located 220m N of an unnamed stream which is hydrologically connected to the Newcastle Lough, a privately owned nature reserve of scientific interest. Newcastle Lough is located ca. 900m SE of the site.</p> <p>The unnamed stream has a WFD status of “Good” and is identified as “Not at Risk”. The inadvertent deposition of hazardous material could lead to the pollution of soil, water courses and groundwater bodies. It is considered that increased deposition of suspended soils to the stream is unlikely to occur as a result of the construction or operational phases of development.</p> <p>Dust, Noise and Vibration will be generated from HGV traffic entering and exiting the development sites and by 360° excavators and dozers during soil extraction.</p> <p>Significant negative effects on the environment are not likely to arise due to pollution or nuisance due to the nature and scale of the project and the mitigation measures proposed.</p>
<p><b>(g) risk of major accidents, and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge</b></p>	<p>Best practice construction methodologies will be employed throughout the construction phase and a Construction Environmental Management Plan shall be adhered to.</p> <p>A review of PFRA and CFRAM maps for the area confirms that the development site is not at risk from fluvial pluvial or coastal flooding.</p> <p>The potential impacts due to risk of accidents and/or disasters are anticipated to be negligible given the nature of the proposed development including standard procedures that will be applied.</p>
<p><b>(h) risks to human health (e.g. due to water contamination or air pollution)</b></p>	<p>The risks to human health are anticipated to be negligible given the nature of the proposed development including standard procedures that will be applied to avoid effects.</p>



## 5.2 Location of the proposed developments

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

Schedule 7 Criteria	Information
<b>(a) existing and approved land use</b>	The R162 road itself is occupied by 2 opposing lanes of undivided traffic. The lands adjacent to the site are occupied by agricultural lands, commercial units and residential units.
<b>(b) relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground</b>	<p>The site is located ca. 220m north of an unnamed stream (DEE_020) which is a tributary of the River Dee. The stream has a “Good” WFD status according to EPA maps and is deemed as being ‘Not at Risk’ of not achieving good status in accordance with the Water Framework Directive. Construction activities are not deemed to pose a risk to the nearest river water receptors.</p> <p>The site overlies a poor aquifer which is generally unproductive except for local zones of high vulnerability. The eastern extent of the proposed footpath encroaches on the boundary of a Borehole (2629SEW036), with a locational accuracy of 1km. The use of this source is defined as “Domestic use only”. The footpath also encroaches on a Dug Well (2629SEW017) with a locational accuracy of 50m. The use of this well is not defined. Construction activities are not deemed to pose a risk to this nearest well receptors.</p> <p>Best practice housekeeping and measures to prevent nuisances at the development sites will be outlined in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and the Environmental Operation Plan (EOP).</p> <p>Following the implementation of the above measures, impacts to soil, land and biodiversity are not anticipated as a result of the proposed development.</p>
<b>(c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:</b>	
<b>i. wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths</b>	The proposed development is not located in the vicinity of any designated sites.
<b>ii. coastal zones and the marine environment</b>	The proposed development sites are not hydrologically connected to the marine environment.
<b>iii. mountain and forest areas</b>	The proposed development sites are not within or directly connected to any mountain or forest areas.
<b>iv. nature reserves and parks</b>	The proposed development is not within or directly

	<p>connected to any nature reserves or parks. The development site is located ca. 900m northwest of the Newcastle Lough Statutory Nature Reserve (SNR). No residual impacts are expected to the SNR.</p>
<p><b>v. areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive</b></p>	<p>The EIA screening report has been conducted to determine whether a full EIA report is deemed necessary for the proposed project. 12 no. designated site were identified within 15km of the proposed development. After elimination based on lack of hydrological connectivity between the development sites and designated areas, no designated sites were deemed of interest to the proposed works.</p> <p>This report concluded the nature and scale of the proposed activities at the development sites posed no significant impacts upon the Natura 2000 site identified.</p>
<p><b>vi. areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure</b></p>	<p>The site is not located within such an area.</p>
<p><b>vii. densely populated areas</b></p>	<p>The development site is located in a settled rural area of a mixed land uses with residential and commercial uses. The site is situated in an area with a population density of 25.25 per km<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>The proposed construction of a new 850m long, 2m wide footpath and a car park comprising 19 no. spaces works can be considered minor in nature, hence significant impacts in the local population are unlikely.</p>
<p><b>viii. landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance</b></p>	<p>There are no archaeological heritage feature located within the boundaries of the proposed development works. The closest feature is a ringfort (ME002-047) located ca. 420m west of the site.</p> <p>The works are not within an archaeological area of importance.</p> <p>There are no geological heritage features located within, or in the immediate environs of the development site.</p> <p>Impacts to visual (geological), historical, cultural or archaeological features are not anticipated as a result of the proposed development.</p>

### 5.3 Characteristics of Potential Impacts

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

Schedule 7 Criteria	Information
<b>(a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),</b>	The development sites are located in sparsely populated areas of low environmental sensitivity. Some slight impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed activity however the extent of these is anticipated to be localised hence significant impacts are not envisaged.
<b>(b) nature of the impact</b>	
<b>i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health</b>	Potential impacts identified to the local population included noise, dust and traffic. Given the mitigation measures proposed, the systems and practices in place and the low population density within the surrounding environs, impacts to human health are anticipated to be slight.
<b>ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</b>	<p>During the construction phase and in the absence of mitigation measures, periods of significant rainfall will increase the risk of suspended soil deposition into watercourses.</p> <p>The nearest water receptor to the proposed works is the unnamed stream ca. 220m south of the proposed works. The distance of this receptor to the proposed development will act as a buffer in the event of sediment release or pollution events during the construction or operational phases of development. Considering the topography of the proposed development location, the proximity of the proposed works to the nearest water receptor, the character of the surrounding landscape and the proposed mitigation measures and design elements outlined in <b>Section 3.2.3</b> of this report, the risk of increased suspended soils deposition or pollution to the closest waterbody is considered to be unlikely during the construction and operational phases of development. It is therefore considered that the proposed works do not pose a risk to the nearest water receptors which include the unnamed stream and the hydrologically connected Newcastle Lough SNR.</p> <p>The site and immediate environs are not prone to flooding. The existing roads already in place do not exacerbate the risk of flooding elsewhere in the catchment, and it is not anticipated the upgrade of the roads to incorporate footpaths and the provision of a car park along the R162 will exacerbate the risk of flooding.</p> <p>An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening report has been prepared by ORS as part of the Part 8 Application. The AA Screening report should be read in conjunction with this report. In summary it was concluded that an AA of the proposed development is not required as it can be excluded, on the basis</p>

	<p>of objective information provided in the report, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European sites.</p> <p>Overall, the residual effects from an ecological perspective are not anticipated to be significant and impacts to biodiversity, flora and fauna is anticipated to be slight.</p>
<b>iii. Land and Soil</b>	<p>The inadvertent deposition of hazardous material may lead to pollution of soil both on-site and at neighbouring sites.</p> <p>This risk is mitigated by a rigorous waste acceptance procedure, highly trained members of staff and good housekeeping practices.</p>
<b>iv. Air &amp; Climate</b>	None identified or likely.
<b>v. Material Assets, landscape and cultural heritage including architectural aspects</b>	<p>The requires the acquisition of privately owned lands which will be acquired by agreement. There will be no loss of any land / property used by the community or any demolition of property.</p> <p>The development will not give rise to a revaluation of or change in the development potential of adjoining lands / properties.</p> <p>The construction of the Project is not expected to have a significant effect on the visual amenity. There are no protected views within the area that will be affected by the proposed development.</p> <p>It is not considered that any elements of the development proposals will cause any direct or visual impacts with respect to previously recorded and/or extant archaeological monuments or architectural heritage features.</p>
<b>vi. The interrelationship between the environmental topics</b>	<p>Interaction between soil, ground and surface water receptors and by extension, sensitive aquatic and terrestrial habitats were considered.</p> <p>Mitigation measures implemented throughout the construction phase and operational phase design elements of the proposed works are expected to reduce the residual impacts associated with such to slight/negligible.</p>
<b>(c) transboundary nature of the impact</b>	There are no transboundary impacts associated with this project.
<b>(d) intensity and complexity of the impact</b>	
<b>i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health</b>	Impacts during construction stage anticipated to be slight and temporary in nature and will have a low intensity type impact.
<b>ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	Impacts during operation stage anticipated to be slight and permanent in nature and will have a low intensity type impact.
<b>iii. Land and Soil</b>	

<b>iv. Air &amp; Climate</b>	None identified or likely.
<b>v. Material Assets, landscape &amp; cultural heritage including architectural aspects</b>	The requires the acquisition of privately owned lands which will be acquired by agreement. There will be no loss of any land / property used by the community or any demolition of property.
<b>vi. The interrelationship between the environmental topics</b>	Interaction between soil, ground and surface water receptors and by extension, sensitive aquatic and terrestrial habitats were considered.  Mitigation measures implemented are expected to reduce the residual impacts associated with such to slight/negligible.
<b>(e) Probability of the impact</b>	
<b>i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health</b>	Negative impacts associated with the construction stage are certain and temporary.  Negative impacts associated with the operation stage are possible, but unlikely and long-term.
<b>ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	Impacts during construction stage are possible.  Impacts during operation stage are possible.
<b>iii. Land and Soil</b>	Impacts during construction stage are possible, but unlikely.  Impacts during operation stage are possible, but unlikely.
<b>iv. Air &amp; Climate</b>	No significant impact identified or likely.
<b>v. Material Assets, landscape &amp; cultural heritage including architectural aspects</b>	Negative impacts associated with the construction stage are certain and temporary.
<b>vi. The interrelationship between the environmental topics</b>	None identified or likely.
<b>(f) Expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact</b>	
<b>i. Human Beings, Population and Human Health</b>	Construction stage impact and nuisances will be temporary. Effects associated with the operational phase are anticipated to be long-term.
<b>ii. Water, Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	Construction stage impact and nuisances will be temporary. Operational phase impacts on Flora, Fauna, surface water, groundwater and biodiversity are anticipated to be significant and long-term in the absence of mitigation measures.
<b>iii. Land and Soil</b>	Construction stage impact and nuisances will be temporary. Operational phase impacts on Flora, Fauna, surface water, groundwater and biodiversity are anticipated to be slight and long-term.
<b>iv. Air &amp; Climate</b>	Construction stage impact and nuisances will be temporary. No impacts identified by operational stage.

<p><b>v. Material Assets, landscape &amp; cultural heritage including architectural aspects</b></p>	<p>The potential impacts during the development will be associated with the construction stage. No impacts identified by operational stage.</p>
<p><b>vi. interrelationship between the environmental topics</b></p>	<p>Interaction between soil, ground and surface water receptors and by extension, sensitive aquatic and terrestrial habitats are anticipated to be long-term but unlikely.</p>
<p><b>(g) cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment</b></p>	<p>It is considered that cumulative impacts with other existing and/or approved projects are not likely to cause significant effects on the environment.</p>
<p><b>(h) possibility of effectively reducing the impact</b></p>	<p>A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and an Environmental Operating Plan (EOP) will be submitted by the main contractor to the local authority for approval and will include the following features designed to ensure maximum protection for the environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Any excavations and/or vegetation removal will be minimised during construction and/or maintenance works.</li> <li>2. Excavated material will not be stored immediately adjacent to watercourses.</li> <li>3. Disturbance to natural drainage features should be avoided during the construction and/or maintenance.</li> <li>4. Construction machinery should be restricted to public and or site roads. As a general rule machinery should not be allowed to access, park or travel over areas outside the footprint of proposed development.</li> <li>5. Suitable prevention measures should be put in place at all times to prevent the release of sediment to drainage waters associated with construction areas and migration to adjacent watercourses to reduce erosion and silt-laden runoff, create, where possible, natural vegetation buffers and divert runoff from exposed areas, control the volume and velocity of runoff, and convey that runoff away from watercourses.</li> <li>6. Where necessary drainage waters from construction areas should be managed through a series of treatment stages that may include swales, check dams and detention ponds along with other pollution control measures such as silt fences and silt mats.</li> <li>7. Where vegetation removal associated with treelines, hedgerows, individual mature trees, scrub or woodland is</li> </ol>

required, this shall only be undertaken outside the breeding bird season, between March and August inclusive.

- 8.** Where extensive areas of ground are to be exposed during route construction or maintenance dust suppression should be undertaken during periods of dry weather.
- 9.** All chemical substances required during construction and/or maintenance works will be stored in sealed containers.
- 10.** Any refuelling or lubrication of machinery will not be undertaken within 50m of a watercourse.
- 11.** Spill kits will be required on site during construction and/or maintenance works.
- 12.** Ensure non-native, invasive species do not occur at construction/maintenance areas, or if occurring, are not spread as a result of works. The NRA Guidance on invasive species, outlined above will be adhered to as well as the preparation and implementation of a site specific Invasive Species Management and Control Plan.
- 13.** Disseminate information on sensitive ecological receptors, such as sensitive habitats, breeding birds etc. occurring adjacent to or in the wider area. This information will aim to educate recreational users on the conservation status and sensitivities of such receptors to encourage responsible usage of the area.



## 6 Conclusion

The construction and operation of the 850m footpath and cark parking site do not trigger any thresholds for mandatory EIA/EIAR as set in EU Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended and transposed into Irish Law by the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2023*.

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

This EIA Screening Assessment has determined that the characteristics of the proposed development are considered not significant. The scale and nature of the proposed works of concern for the Part 8 Application include;

1. *Construction of a new 850m long, 2m wide footpath to the west and east of the Poles Cross Greenway crossing point along the R162 road.*
2. *Provision of a 19 no. space car park immediately east of the Poles Cross Greenway access point, on the northern side of the R162.*

The proposed development sites are not noted as being located within a Zone of Archaeological Potential. Impacts to archaeological features are not anticipated as a result of the proposed development and a mandatory EIA is not triggered, however, as per the *SEA Environmental Report for the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027*, developments proposed within designated Zones of Archaeological Potential and in sites on or abutting Monuments identified by the Sites and Monuments Record, the Council will refer applications for proposed developments to National Monuments Service of the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, to ascertain their requirements and consider their response.

The works are not located within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). Impacts to architectural features are not anticipated as a result of the proposed development and criteria for a mandatory EIA is not met.

The mitigation measures that will be implemented as part of the construction phase in the form of CEMP and, detailed in **Table 5.3**.

The best practice procedures to be implemented at the site during the operational phase in accordance with EPA Best Practice Guidelines, listed in **Table 5.1**.

Given the scale and nature of the proposed development, the characteristics of the surrounding environment and design elements of the proposed works the overall risk posed to the environment is considered to be low. No significant impacts to the environment including the nearest hydrological receptors and the Newcastle Lough SNR are anticipated following the implementation of suitable mitigation measures associated with best-practice construction methods.

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

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

## Appendix A: Risk Assessment as per Air Quality Monitoring and Noise Control Unit’s Good Practice Guide for Construction and Demolition

### Risk Assessment A – Locality/Site Information

	Low	Medium	High
<b>Expected duration of work</b>			
Less than 6 months			
6 months to 12 months		x	
Over 12 months			
<b>Proximity of nearest sensitive receptors</b>			
Greater than 50 metres from site	x		
Between 25m and 50m			
Less than 25 metres			
Hospital or school within 100 metres			
<b>Day time ambient noise levels</b>			
High ambient noise levels (>65dB(A))			
Medium ambient noise levels (55-65dB(A))		x	
Low ambient noise levels (<55dB(A))			
<b>Working Hours</b>			
8am – 7pm Mon-Fri; 9am-2pm Sat	x		
Some extended evening or weekend work			
Some night-time working, including likelihood of concrete power floating at night			
<b>SUBTOTAL A</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

## Risk Assessment B – Works Information

	Low	Medium	High
<b>Location of works</b>			
Majority within existing building			
Majority External			x
<b>External Demolition</b>			
Limited to two weeks			
Between 2 weeks and 3 months		x	
Over three months			
<b>Ground Works</b>			
Basement level planned			
Non-percussive methods only			
Percussive methods for less than 3 months		x	
Percussive methods for more than 3 months			
<b>Piling</b>			
Limited to one week			
Bored Piling Only			
Impact or vibratory piling			
<b>Vibration generating activities</b>			
Limited to less than 1 week			
Between 1 week and 1 month		x	
Greater than 1 month			
<b>SUBTOTAL B</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

## Total Risk Assessment

	Low	Medium	High
<b>Risk Assessment A</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Risk Assessment B</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>

The site is assessed as a **moderate-risk** overall.

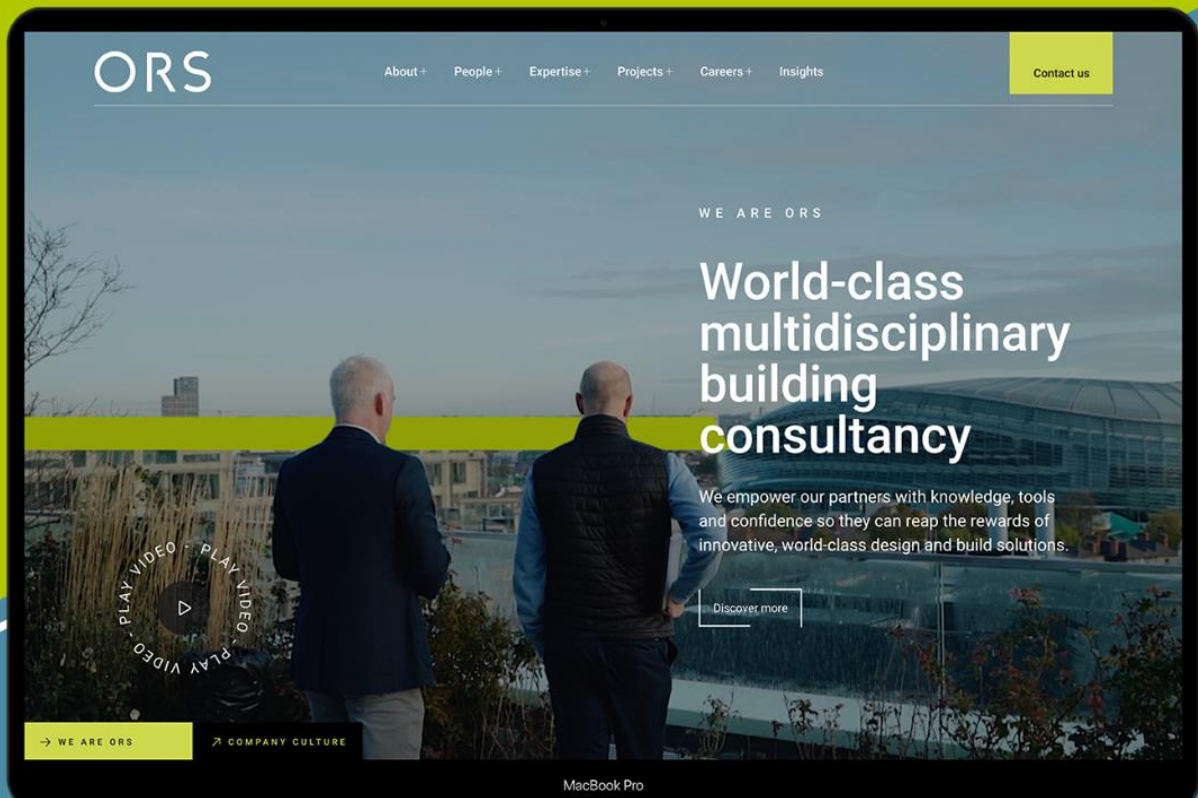
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