



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí
Cork City Council

Infrastructure Development Directorate

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening & Screening
Determination Report

For

Passage Greenway Phase 3 - Skehard Road Link



We are Cork.

1 Executive Summary

This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report has been prepared to consider the requirement or otherwise of carrying out an EIA in respect of the proposed Passage Greenway Phase 3 - Skehard Road Link.

This screening exercise was undertaken in two stages. The first stage considered the need for a mandatory EIA, while the second stage considered the need for a sub-threshold EIA. As part of the sub-threshold screening exercise, the potential for impacts on environmental sensitivities was considered in addition to the interrelationship between those environmental sensitivities. Following on from this, the formal EIA Screening Exercise was completed, having regard to the criteria set out in the Roads Acts, as amended and in the EIA Directive (2014/52/EU).

This report concludes that this is a sub-threshold type project which is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment, either by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, and that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required in this instance.

2 Legislative context

EIA legislation sets down the types of projects that may require an EIA. Annex I of Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU defines mandatory projects that require an EIAR (EIS) and Annex II lists projects which can be subject to case-by-case analysis or thresholds to be determined by member states.

3 Mandatory requirements

The proposed scheme has been assessed in terms of the mandatory requirement for an EIA based on the nature or scale of the development, as addressed in the EU Directive 2014/52/EU and also the Roads Acts 1993 - 2016. It is considered that the proposed scheme is not one which falls within the scope of this category. It should be noted that mandatory EIA requirements for non-road type development have also been considered and discounted in this instance as part of this infrastructure type projects listed in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended and in Annex I and II of the EIA Directive as amended were considered.

4 Sub-threshold requirement for an Environmental Impact Statement

Legislative context and screening methodology

While the mandatory requirements for EIA for road schemes are straight forward, being based on type and scale, the discretionary (or sub-threshold) requirements are based on an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the proposed road development. Where a proposed road development would be located on certain environmental sites the road authority shall decide whether the proposed road development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. The key issue, in the context of the possible need for EIA of sub-threshold development, is whether such development is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The 2014 amending EIA Directive (2014/52/EU) contains guidance for Member States in terms of deciding whether a development is likely to have “significant effects on the environment”. The guidance is provided by way of criteria set out in Annex III of the Directive. The criteria are grouped under three headings and are used to help in the screening process to determine whether a development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. The criteria for determining whether a development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment are taken from Annex III of the Directive and are grouped under the following three headings:

1. Characteristics of proposed development
2. Location of proposed development
3. Characteristics of the potential Impacts

Sub threshold development assessment

The aim of the following section is to address likely impacts, if any on the environment by the implementation of the proposed development having regard to the criteria set out in the EIA Directive, as amended. Criteria for determining whether the project would or would not be likely to have a significant effect on the environment as per the requirements of Article 120 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 and subsequent amendment 2011.

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	
Size of Proposed Development	The proposed development will consist of works to improve access and connectivity between Skehard Road, and its environs, and the Passage Greenway. The proposed development comprises: • Upgrading of pedestrian crossings to “Toucan” crossings at the junction of Skehard Road and Bessborough Road. • Construction of new footpaths a new two-way cycle track south of the junction, incorporating raised “entry treatment” at side roads and entrances to premises. • Removal of the existing mini-roundabout on Bessborough Road and replacement with a priority junction and an associated zebra crossing. • Ancillary improvements such as: public lighting, road drainage improvements, improved road traffic signage, replacement and additional road markings, and other associated works will also be implemented where necessary.
Cumulation with other Proposed Development	The schemes will be in an existing suburban environment and will be confined to the existing road alignments and are limited in scale and extent. While other developments may be ongoing in the surrounding areas such as residential and commercial developments, those developments and the current schemes will not have any significant impact upon, or connection with. each other.
Use of Natural Resources	The use of natural resources will be limited to the materials used in the construction works. Anticipated materials include stone, aggregate and asphalt which will generally be provided on a like for like basis with the material to be replaced.
Production of Waste	Waste production will be limited to the construction phase and will consist of general excavated inert material (stone, aggregate, bituminous materials, topsoil) and will be disposed of at local licensed facilities.
Pollution and Nuisances	This development will not result in an increase in either pollution or nuisance. During the construction stage, the likelihood of an accidental spillage of construction materials into the aquatic environment will be managed through the adoption of best practice construction environmental management. Enhanced facilities for pedestrians should ultimately reduce the nuisance associated with use of private vehicles in this location.
Risk of Accidents	The goal of the scheme is promote active travel uptake and improve road safety at the location by provision of improved pedestrian and cycling facilities. The risk of accidents during the construction stage will be minimised through implementation of a Construction Safety and Health Plan incorporating Temporary Traffic and Pedestrian Management Plans. Consequently, the potential for accidents will be reduced in both the short and long term.

2. LOCATION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	
Existing Land Use	The footprint of the Project will be within the existing bounds of public road and footpath alignments. There will be no fundamental change in land use.
Relative Abundance, Quality and regenerative Capacity of Natural Resources in the Area	The Project will have negligible impact on the quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area. All construction material will be imported for the construction of the Project. The scheme will require the removal of up to 11 mature trees. To offset this loss, new landscaping and tree planting will be undertaken insofar as is reasonably practicable using appropriate species.
Absorption Capacity of the Natural Environment	There is not likely to be any significant negative impact on road users resulting from the scheme's implementation. Construction will be for a short duration and will not significantly impede traffic flow in the areas concerned. During operation it is intended that the proposed schemes will lead to improved road safety in their respective areas, with pedestrians and cyclists benefiting from the improved facilities in particular. Preventative measures will be implemented during and post construction to reduce the risk of pollution to surface waters. It has been concluded that the Project does not have the potential to impact, either directly or indirectly, the Qualifying Interests or Special Conservation Interests of any European site. Consequently, there will be no adverse impacts on the Conservation Objectives of any European sites as a result of the Project.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS	
Extent of the Impact	The primary impact will occur during the construction phase which is short term.
Transfrontier nature of the Impact	N/A
Magnitude and Complexity of the Impact	Minimal Air Quality & Climate <u>Operation Phase:</u> The objective of the project is promotion of uptake of active travel and improved road safety at the location for all road users. The proposed improvements will benefit pedestrians and cyclists in particular. The improved facilities may have some potential towards the displacement of motor vehicles and in this manner, may contribute a very modest improvement in air quality and climate in the immediate locality. <u>Construction Phase:</u> The level of construction traffic required for a project of this scale will not have any significant negative impact on the local air quality or climate; neither will a road improvement project of this scale result in any significant generation of dust. Noise & Vibration <u>Operational Phase:</u> Lower vehicular speeds and improved pedestrian and cycle facilities at the scheme locations will likely have a mild positive impact on noise or vibration in the local environment. <u>Construction Phase:</u> Works will be carried out in compliance with BS5228: Part 1 and the European Communities (Noise Emission by Equipment for Use Outdoors) Regulations, 2001. This will ensure a controlled level of noise during construction phase. The level of construction traffic and construction operations required for a relatively short term project of this scale will not result in the creation of any significant negative impact through noise and vibration. Hydrology <u>Operation Phase:</u> The existing drainage will be maintained and the proposed development will not increase or alter the quantity of surface water discharging to the receiving bodies. <u>Construction Phase:</u> Runoff from the site will continue to be collected by the existing road drainage systems with additional gullies being added to the system where necessary. Where necessary, appropriate measures will be implemented to prevent any deleterious materials such as oils or cement from entering the drainage system. Biodiversity Having regard to the location, nature and size of the proposed development, it there are no anticipated significant effects on biodiversity during either construction or operations phases. The scheme will require the removal of up to 11 mature trees. To offset this loss, new landscaping and tree planting will be undertaken insofar as is reasonably practicable using appropriate species.

3.	CHARACTERISTICS OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS
	Archaeology, architecture, cultural heritage <u>Operational Phase:</u> There are a number of recorded monuments and protected structures in Cork City. However, the proposed road scheme so not located so close to any protected structure or national monument that it would have an impact on the material, character, or setting of the structure/monument. The proposed scheme is located within the bounds of existing road and footpath alignments. Therefore, there will be no significant impact on any archaeology, architecture or cultural heritage. <u>Construction Phase:</u> Presence of plant and machinery may temporarily detract from certain views. However, this will be a very mild negative short-term impact and is easily offset by the benefits accrued from improved facilities and road safety at the operational stage. To mitigate against any potential negative impact on structures associated with vibration, the works will be carried out in compliance with BS 5228:2009 "Code of Practice for Noise & Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites. Visual Amenity <u>Operation Phase:</u> The Project is located wholly on existing roads and footways and is unlikely to have any significant lasting negative impact on the landscape of the area. The improvement of footpath and road surfaces may contribute a modest improvement to the visual amenity of the streetscape in the vicinity of the site, as will planting of additional trees to offset any loss of trees necessitated to facilitate the scheme's construction. <u>Construction Phase:</u> Presence of plant and machinery may temporarily detract from certain views. However, this will be a very mild negative impact which is short-term and easily offset by the benefits accrued from improved active travel facilities and road safety at the operational stage Overall Environmental impacts associated with the proposed development will be minor and short-term and, therefore, significant environmental effects can be ruled out without the necessity for further surveys, investigations, and assessments.
Probability of the Impact	Low During the construction stage, noise nuisances and air pollution may occur over a short duration.
Duration, Frequency and Reversibility of the Impact	Potential impacts are limited to the construction phase These impacts will be temporary, reversible and one-off.

5 Screening Assessment Conclusion

SCREENING CONCLUSION STATEMENT

Having regard to the contents of Article 120 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 3) regulations 2011 and Schedule 7m of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, this screening concludes that this project, by reason of its nature, scale and location is not likely to have a significant negative effect on the environment, either by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, and that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required in this instance.

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1 Irish Site Data

Cork Lough Proposed Natural Heritage Area (site code 001081)	
Conservation objective	
Qualifying interests	This small lake is situated in the north-west of Cork City, 1km. south of the River Lee. The site is a N.H.A. of local importance.
References and further information	

Lee Valley Proposed Natural Heritage Area (site code 000094)	
Conservation objective	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.
Qualifying interests	This site occupies five separate sections of the valley of the River Lee, immediately to the west of Cork City. The diverse range of intact seminatural habitats in the Lee Valley makes this a site of regional conservation importance.
References and further information	

2 EUROPEAN SITE DATA

Great Island Channel Special Area Of Conservation (site code 001058)	
Conservation objective	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.
Qualifying interests	Annex I listed habitats: mudflats, sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, estuaries, spartina swards, Atlantic salt meadows.
References and further information	Conservation Objectives for Great Island Channel SAC [001058] (NPWS), Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (NPWS), Site Synopsis Great Island Channel Site Code 001058 (NPWS) (see www.npws.ie for further details)

Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (site code 004030)	
Conservation objective	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as special conservation interests for this SPA.
Qualifying interests	Annex I-listed bird species: bar-tailed godwit, common tern (breeding), golden plover, ruff, whooper swan. Other birds of special conservation interest include black-headed gull, black-tailed godwit, common gull, curlew, dunlin, great crested grebe, grey heron, grey plover, lapwing, lesser black-backed gull, little grebe, oystercatcher, pintail, red-breasted merganser, redshank, shelduck, shoveler, teal, and widgeon. This site is an internationally important wetland site supporting > 20,000 wintering waterfowl.
References and further information	Conservation Objectives for Cork Harbour SPA [004030] (NPWS), Natura 2000 Standard Data Form (NPWS), Site Synopsis Cork Harbour SPA Site Code 004030 (NPWS) (see www.npws.ie for further details)