



EIA Screening Report

PRESENTED TO

**Marshall Yards Development Company Ltd.
Proposed Large Scale Residential Development
Ballybin Road, Ratoath, Co. Meath**

DATE

June 2024

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Enviroguide Consulting was commissioned by Marshall Yards Development Company Ltd. to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening appraisal in relation to a proposed Large-scale Residential Development (LRD) (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Development), on lands at Ballybin Road, Ratoath, Co. Meath.

The purpose of this report is to provide information for the relevant competent authority to carry out the screening for EIA and will highlight any significant effects, if any, that may arise as a result of the Proposed Development during the construction and operational phases.

1.2 Quality Assurance and Competence

This EIA Screening Report has been prepared by Rachel Redmond Environmental Consultant with Enviroguide. Rachel has a BSc (Hons) in Environmental Science from University College Cork. Rachel has over 2 years professional experience as an Environmental Consultant, preparing EIA Screening Reports and a range of chapters for environmental impact assessment reports (EIARs) of a similar scale and nature to the Proposed Development.

This EIA Screening Report has been approved by Harry Parker, Technical Director and EIA Lead at Enviroguide. Harry is an environmental consultant with 17 years' experience in consultancy, specialising in EIAs for large-scale residential and commercial developments, working closely with a range of developers, planning consultants and architects within the public and private sector.

1.3 Screening Objective

The overall objective of this screening for EIA report is to identify and assess the potential for likely significant environmental impact associated with the Proposed Development and to determine if a statutory EIA is required for the Proposed Development. The requirement for a statutory EIA is set out in the mandatory and discretionary provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) (the Act) and in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended (the Regulations). Projects listed in Schedule 5, Part 1, of the Regulations, will be subject to mandatory assessment (Article 4(1) of Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (together, the EIA Directive)) as they are deemed as projects that have significant effects on the environment. Others, listed in the Schedule 5, Part 2 of the Regulations, contain threshold levels and criteria and for projects that fall below these thresholds and criteria, it is the decision of the competent authority to decide if an EIA (and the associated Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)) is required. Whether a 'sub-threshold' development should be subject to EIA is determined by the likelihood that the development would result in likely significant environmental effects. Significant effects may arise due to the nature of the development, its scale or extent and its location in relation to the characteristics of the receiving area, particularly sensitive environments.

This report documents the methodology employed to complete the screening exercise, having regard to relevant legislation and guidance documents. It also sets out a clear rationale for each decision of this screening exercise. The following documents were consulted to inform the approach taken to the screening exercise:

- Advice Notes on Current Practice in the Preparation of Environmental Impact Statements;
- Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports;
- Environmental Assessments of Plans, Programmes and Projects – Rulings of the Court of Justice of the European Union;
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects – Guidance on Scoping (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU);
- Guidance of Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Environmental Impact Assessment;
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects – Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report;
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on Screening (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU);
- Guidance on Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive;
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment;
- Key Issues Consultation Paper on the Transposition of 2014 EIA Directive (2014/52/EU) in the Land Use Planning and EPA Licencing Systems;
- Guidelines for the Assessment of Indirect and Cumulative Impacts as well as Impact Interactions;
- Implementation of Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment; and,
- Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Practice Note.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Site Overview

The Proposed Development is at a site with a total area of 5.48 hectares principally located at Main Street/R125 and Ballybin Road, Ratoath, Co. Meath. The total site contains a proposed residential development site with an area of 3.66 hectares (bisected by a proposed realigned Ballybin Road) and a proposed infrastructural development site with an area of 1.82 hectares (principally for road and related works, water services and open space amalgamation). The site is generally bound by: Fox lodge woods and Fox Lodge Manor to the west and north; existing agricultural lands and residential development to the north and east; existing Ballybin Road and Moulden Bridge to the east; and Main Street/R125 and Jamestown Road/L1016 to the south. The site also incorporates parts of: the existing Ballybin Road (north and west of Moulden Bridge), Main Street/R125, Jamestown Road/L1016 and green open space in Fox Lodge Manor.

The site is currently accessed via the Ballybin Road which is located at the eastern boundary of the site. The site is located approximately 700m east of Ratoath town centre.

The site currently consists largely of a greenfield site with two existing houses and an agricultural shed which are proposed to be demolished. There are hedgerows surrounding and within the site.

Situated to the north of the site is an existing residential development and Fox Manor Montessori and Playschool. Further north are greenfield sites. To the west of the site are further existing residential developments, further east is Ratoath town centre. South of the site are existing residential developments, St. Pauls National Catholic School and agricultural fields. To the east of the site are further existing residential developments and agricultural fields. Additionally, there are businesses located to the east including Meath School of Motoring, Designed for Freedom Counselling and Fastpack Crating Ltd.

There are no special areas of conservation (SAC), special protection areas (SPA) or national heritage areas (NHA) on the site or in close proximity to the site. The closest waterbody to the site is the Ratoath stream ¹(IE_EA_08B020400), located approximately 60m south of the site. There are no sites and monuments record (SMR), or national inventory of architecture heritage (NIAH) located onsite or directly adjacent to the site.

The site is located within the jurisdiction of Meath County Council and is zoned as “A2 - New Residential” and “A1 – Existing residential” within the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027.

Refer to Figure 1 and Figure 2 for the site location map and site layout map.

¹ We note that the Ratoath Stream is also referred to as the Broadmeadow River locally and in the Council’s planning documentation.

2.2 Project Description

The Proposed Development is a residential led development. It principally consists of:

- The demolition of two dwellings (594 square metres gross floor area combined) and one agricultural shed (988.7 square metres gross floor area).
- The construction of 141 residential dwellings with a gross floor area of 12,428 square metres in buildings of two and three storeys.
 - The residential dwellings include 117 houses (57 two-bed, 52 three-bed, 7 four-bed and 1 five-bed) and 24 maisonette/duplex units (18 one-bed and 6 three-bed).
- Hard and soft landscaping, including public open space, communal amenity space and private amenity space (as rear gardens and terraces/balconies facing multiple directions);
- 228 car parking spaces;
- Cycle parking spaces;
- Demolition of the wall at the north-west corner of the site interfacing with Fox Lodge Manor and the amalgamation of existing public open in the estate and proposed public open space;
- Boundary treatments;
- Public lighting;
- Rooftop PV panels;
- Two ESB sub-stations; and
- Associated site and development works above and below ground.

The Proposed Development also includes the following highways works:

- The reconfiguration of the road layout at the south (Main Street/R125 and The Avenue/L1016) and east (Ballybin Road) of the site.
- The demolition and removal of an existing 5-arm roundabout and to replace it with a new 4-arm signalised junction and reconfigured access to the existing Ratoath Childcare site. The new junction arrangement will facilitate a proposed realignment of the southern section of the existing Ballybin Road (approximately 172 metres) as the northern arm of the new signalised junction and a revised entrance for the existing dwelling to the north-east of the site at Ballybin Road (known as 'Fox Lodge Farm', Eircode A84 KF97).
- Two new multi-modal accesses onto the proposed realigned Ballybin Road to serve the bisected residential site;
- Two pedestrian accesses onto Main Street/R125 and one pedestrian access onto the realigned Ballybin Road;
- Relocation of existing eastbound bus stop at Main Street/R125 approximately 130 metres to the west;
- Repurposing of the closed section of Ballybin Road as a pedestrian/cycle greenway;
- Internal roads and footpaths.

The proposed road infrastructure works also include: road markings, traffic signals, traffic signage, footpaths and cycle infrastructure.



Figure 1 Site Location Map (DOBA, 2024)

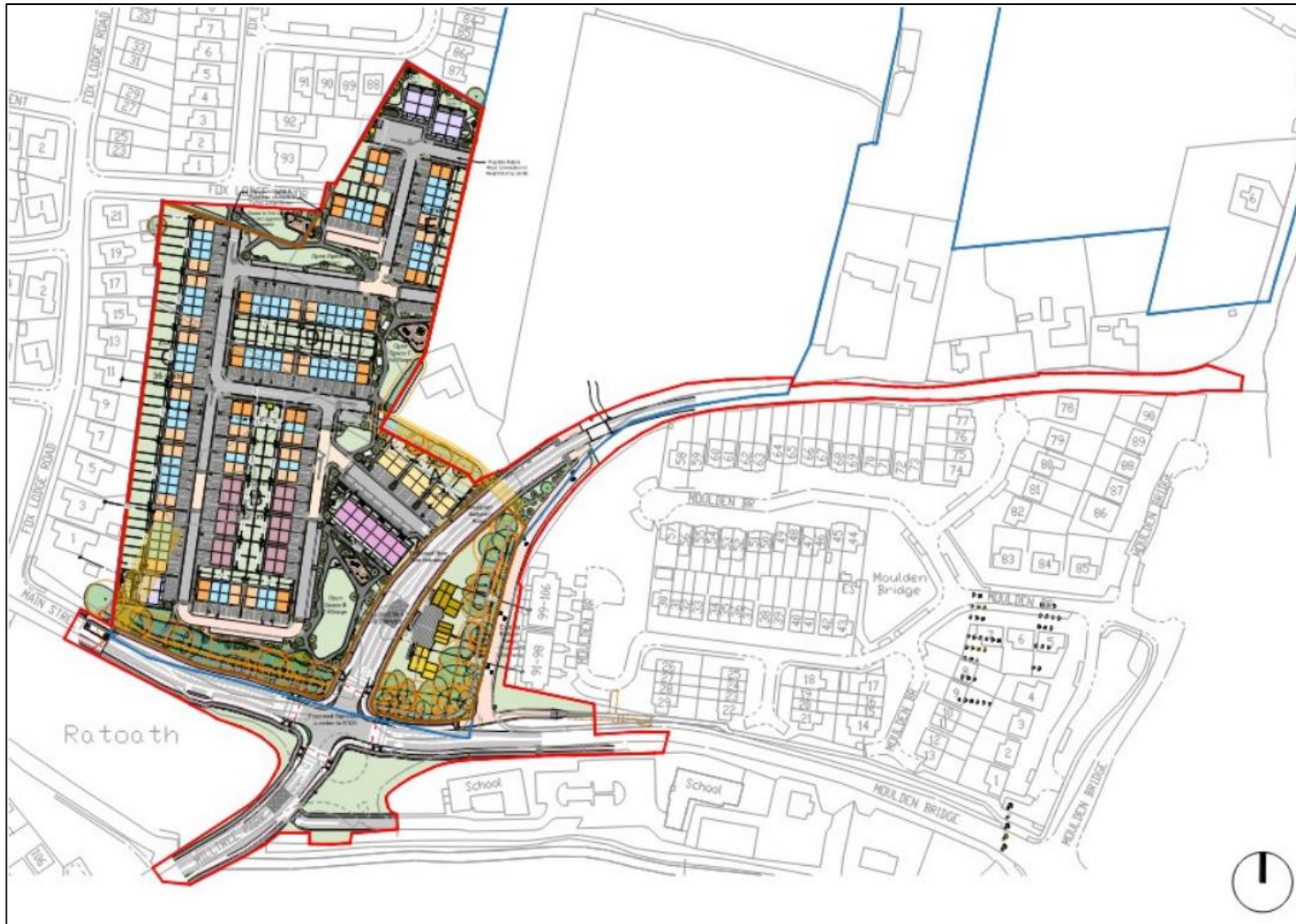


Figure 2 Proposed Site Layout (JFA, 2024)

2.3 Site Planning History

The site lies within the administrative jurisdiction of Meath County Council.

The counties bordering Meath County are Kildare, Westmeath, Dublin, Louth, Monaghan, Cavan and Offaly. The distance from the site to the closest adjoining county border (County Dublin) is approximately 5.3km, however it is not considered there will be potential for any interactions to create likely significant effects on the site.

Therefore, the planning history for the site was reviewed from data sources including:

- Relevant council website: Meath County Council <https://www.meath.ie/>
- Relevant bordering Council Website: Fingal County Council <https://www.fingal.ie/>
- An Bord Pleanála website: <http://www.pleanala.ie/>
- EIA Portal, as provided by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government: <https://housinggovie.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d7d5a3d48f104ecbb206e7e5f84b71f1>

There is no planning history at the site within the last 5 years.

3 EIA SCREENING PROCESS

3.1 Legislative Requirements for an EIA

Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (together, the EIA Directive)) was enacted as a means to assess the effects of projects on the environment, and to properly ensure that any potential significant effects are assessed before a project proceeds. Annex I of the EIA Directive defines mandatory projects that require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Annex II of the EIA Directive lists projects which do not necessarily have significant effects but can be subject to case-by-case analysis or thresholds to be determined by member states. Section 172 of the Planning and Development Act 2001, as amended, provides the legislative basis for mandatory EIA. It states the following:

“An environmental impact assessment shall be carried out by the planning authority or the Board, as the case may be, in respect of an application for consent for proposed development where either —

(a) the proposed development would be of a class specified in —

(i) Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, and either —

(I) such development [would equal or exceed, as the case may be,] any relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, or

(II) no quantity, area or other limit is specified in that Part in respect of the development concerned,

or

(ii) Part 2 [(other than subparagraph (a) of paragraph 2)] of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 and either —

(I) such development [would equal or exceed, as the case may be,] any relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, or

(II) no quantity, area or other limit is specified in that Part in respect of the development concerned,

or

(b) (i) the proposed development would be of a class specified in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 but F594 [does not equal or exceed, as the case may be] the relevant quantity, area or other limit specified in that Part, and

(ii) it is concluded, determined or decided, as the case may be, —

(I) by a planning authority, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by this Act or the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (S.I. No. 600 of 2001),

(II) by the Board, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by this Act or those regulations,

(III) by a local authority in exercise of the powers conferred on it by regulation 120 of those regulations,

(IV) by a State authority, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by regulation 123A of those regulations,

(V) in accordance with section 13A of the Foreshore Act, by the appropriate Minister (within the meaning of that Act), or

(VI) by the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, in exercise of the powers conferred on him or her by section 8A of the Minerals Development Act 1940,

that the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.”

In some cases, Member States have also established “exclusion” or “negative” lists specifying thresholds and criteria below which EIA is never required or below which a simplified EIA procedure applies. There may be exceptions to the negative thresholds, for example, for projects in defined sensitive locations. Such exceptions will apply in the case of Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (as amended) assessments. The use of exclusion lists, defining thresholds below which EIA is never required, is very limited in the EU Member States.

Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, outlines the legislative requirements deeming whether a project needs a mandatory EIA. Projects that automatically require an EIA included in Annex 1 of the EIA Directive are listed in Part 1 of Schedule 5 to the Planning and Development Regulations. Projects that are assessed either on a case-by-case examination or on the basis of set mandatory thresholds are defined under Annex II of the EIA Directive, and these are transposed in Irish legislation in Schedule 5, Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations.

The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) Schedule 5, Part 2, requires an EIA for the following projects, which could potentially be relevant to the Proposed Development:

“10. Infrastructure projects

10. (b)(i) Construction of more than 500 dwelling units.

It is proposed to construct 141 residential units as part of the Proposed Development.

This is below the stated threshold of 500 dwellings. Therefore, a mandatory EIA is not required.

10 (b)(ii) 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.

It is proposed to provide 228 car parking spaces for the Proposed Development. Car parking is ancillary to the Proposed Development.

This is below the stated threshold of 400 spaces, and is ancillary to the development. Therefore, a mandatory EIA is not required.

10(b)(iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.

(In this paragraph, “business district” means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)

The site is located outside of a built up area (Ratoath town). The site is approximately 5.48 hectares in size.

The size of the site is below the stated threshold of 10 hectares and 20 hectares. Therefore, a mandatory EIA is not required.

14. Works of demolition carried out in order to facilitate a project listed in Part 1 or Part 2 of this Schedule where such works would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.

It is proposed to demolish two residential dwellings and an agricultural shed on the site. It is not expected that this demolition process be likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

15. Any project listed in this Part which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in this Part in respect of the relevant class of development, but which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.

The Proposed Development will be reviewed having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 5 Part 2, (15). The findings of this review will be detailed in this report's conclusions.

As this Proposed Development is below the threshold specified in the above Classes or the Classes do not apply, it is considered a sub-threshold development on these grounds. Therefore, the Proposed Development does not meet the thresholds to require a mandatory

EIA as per Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations and is considered to be a sub-threshold development in the context of Irish legislation.

A sub-threshold development is defined as a “*development of a type set out in Part 2 of Schedule 5 which does not equal or exceed, as the case may be, a quantity, area or other limit specified in that Schedule in respect of the relevant class of development*”. Sub threshold developments can be screened to determine if an EIA is required.

The criteria as set out in Schedule 7 of the Regulations has been assessed in this EIA Screening Report, based on the information provided by the Developer as set out in Schedule 7A.

Table 2 provides a summary of the legislative requirements for a mandatory EIA:

Table 1 Summary of EIA Activities

Class of Activity	Description of Activity Class	Summary Comments	EIA Required?
Schedule 5 Part 2 10. (b)(i)	Construction of more than 500 dwelling units.	It is proposed to construct 141 residential units as part of the Proposed Development This is below the EIA threshold.	No
Schedule 5 Part 2 10 (b)(ii)	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.	Parking is ancillary to the Proposed Development. 228 car parking spaces are proposed. This is below the EIA threshold.	No
Schedule 5 Part 2 (10)(b)(iv)	Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.	The site is 5.48 hectares in size which is below the threshold.	No
Schedule 5 Part 2 14	Works of demolition carried out in order to facilitate a project listed in Part 1 or Part 2 of this Schedule where such works would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.	It is proposed to demolish two residential dwellings and an agricultural shed on the site. It is not expected that this demolition process be likely to have a significant effect on the environment.	No
Schedule 5 Part 2 15	Any project listed in this Part which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in this Part in respect of the relevant class of development but which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.	The Proposed Development will be reviewed having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 5 Part 2, (15). The findings of this review will be detailed in this report's conclusions.	To be determined by this EIA Screening

3.2 EIA Screening

The process of evaluating the likelihood of a project listed in Annex II requiring an assessment is called Screening. Figure 3, from The Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects, Guidance on Screening (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU) (European Commission, 2017) provides the steps involved in the Screening process.

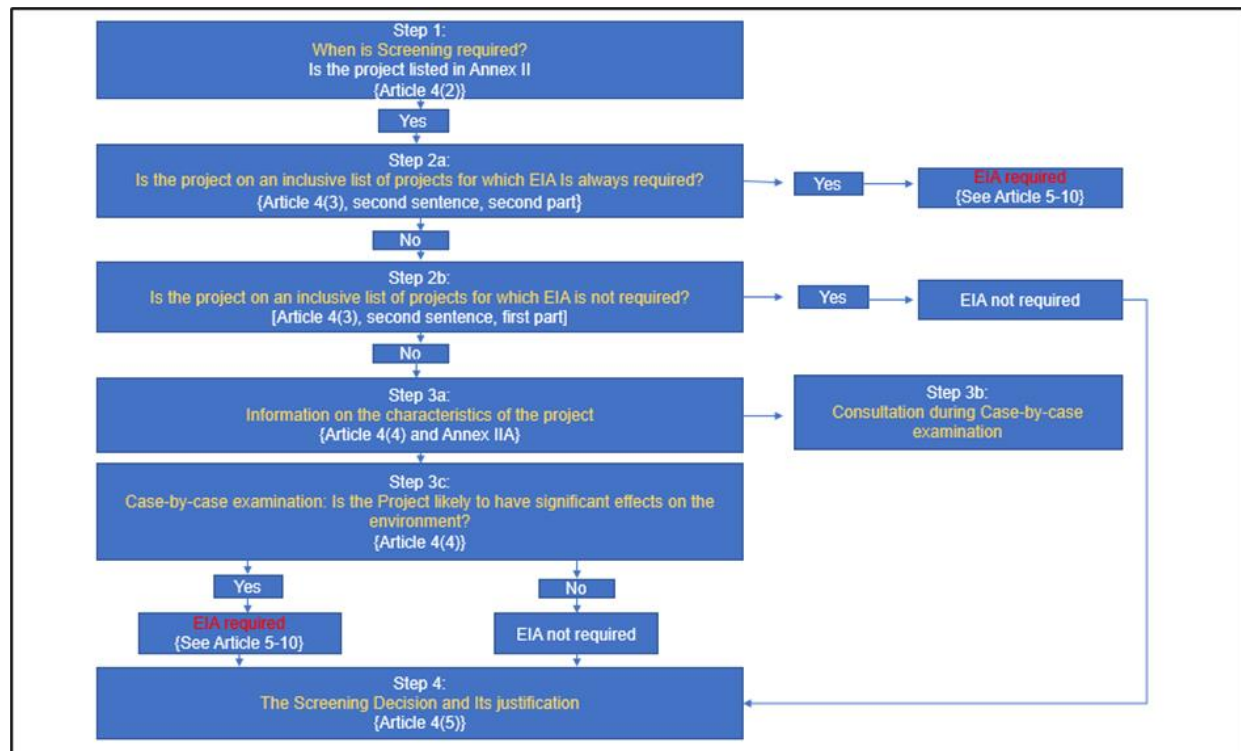


Figure 3 Flow Diagram of the Steps in Screening (Source: European Commission Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects, Guidance on Screening, 2017)

Annex III to the EIA Directive sets out the criteria that should be considered in screening. The European Commission Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects, Guidance on Screening, 2017 document sets out checklists to support and help the process of deciding whether or not a Project is likely to have significant effects on the environment to help EIA participants to apply these criteria in case-by-case screening.

This includes a Checklist of Criteria for Evaluating the Significance of Environmental Impacts. This Checklist is designed to help users decide whether an EIA is required based on the characteristics of the likely impacts of the Proposed Development. As set out in the guidance document, the questions are designed so that a 'Yes' answer will generally point towards the need for an EIA process and a 'No' answer points to an EIA process not being required. The answer that the impact is uncertain would, most likely, point to the need for an EIA Process.

Table 3 details the questions in the *Checklist of Criteria for Evaluating the Significance of Environmental Impacts*, and provides an answer based on the findings of the following sections of this Screening Report (Section 4.1 to Section 4.3).

Table 2 Checklist of Criteria for Evaluating the Significance of Environmental Impacts²

Questions to be Considered	Answer
Will there be a large change in environmental conditions?	No. Refer to Section 4.1, Section 4.2 and Section 4.3 for further information.
Will new features be out-of-scale with the existing environment?	No. Refer to Section 4.1 for further information.
Will the impact be unusual in the area or particularly complex?	No. Refer to Section 4.3 for further information.
Will the impact extend over a large area?	No. Refer to Section 4.1 for further information.
Will there be any potential for transboundary impact?	No. Refer to Section 4.3 for further information.
Will many people be affected?	No. Refer to Section 4.2 for further information.
Will many receptors of other types (fauna and flora, businesses, facilities) be affected?	No. Refer to Section 4.2 and Section 4.3 for further information.
Will valuable or scarce features or resources be affected?	No. Refer to Section 4.1 for further information.
Is there a risk that environmental standards will be breached?	No. Refer to Section 4.3 for further information.
Is there a risk that protected sites, areas, features will be affected?	No. Refer to Section 4.2 and 4.3 for further information.
Is there a high probability of the effect occurring?	No. Refer to Section 4.3 for further information.

² (European Commission Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects, Guidance on Screening, 2017)

Questions to be Considered	Answer
Will the impact continue for a long time?	No. Refer to Section 4.3 for further information.
Will the effect be permanent rather than temporary?	No. Refer to Section 4.3 for further information.
Will the impact be continuous rather than intermittent?	No. Refer to Section 4.3 for further information.
If it is intermittent will it be frequent rather than rare?	No. Refer to Section 4.3 for further information.
Will the impact be irreversible?	No. Refer to Section 4.3 for further information.
Will it be difficult to avoid, or reduce or repair or compensate for the effect?	No. Refer to Section 4.3 for further information.

3.3 Sub-Threshold Development

Sub-threshold development may still require an EIA process to be completed. The most important element to address in the possible assessment of a sub-threshold development and its requirement for an EIA is the likelihood of a project having any significant effects on the environment. Annex III of the EIA Directive sets out criteria to determine whether the projects listed in Annex II should be subject to an environmental impact assessment.

It is also set out in Schedule 7 to the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended. Within Schedule 7A, information to be provided by the applicant or developer for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for EIA includes:

1. A description of the proposed development, including in particular –
 - (a) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole proposed development and, where relevant, of demolition works, and
 - (b) a description of the location of the proposed development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.
2. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.
3. A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the proposed development on the environment resulting from –
 - (a) the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant, and

- (b) the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.
- 4. The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take into account, where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7.

Within Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, the characteristics under which a project must be considered in order to determine if an EIA is required includes:

1. Characteristics of projects

- (a) the size and design of the project;
- (b) cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects;
- (c) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;
- (d) the production of waste;
- (e) pollution and nuisances;
- (f) the risk of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge; and
- (g) the risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)

2. Location of projects

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by projects must be considered, with particular regard to:

- (a) the existing and approved land use;
- (b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground;
- (c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying attention to the following areas:
 - (i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;
 - (ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;
 - (iii) mountain and forest areas;
 - (iv) nature reserves and parks;
 - (v) areas classified or protected under national legislation; Natura 2000 areas designated by Member States pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC;
 - (vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;
 - (vii) densely populated areas; and
 - (viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

3. Type and characteristics of the potential impact

The likely significant effects of projects on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set out in points 1 and 2 of this Annex, with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in Article 3(1), taking into account:

- (a) the magnitude and special extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);

- (b) the nature of the impact;
- (c) the transboundary nature of the impact;
- (d) the intensity and complexity of the impact;
- (e) the probability of the impact;
- (f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;
- (g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects; and
- (h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

The above criteria, as transposed in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended, are grouped under three main headings, as follows:

1. Characteristics of the Proposed Development;
2. Location of the Proposed Development; and
3. Types and Characteristics of the Potential Impacts.

The layout of this EIA Screening Report is set out in accordance with these three headings, with sub-headings to assess the characteristics, location and potential impacts of the Proposed Development.

4 CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING WHETHER DEVELOPMENT LISTED IN PART 2 OF SCHEDULE 5 SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

4.1.1 Size and Design of the Proposed Development

The site of the Proposed Development is approximately 5.48 hectares in size, with the proposed residential area of 3.66 hectares. The Proposed Development will comprise of the demolition of the two existing residential dwellings and agricultural shed on site and the construction of 141 residential dwellings in buildings of two and three storeys. The dwellings include 117 houses (57 two-bed, 52 three-bed, 7 four-bed and 1 five-bed) and 24 maisonette/duplex units (18 one-bed and 6 three-bed).

It is proposed to construct two new multi-modal accesses onto the proposed realigned Ballybin Road to serve the bisected residential site which would serve as the vehicular access to the site.

The predominant land use is residential, the character is semi-rural in nature and the site is on zoned lands.

Therefore, the Proposed Development will not cause any significant adversely effects on the environment as a result of the size and design of the project.

4.1.2 The Nature of any Associated Demolition Works

There are two residential dwellings and an agricultural shed currently situated on the site which are proposed to be demolished as part of the Proposed Development.

4.1.3 Use of Natural Resources

The main use of resources will be the construction materials used during the construction phase. While the exact quantities of material required have yet to be confirmed, the quantity of materials that will be imported to the site will not cause concern in relation to likely significant effects on the environment due to successful implementation of the proposed measures outlined in the CMP (DOBA Consulting Engineering, 2024). There will also be an increase in the use of energy (fuel for construction vehicles, electricity for tools).

The proposed water supply at the site includes for a 150mm diameter watermain with 100mm diameter loops, associated connections, valves, hydrants, and meters designed in accordance with the Irish Water's Code of Practice for Water Infrastructure IW-CDS-5020-03/ and with the Department of the Environment's Building Regulations "Technical Guidance Document Part B Fire Safety" (Infrastructure Design Report, DOBA Consulting Architects 2024).

An AA Screening Report was prepared by Enviroguide (June, 2024) which concluded that, on basis of the best scientific knowledge available and objective information, that the possibility of any significant effects on the European sites within the proximity of the site, whether arising from the project itself or in combination with other plans and projects, can be excluded in light of the above listed European sites' conservation objectives.

Therefore, it is not foreseen that any significant use of natural resources (land, soil, water and biodiversity) is required for the construction or operational phase of the Proposed Development.

4.1.4 Production of Waste

All works carried out as part of these works will comply with all statutory legislation including the Waste Management Act 1996 (as amended) and the European Communities (Waste Directive) Regulations 2011 (as amended), and the contractor will co-operate fully with the Environmental Section of the Local Authority.

There will be an increase in waste quantities in the form of construction waste. A CMP (DOBA Consulting Engineers, 2024) has been completed for the Proposed Development and is submitted with the planning application. The CMP includes a Resource and Waste Management Section in accordance with the EPA's 2021 guidelines. A waste management plan will be prepared for the Proposed Development during construction phase.

Based on the measures outlined in the CMP, it is not predicted that the production of waste during the construction or operational phase will cause any likely significant effects on the environment.

Due to the scale of the Proposed Development, in combination with the use of the authorised waste collection/waste treatment facilities, it is not predicted that the production of waste will cause any significant effects on the environment.

4.1.5 Pollution and Nuisances

The construction phase of the Proposed Development could give rise to short-lived nuisances (noise or dust). However, it is not predicted that these impacts will be significant, as they will only be temporary and of short-term duration for the construction phase, and adequate noise and dust mitigation measures will be put in place for the duration of the construction phase of the Proposed Development.

The Construction Management Plan (CMP) (DOBA Consulting Engineers, 2024) outlines the dust prevention measures that will be included for control of any site airborne particulate pollution at the site of the Proposed Development. Noise mitigation measures are discussed in further detail in Section 4.3 Noise and Vibration.

Specific dust control measures to be employed are highlighted below, which are highlighted within the CMP:

- Effective site management regarding dust emissions will be carried out;
- Minimise dust generation by wetting down haul roads;
- The contractor shall undertake dust monitoring at a range of nearest sensitive receptors during the construction phases with the Technical Instructions on Air Quality Control (TA Luft) dust deposition limit set at 350 mg/m²/day, averaged over one year and applied as a 30-day average;
- In order to reduce mud and debris being deposited onto the local road network, a wheel washing facility will be installed. All of the public roads (R125, the Avenue, Ballybin Road) will be regularly swept by a road sweeping vehicle to ensure that it is kept free of dust and dirt; and,

- A minimum 1.8m hoarding will be provided around the site works to minimise the dispersion of dust from the working areas.

Personnel working at the Proposed Development site will be trained in the implementation of environmental control and emergency procedures. Mitigation measures for the control of emissions to water courses and groundwater are detailed in Section 4.3.3.4 Hydrology and Hydrogeology. There will be no odour generating activities onsite and therefore, it is unlikely that the Proposed Development will give rise to nuisance odours.

The realignment of the Ballybin Road will require road closures which may be a nuisance for the nearby residents and road users however this is temporary and short term. A planning-stage Construction Traffic Management plan has been prepared by DOBA within the CMP (DOBA, 2024).

It is therefore concluded that based on the proposed mitigation measures as outlined in the CMP, the Proposed Development will not give rise to significant adverse pollution or nuisance effects.

4.1.6 Risk of Major Accidents and/or Disasters

The potential for the construction or operational phase of the Proposed Development to result in any major accidents and /or disasters can be considered low. This is based on adherence to standard health and safety procedures, and the lack of substances that will be used in the Proposed Development which may cause concern for having likely significant effects on the environment.

Therefore, it is considered that the Proposed Development will not cause any significant adverse environmental effects as a result of a major accident or disaster.

4.1.7 Risk to Human Health

Good practice mitigation measures will be implemented for the construction phase of the Proposed Development. These will focus on the pro-active control of dust and other air pollutants to minimise generation of emissions at source. The mitigation measures that will be put in place during the construction phase of the Proposed Development will ensure that the impact of the development complies with all EU ambient air quality legislative limit values (Directive 2008/50/EC (as amended) on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe here and Ambient Air Quality Standards Regulations 2022) which are based on the protection of human health, these mitigation measures are outlined in Section 4.1.5. Pollution and Nuisance. The Clean Air Strategy (Government of Ireland, April 2023) is a high-level strategic framework which identifies the pathway to compliance with our national emissions targets for each pollutant. The Proposed Development will follow the corrective actions and measures outlined in this Strategy, as required.

A Sunlight, Daylight and Shadow Assessment was completed by Net3D (June, 2024) which concluded that the Proposed Development generally complied with the recommendations and guidelines of Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice – BR209.

Additionally, the buildings are designed in accordance with the Building Regulations, in particular Part D “Materials and Workmanship”, which includes all elements of the construction (Building Lifecycle Report, JFA).

Therefore, it is not foreseen that there will be any significant adverse effects on human health.

4.2 Location of the Project

4.2.1 Existing and Approved Land Use

The site is located within the administrative jurisdiction of Meath County Council, and is in line with the National, Regional and Local sustainable planning principles. The subject site is principally zoned as 'New Residential' and "Existing Residential" in the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027, which has an objective to *"to provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities and employment uses as considered appropriate for the status of the centre in the settlement hierarchy"* and "to protect and enhance the amenity and character of existing residential communities".

4.2.2 Relative Abundance, Availability, Quality and Regenerative Capacity of Natural Resources

Having regard to the character of the receiving environment and the surrounding area, the effects will be not significant from the Proposed Development in relation to the regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area.

Therefore, the Proposed Development will not cause any significant adverse effects on the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources as it will not use a quantity considered significant in the context of the location and receiving environment.

4.2.3 The Absorption Capacity of the Natural Environment

Having regard to the criteria below which have been subject to analysis, it is considered that the site will facilitate the scale and nature of the Proposed Development. The scale of development has been designed in line with surrounding heights and scale of existing buildings. It is considered there is a low likelihood of significant environmental effects occurring as a result of the Proposed Development.

4.2.4 Wetlands, Riparian Areas, River Mouths, Coastal Zones and the Marine Environment

The site is within the Nanny-Delvin catchment (Catchment ID 08) and Broadmeadow_SC_010 sub-catchment (Sub-Catchment ID 08_3). The closest watercourse to the site is the Ratoath Stream (EU Code: IE_EA_08B020400), located approximately 60m south of the site.

The site is situated on a locally important groundwater aquifer which is moderately productive groundwater body. The groundwater vulnerability at the site ranges from high at the southern boundary, moderate in the middle section, and low from the middle of the site to the northern boundary.

Therefore, it is not anticipated that there will be adverse effects in any watercourses, wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths, coastal zones or the marine environment in the vicinity of the Proposed Development.

4.2.5 Mountain and Forest Areas

Due to the setting and location of the Proposed Development, it is predicted that the construction or operational phases will not have any likely significant effect on mountains and forest areas.

4.2.6 Nature Reserves and Parks

There are no nature areas or parks that will be affected by the Proposed Development due to the distance from the Proposed Development to any designated nature reserves and parks.

4.2.7 Nationally Designated Sites

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report was carried out by Enviroguide Consulting (2024) for the Proposed Development site.

Site Name & Site Code	Direct Distance to Site
Malahide Estuary SAC (000205)	16.1 km east
Rogerstown Estuary SAC (000208)	18.3 km east
South Dublin Bay SAC (000210)	24.5 km southeast
North Dublin Bay SAC (000206)	24 km southeast
Malahide Estuary SPA (004025)	16.1 km east
Rogerstown Estuary SAC (004015)	18.3 km east
North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236)	22.2 km east
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024)	24.5 km southeast
North Bull Island SPA (004006)	24 km southeast

This assessment concluded that upon the examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information and applying the precautionary principle, it is concluded by the authors of this report that the possibility **may be excluded** that the Proposed Development will have a significant effect on any of the European sites listed above.

Therefore, no nationally designated sites will be significantly adversely affected by the Proposed Development.

4.2.8 Environmental Quality Standards

No environmental quality standards will be exceeded by the construction or operational phases of the Proposed Development.

All works carried out as part of these works will comply with all Statutory Legislation including the Local Government (Water Pollution) acts, 1977 and 1990 and the contractor will cooperate in full, with the Environment Section of Meath County Council in this regard.

4.2.9 Densely Populated Areas

The site is zoned lands which are zoned as “new residential” and “existing residential”, with the objective “*to provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities as considered appropriate*” and “*to protect and enhance the amenity and character of existing residential communities*”.

It is considered that there will be no likely significant impacts through adding to pressures on existing infrastructure or increasing densely populated areas.

It can therefore be concluded that there will be no likely significant adverse effects on the environment with regard to the geographic location of densely populated areas.

4.2.10 Landscapes and Sites of Historical, Cultural or Archaeological Significance

There are no recorded monuments within or directly adjacent to the site. There are two monuments recorded within 500m of the site boundary (ME044-034: Historic Town and ME044-034015: Field System), and the wider area contains a large number of archaeological excavations dating from the prehistoric period onwards (Archaeological Assessment, John Cronin and Associates 2024).

A geophysical assessment was carried out at Ratoath townland which did not identify any anomalies of clear archaeological potential, however evidence for former cultivation of uncertain antiquity was detected (John Cronin and Associates, 2024).

Due to the undeveloped nature of the site, the greenfield areas of the site is considered to possess a moderate archaeological potential. In the absence of mitigation measures, there is the potential for direct and indirect impacts to recorded and unrecorded archaeological heritage resources (John Cronin and Associates, 2024).

4.2.11 Designated Focal Points/ Views

There are no protected views, rights of way or planned pieces of strategic infrastructure or any important tourist sites affected in any way by the Proposed Development.

A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) was carried out by JBA Consulting (June 2024) which concluded that the proposed development before mitigation measures would have a moderate

impact on the surrounding environment. With the addition of the mitigation measures the residual impact is expected to be slight and negligible to a potentially positive effect.

On the assessment of the above, it is demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse effects on the surrounding natural environment in terms of designated focal points/views in the long-term.

4.3 Types and Characteristics of the Potential Impacts

4.3.1 Magnitude and Spatial Extent of the Impact

The proposed use of the Proposed Development is consistent with land use in this location. The effects are not considered to be significant with regards to the nature and scale of the proposed construction works and the implementation of appropriate control measures. It is not predicted that any significant physical effects will be experienced beyond the project works area and immediate adjacent area during the construction phase and the geographical extent for construction effects will be restricted to the site and adjacent areas. The construction will be a phased approach with 82 units constructed in the first phase (8 months) and the remaining 59 units constructed in the second phase (5 months), it is therefore estimated that the construction phase will last for approximately 13 months from the date of commencement.

For this purpose of this Assessment, the impact has been assessed and determined on a local level, due to the scale of the Proposed Development.

The operational phase will result in an increase in population in the area; however, due to the nature and scale of the proposed activities for this development, there are no significant effects envisaged on the geographical area and size of the affected population in the area. The operational phase will result in an increase in the population of the area, and it will have a positive effect on the long-term supply needs of housing and accommodation in the Ratoath area.

4.3.2 Transboundary Nature of the Impact

The effects of the Proposed Development are local in nature and there are no transboundary impacts associated with the Proposed Development. The geographical extent and population likely to be affected is limited and significant environmental effects are unlikely to arise.

4.3.3 Intensity and Complexity of the Impact

During the construction phase, temporary and intermittent effects are predicted due to potential noise and dust, however these effects will be localised and last only for the duration of these phases. Therefore, any potential effects will not be significant. The control measures outlined in the Construction Management Plan (CMP) (DOBA Consulting Engineers, 2024) will ensure that there will be no nuisance or impacts from the Proposed Development beyond the site boundary. Any potential nuisances will be controlled through careful pre-project planning and effective site management.

There are no aspects to the Proposed Development which are considered to be of unusual magnitude or complexity, and any potential effects are considered to be consistent with developments of this scale. Therefore, any potential effects will not be significant.

During operation, a positive effect (not significant) may be realised, as this development will facilitate the provision of residential accommodation in proximity to public transport, employment locations and services and facilities which can meet the housing and accommodation needs of a greater number of persons and will address the housing shortage and the significant demand that exists nationally.

4.3.3.1 Air Quality and Climate

Ambient air quality monitoring and assessment in Ireland is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the 2008 EU Directive Clean Air for Europe (2008/50/EC) (CAFE Directive). The CAFE Directive has been transposed into Irish legislation by the Air Quality Standards Regulations (S.I. No. 180 of 2011). The CAFE Directive requires EU member states to designate 'Zones' reflective of population density for the purpose of managing air quality. Four zones were defined in the Air Quality Standards Regulations (2011) and subsequently amended in 2013 to account for 2011 census population counts and to align with coal restricted areas in the Air Pollution Act (Marketing, Sale, Distribution and Burning of Specified Fuels) Regulations 2012. (S.I. No. 326 of 2012) (the 2012 Regulations).

The main areas defined in each zone are:

- ❖ **Zone A:** Dublin Conurbation
- ❖ **Zone B:** Cork Conurbation
- ❖ **Zone C:** Other cities and large towns comprising Limerick, Galway, Waterford, Drogheda, Dundalk, Bray, Navan, Ennis, Tralee, Kilkenny, Carlow, Naas, Sligo, Newbridge, Mullingar, Wexford, Letterkenny, Athlone, Celbridge, Clonmel, Balbriggan, Greystones, Leixlip and Portlaoise.
- ❖ **Zone D:** Rural Ireland, i.e., the remainder of the State excluding Zones A, B and C.

According to the 2012 Regulations, the site falls into 'Zone D' of Ireland which is described by the EPA as 'Rural Ireland'. It is expected that existing ambient air quality in the vicinity of the site is characteristic of a semi-rural location with the primary source of air emissions such as particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and hydrocarbons likely to be of traffic, aviation, industrial activities, combustion and agriculture, and domestic fuel burning.

The Proposed Development involves construction works which may temporarily impact on air quality due to dust emissions. According to the Institute of Air Quality Management (2014), the main air quality impacts associated with construction are typically:

- Dust deposition and surface soiling;
- Visible dust plumes;
- Elevated particulate matter (PM₁₀) concentrations due to dust generating activities onsite;
- Increase in airborne particles and nitrogen dioxide due to exhaust emissions from diesel powered vehicles and machinery onsite and vehicles accessing the site.

Any potential dust impacts will be localised in nature and last only for the duration of these work and the site will be managed in accordance with the Construction Environmental management Plan (DOBA Consulting Engineers, 2024).

There is the potential for combustion emissions from onsite machinery and traffic derived pollutants of carbon dioxide and nitrogen dioxide to be emitted as a result of the proposed construction works. However, due to the size and duration of the construction phase, and the mitigation measures proposed, the effect on national greenhouse gas emission (GHG) emissions will not be significant in terms of overall national contributions and Ireland's obligations under the Paris Agreement and therefore the Proposed Development will have no likely significant adverse effects on air quality and climate.

4.3.3.2 Noise and Vibration

There will be an increase in noise and vibration levels during the construction phase. However, these impacts will be localised, intermittent, and last only for the duration of this phase. The Construction Management Plan (CMP) (DOBA Consulting Engineers, 2024) has outlined the following noise mitigation measures to ensure that no significant vibration levels occur, and that all appropriate steps are taken to assist in effective noise and vibration level management:

- Site compounds will be located away from noise sensitive receptors within the site constraints;
- Lifting bulky items, dropping and loading of materials within these areas will be restricted to normal working hours;
- For steady continuous noise such as that generated by diesel engine's, it may be possible to reduce the noise emitted by fitting a more effective exhaust silencer system or utilising an acoustic canopy to replace the normal engine cover;
- For concrete mixers, control measures will be employed during cleaning to ensure no impulsive hammering is undertaken at the mixer drum;
- For all materials handling, ensure that materials are not dropped from excessive heights, lining drop chutes and dump trucks with resilient materials;
- Demountable enclosures to screen operatives using hand tools and will be moved around site as necessary;
- All items of plant will be subject to regular maintenance to prolong the effectiveness of noise control measures;
- Construction site hoarding to be constructed around the site boundaries of a material with a mass per unit of surface area greater than 7 kg/m² to provide adequate sound insulation;
- Construction noise monitoring will be undertaken at periodic sample periods at the nearest noise sensitive location to the development works to check compliance with the construction noise criterion and be conducted in accordance with the international standard ISO 1996: 2017: Acoustics – Description, measurement and assessment of environmental noise;
- the following noise conditions shall be adhered to:
 - 70dB(A) (LAeq 1 hour) between 0800 hours and 1800 hours Monday to Friday inclusive (excluding bank holidays) and between 0800 hours and 1300 hours on Saturdays when measured at any noise sensitive location in the vicinity of the site. Sound levels shall not exceed 45 dB(A) add another other time following completion of the site development works.

Good practice noise and vibration control measures will be employed by the contractor and screening provided to adjoining properties.

Based on the measures that will be carried out as outlined in the CMP (DOBA Consulting Engineers, 2024), it is therefore concluded that the Proposed Development will not result in significant adverse noise and vibration related effects.

4.3.3.3 Soils and Geology

The CMP details that, clean, inert / non-hazardous excavation materials will be reused as landscaping or engineering will be considered following appropriate material testing and risk assessment to ensure that the material is suitable for its proposed end use. Where excavation material may not be reused within the proposed works the contractors will endeavour to send material for recovery or recycling so far as is reasonably practicable or disposal to an appropriate licensed landfill in accordance with the landfill directive (DOBA, 2024).

The CMP additionally outlines mitigation measures for land and soils which include:

- Provide adequate security to potential pollutants against vandalism;
- Provide procedures to ensure that any spillages will be immediately contained, and contaminated soil shall be removed from the proposed development and property disposed of in an appropriately licenced facility;
- Minimise dust generation by wetting down haul roads;
- Store stockpiles of earthworks and site clearance material on impermeable surfaces and coverage with appropriate materials;
- Place silt traps in road gullies to capture any excess silt in the runoff from working areas;
- Carry out earthworks operations such that surfaces shall be designed with adequate falls, profiling and drainage to promote safe runoff and prevent ponding and flooding;

There are no protected Geological Heritage Sites in the vicinity of the Proposed Development that will be affected by the Proposed Development.

4.3.3.4 Hydrology and Hydrogeology

The following measures outlined within the CMP (DOBA Engineers, 2024) will protect the receiving surface water and groundwater environment during the construction phase of the Proposed Development:

- Treat all excavated spoil to remove excess fluid prior to stockpiling and transportation where possible;
- Transfer excess soil materials from stockpile areas off site during dry periods where feasible;
- Restrict stockpile and transfer of excess soil material to specified and impermeable areas that are isolated from the surrounding environment;
- Provide wheel washes at site entrances and exit points;
- Train staff to follow vehicle cleaning procedures;
- Train site managers foremen and workforce including all subcontractors in pollution risks and preventative measures;
- Bond all fuel storage facilities away;
- Implement a regular vehicle inspection plan for fuel oil and hydraulic fluid leaks provide suitable equipment to deal with spills on site; and,
- Minimise the use of cleaning chemicals.

Therefore, it is considered that the Proposed Development will not cause any significant adverse effects on the hydrology and hydrogeology within the site of the development, or the surrounding area.

4.3.3.5 Biodiversity

The Proposed Development has been continuously developed with the protection of the surrounding ecological environment in mind.

The Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (Enviroguide, 2024) concluded that, on the basis of the best scientific knowledge available and objective information, that the possibility of any significant effects on the listed European sites, whether arising from the project itself or in combination with other plans and projects, can be excluded in light of the European sites' conservation objectives.

An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) (Enviroguide, 2024) was also completed for the Proposed Development. The EclA identified a number of Key Ecological Receptors (KER) on Site that would be subject to negative impacts from the Proposed Development in the absence of mitigation. Each of these KERs have been assigned appropriate mitigation to prevent any long-term negative impacts. The EclA concludes that following the reports recommendations, the Proposed Development will have no negative long-term impacts on the Site.

Therefore, it is considered there will be no significant, adverse effects to any valued habitats or individual or group of species as a result of the Proposed Development.

4.3.3.6 Archaeology, Architecture and Cultural Heritage

Within the Archaeology assessment, recommendations are made to reduce the impact of the Proposed Development on the surrounding archaeology. In the absence of mitigation measures the proposed development has the potential to cause direct and indirect impacts to the surrounding archaeology.

Recommendation measures, as set out within the Archaeology Assessment (John Cronin and Associates, 2024) are as follows:

- The applicant is required to engage the services of a suitably qualified archaeologist (licenced under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004) to carry out pre-development testing at the site. No subsurface work shall be undertaken in the absence of the archaeologist without his / her express consent;
- The archaeologist is required to notify the Department for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in writing at least four weeks prior to the commencement of site preparation This will allow the archaeologist sufficient time to obtain a licence to carry out the work. The earlier the archaeologist is able to access the site for the survey, the better, since there may be a further phase of archaeological works if something significant is found
- The archaeologist shall carry out any relevant documentary research and may excavate test trenches to a general total of 8% – 10 % of the greenfield site area, suitably placed to give an overall coverage of the site, a locations chosen by the archaeologist having consulted the Proposed Development plans and the advance geophysical survey

- Having completed the work, the archaeologist shall submit a written report to the Planning Authority and to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for consideration.
- When archaeological material is shown to be present, avoidance, preservation in situ, preservation by record (rescue excavation) and/or monitoring may be required, and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will also advise the Applicant. Developer with regards to these measures.
- In areas where no archaeological material is present following the testing survey, then no further work would typically be required
- No site preparation or construction works shall be carried out until after the archaeologists report has been submitted and permission to proceed has been received in writing from the Planning Authority in consultation with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

It should also be noted that Meath County Council, in their formal opinion on the LRD (24/05/2024) agreed with the recommendations set out above and within the Archaeological Assessment, and have proposed the application of the above wording for a condition of planning permission (should the LRD be approved) (John Cronin and Associates, 2024).

4.3.3.7 Material Assets and Land

All construction waste required for disposal will be treated by using appropriately authorised waste disposal or materials recovery facilities. All waste will be consigned using an appropriately authorised waste collection contractor. During the operational phase of the Proposed Development, all waste will be collected by appropriately authorised waste collection contractors and will be treated at suitably authorised waste disposal or materials recovery facilities as detailed within the Operational Waste Management Plan (OWMP) (DOBA Consulting Engineers, 2024).

The proposed water supply at the site includes for a 150mm diameter watermain with 100mm diameter loops, associated connections, valves, hydrants, and meters designed in accordance with the Irish Water's Code of Practice for Water Infrastructure IW-CDS-5020-03/ and with the Department of the Environment's Building Regulations "Technical Guidance Document Part B Fire Safety" (Infrastructure Design Report, DOBA Consulting Architects 2024).

It is considered that the Proposed Development will be in keeping with the surrounding land uses and the zoning of the area.

It is considered that there is sufficient capacity to service the Proposed Development in this aspect, and there will be no significant adverse effects on the material assets and land.

4.3.3.8 Landscape and Visual Amenity

A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) (JBA, 2024) was carried out as part of the Proposed Development planning application. The VIA proposes planting tall plant species as mitigation measures.

With the inclusion of mitigation measures it is expected that the moderate effect would be reduced. Upon maturing of the planting, these are expected to be further reduced to slight and negligible to potentially positive (JBA, 2024).

On the assessment of the above, it is demonstrated that there will no significant adverse effect on the surrounding natural environment in terms of landscape and visual amenity in the long-term.

4.3.3.9 Population and Human Health

The construction and operational phase of the Proposed Development will provide for an increase of employment in the area which is believed to have a positive impact on the population.

The operational phase of the Proposed Development will result in an increase in the population of the area, and it will have a positive impact on the long-term supply needs of housing in the Ratoath area.

It is considered that the Proposed Development will not result in significant adverse effects on population and human.

4.3.3.10 Resource and Waste Management

Within the CMP (DOBA Consulting Engineers, 2024), Section 4 details construction and demolition resource and waste management which puts a focus on prevention, reuse, recycle and disposal of construction wastes.

The CMP details the estimated waste arising from the construction phase of the Proposed Development as set out in the table below.

Table 3: Estimated Quantities of Proposed Construction Waste (DOBA Consulting Engineers, 2024)

Type	Proposed Internal Floor Area (m ²)	Gross Area	Average m ³ /100m ²	Construction Waste (m ³)
Residential	c. 12, 428		18.2	2,249

There will be an emphasis on source segregation and material management during the construction phase, and the CMP will be further developed prior to commencement of the proposed works.

It is therefore concluded that the Proposed Development will not result in significant adverse resource or waste management related impacts.

4.3.3.11 Interactions

The interactions between impacts on different environmental factors have been addressed throughout this EIA Screening Report. The environmental interactions between all factors assessed are deemed to be insignificant both in the short term and the long term for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.

When considering interactions, the assessor has been vigilant in assessing pathways – direct and indirect – that can magnify effects through the interaction. In practice many effects have slight or subtle interactions with other disciplines. However, it is concluded that most inter-

relationships are neutral in effect when appropriate control measures are incorporated into the operation of the Proposed Development.

4.3.3.12 Probability of the Impact

Noise and dust may occur during the construction phase; however, these are considered as not being significant, due to the mitigation measures that will be employed to ensure limit values will not be exceeded.

4.3.3.13 Expected Onset, Duration, Frequency, and Reversibility of the Impact

Any potential effects associated with the construction phase of the Proposed Development will be temporary and characteristic of a typical housing development project. Potential adverse effects such as noise or dust during the construction phase will be temporary and reversible through the correct implementation of the appropriate control measures, and they will not be significant. Permanent, positive effects (not significant) will be experienced as a result of the Proposed Development in terms of human health through the generation of employment opportunities during the construction phase, as well as through the provision of accommodation in proximity to public transport, employment locations and services and facilities and will contribute positively towards addressing the critical national shortage in housing supply.

According to the EclA (Enviroguide, June 2024), it is considered that provided the mitigation measures proposed are followed, the Proposed Development on any valued habitats, will have no significant negative long term impacts on the Site.

4.3.3.14 Cumulation with Other Projects

Cumulative Impacts are defined in European Commission Guidelines for the Assessment of Indirect and Cumulative Impacts as well as Impact Interactions 1999 as “*impacts that result from incremental changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions together with the project*”. Effects which are caused by the interaction of effects, or by associated or off-site projects, are classed as indirect effects. Cumulative effects are often indirect, arising from the accumulation of different effects that are individually minor.

Plans and projects in the surrounding area that could have the potential to result in cumulative impacts were reviewed from data sources including:

- Meath County Council planning website: <https://www.meath.ie/>
- An Bord Pleanála website, <http://www.pleanala.ie/>; and,
- EIA Portal, as provided by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government: <https://housinggov.ie/maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d7d5a3d48f104ecbb206e7e5f84b71f1>.

Any planning applications within a 1km radius listed as granted or decision pending from within the last five years (a typical planning application normally remains valid for a five-year period) were assessed for their potential to act in-combination with Proposed Development and cause likely significant effects on the environment. Long-term developments granted outside of this time period were also considered where applicable.

Cumulative impacts are likely to arise due to potential pollution and nuisance during the construction phase in the absence of mitigation measures. Good construction management

practices, as outlined within the CMP (DOBA Consulting Engineers, 2024) will minimise the risk of pollution from construction activities at the site. Due to the full implementation of management controls to avoid adverse environmental impacts from the current Proposed Development and the proposed off-site projects, it is not expected that cumulative impacts from these developments are likely to result in significant adverse effects on the environment.

A Transport Assessment (Systra, 2024) was completed as part of this application and concluded that the site is well positioned to enable active travel access to destinations in Ratoath town centre and particularly schools and the Ratoath college accessed from The Avenue. The Ratoath town network upgrades will complement an enhancement of the existing network of shared and segregated active travel ways found throughout Ratoath.

The Transport Assessment also found that replacing the Ballybin roundabout with a signal controlled crossroad would:

- Fundamentally address the existing road safety problem raised by MCC, by incorporating a realigned Ballybin Road into the junction;
- Reduce eastbound queues on the R125, thereby improving the ability for residents to enter and exit Fox Lodge Manor;
- Incorporate high quality active infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists on all arms of the junction;
- Not jeopardise the principles of the Part 8 scheme that MCC were bringing forward for this location. Indeed the proposed design will enhance the Part 8 Scheme, by providing controlled segregated crossings for pedestrians and cyclists on all arms of the junction
- Acknowledge the need to retain the eastbound bus stop by providing a design compliant layout to the east of the junction;
- Seek to minimise the impact to the trees on the north side of the R125 an arboricultural method statement has been included in the arboricultural report prepared by Charles McCorkell Arboricultural Consultancy;
- Provide a safe means of accessing the LRD site; and,
- Open up the opportunity for further development in the area.

In conclusion, subject to the implementation of adequate mitigation measures in terms of traffic movement, noise and dust which are outlined within this EIA Screening, it is not considered that cumulative impacts from the Proposed Development and other offsite projects are likely to result in significant effects on the environment. Furthermore, the Proposed Development aligns with objectives of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.

4.3.3.15 Cumulation with Relevant Policies and Plans

The following policies and plans were reviewed and considered for possible in-combination effects with the Proposed Development.

- Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027
- Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2015 - 2020
- National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017 – 2021
- Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 [Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)]
- Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)]

The Proposed Development has also been assessed under Article 103 (1A) (a) of the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations:

“Where an applicant is submitting to the planning authority the information specified in Schedule 7A, the information will be accompanied by any further relevant information on the characteristics of the Proposed Development and its likely significant effects on the environment, including, where relevant, information on how the available results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment carried out pursuant to European Union legislation other than the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive have been taken into account.”

On examination of the above, it is considered that there are no means for the Proposed Development to act in-combination with any plans or projects, that would cause any likely significant adverse effects on the surrounding environment. The most significant potential for adverse cumulative effects in combination with other projects in the area is in the potential for water pollution, noise, dust, airborne pollutants and/or vibrations, visual effects and increased traffic. However, the adherence and full implementation of the appropriate control measures will ensure no potential for cumulative effects to arise. Furthermore, any potential effects during the construction phase will be temporary and last only for the duration of this phase.

4.3.3.16 Possibility of Effectively Reducing the Impact

Based on the adherence and implementation of the reports and assessments discussed in this report, it is concluded that no significant environmental effects will occur as a result of the Proposed Development due to the proposed control measures in place that will reduce any potential significant effect.

5 SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Table 5 presents a summary of the assessment findings throughout this EIA Screening Report, including a determination of the significance of the impact for the criteria as listed in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended.

Table 4 Summary of Assessment Findings

Characteristics of Proposed Project		Significance of Impacts Conclusion
Size of the Proposed Development site	The Proposed Development is at a site with a total area of 5.48 hectares. The development site has an area of 3.66 hectares (bisected by a proposed realigned Ballybin Road) and a proposed infrastructural development site with an area of 1.8 hectares.	The size of the Proposed Development is considered to fall below the relevant EIA size thresholds set out in EIA Regulations.
Nature of any Associated Demolition Works	It is proposed to demolish two residential dwellings and an agricultural shed on the site.	No likely significant effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development.
Use of Natural Resources	It is not foreseen that any extensive use of natural resources is required for the Proposed Development.	No likely significant effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development.
Production of Waste	<p>There will be an increase in waste in the form of construction waste during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. All construction waste that cannot be recycled will be collected by appropriately authorised waste collection contractors and will be transferred to appropriately authorised waste facilities for recycling, recovery or disposal. Therefore, it is not predicted that the production of waste will cause any likely significant effects on the environment.</p> <p>Due to the scale of the Proposed Development, in combination with the use of the authorised waste collection/waste treatment facilities, it is not predicted that the production of waste will cause any likely significant effects on the environment.</p>	No likely significant effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development.
Pollution and Nuisances	The construction phase could give rise to temporary nuisances (noise or dust). However, it is not predicted that these impacts will be significant, as they will be temporary and short-term in duration for the construction	No likely significant effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development.

	<p>phase, and adequate noise and dust control measures will be put in place for the duration of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The CMP will ensure that all applicable environmental health and safety regulations are complied with throughout the construction phase thereby ensuring that the Proposed Development will not result in significant effects on human health or the environment resulting from potential pollution or nuisance.</p>	
Risk of Major Accidents and/or Disasters	<p>During construction and operations, it is anticipated that the risk of accidents and/or disasters will be insignificant due to adherence to emergency type specific corrective action measures for potential spillages or fire.</p> <p>The potential for the construction or operational phase of the Proposed Development to result in any major accidents and /or disasters can be considered low. This is based on the correct implementation of all standard health and safety procedures, and the lack of substances that will be used in the Proposed Development which may cause concern for having likely significant effects on the environment.</p>	No likely significant effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development.
Risk to Human Health	<p>During the construction and operational phase, due to best management practices and good housekeeping, it is not foreseen that there will be any negative impacts to human health.</p>	No likely significant effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development.
Location of the Project		
Existing and Approved Land Use	<p>In the context of the Meath County Development Plan, the site is principally zoned as 'New Residential' and 'existing residential'. The Proposed Development, which will include a residential development, is considered to be an appropriate use for the subject site and in accordance and permissible under the zoning objectives.</p>	No likely significant effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development.
Relative Abundance, Availability, Quality and	<p>The effects are considered to be negligible for this Proposed</p>	No likely significant effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development.

Regenerative Capacity of Natural Resources	Development in relation to the regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area.	
Absorption Capacity of the Natural Environment	Having regard to the criteria which have been subject to analysis, it is considered that the site has a high absorption capacity to facilitate the scale and nature of the Proposed Development.	No likely significant effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development.
Types and Characteristics of the Potential Impacts		
Magnitude and Spatial Extent of the Impact	<p>The Proposed Development use is consistent with land use in this location and the effects are considered to be insignificant with regards to this project, due to the nature and scale of the proposed works.</p> <p>Due to the nature and scale of the proposed activities for this development, there are no significant impacts envisaged on the geographical area and size of the affected population in the area. The operational phase will result in an increase in the population of the area, and it will have a positive impact on the long-term supply needs of housing and accommodation in the area.</p>	No overall likely significant effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development.
Transboundary nature of the Impact	There are no transboundary effects envisaged for the Proposed Development.	No likely significant transboundary effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development.
Intensity and Complexity of the Impact	<p>During construction, temporary and intermittent effects are predicted due to potential noise and dust, however these effects will be localised, insignificant, and last only for the duration of this phase. Construction and operational control measures are identified within the CMP and will ensure that there will be no nuisance or effects from the Proposed Development beyond the site boundary.</p> <p>There are no aspects to the Proposed Development which are considered to be of unusual magnitude or complexity, and any potential effects are considered to be consistent with projects of this scale.</p>	No likely significant effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development.

Probability of the Impact	No significant environmental effects are predicted for the Proposed Development during operations. Noise and dust pollution may occur during the construction and operational phases; however, these are considered as not being significant or likely to cause nuisance, due to the mitigation measures that will be employed to ensure limit values will not be exceeded.	No likely significant effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development.
Expected Onset, Duration, Frequency and Reversibility of the Impact	<p>The operational phase of the development will result in an increase in population in the area; however, due to the nature and scale of the proposed activities for this development, there are no significant effects envisaged on the geographical area and size of the affected population in the area.</p> <p>The operational phase will result in an increase in the population of the area, and it will have a positive effect on the long-term supply needs of housing and accommodation in the area. Effects such as noise, dust and/or water pollution during the construction phase will be temporary and reversible through the correct implementation of the appropriate control measures.</p>	No likely significant effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development.
Cumulation with other Projects	It is not considered that cumulative effects from the Proposed Development and other existing offsite projects are likely to result in significant effects on the environment.	No likely significant effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development
Possibility of Effectively Reducing the Impact	Based on the adherence and implementation of the reports and assessments discussed in this report, it is concluded that no significant environmental effects will occur as a result of the Proposed Development due to the proposed control measures in place that will reduce any potential significant effect.	No likely significant effects identified as a result of the Proposed Development

6 CONCLUSION

The Proposed Development has been assessed in accordance with the screening criteria set out in Annex III of the European Union 'EIA Directive' and in accordance with the national legislation transposing same, including the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). It has also been assessed based on Schedule 7 to the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended. Within Schedule 7A, information to be provided by the applicant for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for EIA is set out. The Proposed Development has been assessed in accordance with this information.

Based on the assessment carried out in the appropriate sections of this Screening Report, it can be concluded that the Proposed Development will not have significant effects on the environment during both the construction and operational phases given the mitigation measures and recommendations within.

Having regard to the nature and scale of the Proposed Development on an urban site served by public infrastructure, and the absence of any significant environmental sensitivities in the area, it is concluded that, by reason of the nature, scale and location of the subject site, the Proposed Development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is not required for the Proposed Development.

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