

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

Tower Pedestrian Scheme

Bawnafinny

Tower

Cork

Report prepared for Cork City Council

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Statement of Authority.....	1
2	Consideration of EIA Classes of Development and Need for Mandatory EIA.....	2
2.1	The EIA Directive.....	2
2.2	Screening for Mandatory EIA	2
2.2.1	Planning and Development Act 2000 as Amended and Regulations Made Thereunder..	2
2.2.2	Roads Act 1993 and the Regulations Made Thereunder	3
2.3	Screening for Sub-threshold Development and Non-Mandatory Type EIA	3
2.3.1	Planning and Development Act 2000 as Amended and Regulations Made Thereunder..	3
2.3.2	Roads Act 1993 and the Regulations Made Thereunder	3
3	Description of the Proposed Development	5
3.1	Site Location	5
3.2	Development Description.....	5
4	Consideration of Likely Significant Effects of the Proposed Development on the Environment ...	7
4.1	Characteristics of the Proposed Development.....	7
4.2	Location of the Proposed Development.....	11
4.3	Characteristics of Potential Impacts.....	15
5	Conclusions and Recommendations.....	21

List of Figures

Figure 3-1: Site Location	5
Figure 4-1: Places of archaeological interest (Archaeology.ie).....	14

List of Tables

Table 4-1: Characteristics of the proposed development	7
Table 4-2: Location of the proposed development matrix.....	11
Table 4-3: Significance of impact	15

1 Introduction

Greenleaf Ecology was commissioned by Cork City Council to prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report to accompany a Part 8 Planning Application for the proposed Tower Pedestrian Scheme, Bawnafinny, Tower, Co. Cork.

The purpose of this report is to ascertain the legal requirement or otherwise for an EIA for the project. As a first step this report sets out why the proposed development does not require mandatory EIA. Thereafter, the report considers whether the development as a sub-threshold class of development would require EIA. To this end, the report presents information consistent with the requirements of section 176A(3)(d) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as Revised, including the information specified in schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001. It also presents an assessment of whether the development would, or would not, be likely to have significant effects on the environment, based on the criteria set out in schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001.

Whether a 'sub threshold' development should be subject to EIA is determined by the likelihood that the development would result in 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 made in the process.

The application is accompanied by an "Article 6(3) Appropriate Assessment Screening Report", which was prepared by Greenleaf Ecology (2026)

This report has been informed by an Aquatic Ecology Survey by Mayfly Ecology (2025), an Arboricultural Impact Assessment by Holly Arboriculture (2026) and a Construction Environment Management Plan (Egis, 2026) along with other reports and design drawings accompanying the planning application. The findings of all survey reports and assessments which accompany the application and the relevant site and desk studies are referenced where appropriate in this EIA Screening Report.

The location of the proposed development is illustrated in Figure 3-1.

1.1 Statement of Authority

This EIA Screening Report has been prepared by Karen Banks MCIEEM. Karen is an ecologist with Greenleaf Ecology and has 20 years' experience in the field of ecological assessment. Karen has worked on EIA Screenings, Habitat Directive Assessments and Ecological Impact Assessments for a wide range of small and large-scale projects.

2 Consideration of EIA Classes of Development and Need for Mandatory EIA

2.1 The EIA Directive

The requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment of projects is set by the EU Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment; known as the 'EIA Directive' (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU).

The EIA Directive requires that certain classes of development be assessed for likely environmental effects (commonly known as environmental impact assessment (EIA)) to inform development consent. When submitting an application for development consent for a project falling within a class of development specified in the Directive, the applicant must submit an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

The EIA Directive was transposed into relevant Irish legislation including the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 as amended and the Roads Act 1993 as amended, and Regulations made thereunder.

The criteria to determine whether a sub-threshold road development should be subject to an EIA are set out in Section 50 of the Roads Act, 1993 as amended. Under sections 50 and 51 of the Road Act 1993, as amended, an EIA is required for certain types of road development. In relation to sub-threshold road schemes the key requirement is whether the proposed scheme is likely to have a significant environmental effect as set out under Section 50.

2.2 Screening for Mandatory EIA

2.2.1 Planning and Development Act 2000 as Amended and Regulations Made Thereunder

The Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended (section 172(1)) requires that EIA must be carried out in the case of either of the following two scenarios:

- Where a development is of a class of development and threshold (where one is stated) specified in Part 1 or Part 2 of schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended – this is referred to as mandatory EIA.
- Where a development is of a class of development specified in Part 2 of schedule 5 but is below the threshold specified, and where the development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment – this is referred to a sub-threshold development EIA.

The proposed Tower Pedestrian Scheme, Bawnafinny, Tower, Co. Cork is not considered to fall within any class of development specified in either Part 1 or Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended.

One class of development of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended was identified for consideration but was discounted. This class of development is set out under Schedule 5 Part 2 Item 10(b)(iv) which comprises:

“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 primary purpose of the proposed development is to enhance and improve pedestrian and active travel facilities between existing and proposed new residential development on zoned lands to the east of the village and to enhance existing public amenities in the Bawnafinny area. The purpose of the development is not to facilitate other 'urban development'. Further, the proposed development

extends for c.800m and is below the 10ha threshold for a built-up area. On this basis the proposed Tower Pedestrian Scheme at Bawnafinny is not considered to fall within this class of development.

No other classes of development of Schedule 5 Part 2 were identified for further consideration.

On the basis of the foregoing, EIA is considered not mandatory nor potentially required as a sub-threshold development under the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

2.2.2 Roads Act 1993 and the Regulations Made Thereunder

Section 50(1)(a) of the Roads Act, lists the forms of road development in respect of which there is a mandatory requirement to carry out EIA. Subsection (iii) is relevant in the context of this proposed development:

“any prescribed type of proposed road development consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of any existing public road.”

Item 8 of the Roads Regulations 1994 (S.I. 119 of 1994) states: *“The prescribed types of proposed road development for subsection (1)(a)(iii) of Section 50 of the Act shall be - (a) the construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500m or more in length in an urban area; (b) the construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100m or more in length.”*

The proposed development does not comprise a road with four or more lanes and the new pedestrian bridge spans approximately 25m across the Shournagh River. It can be concluded, therefore, that the proposed development does not require mandatory EIA.

2.3 Screening for Sub-threshold Development and Non-Mandatory Type EIA

2.3.1 Planning and Development Act 2000 as Amended and Regulations Made Thereunder

As noted in Section 2.2.1 above, the proposed Tower Pedestrian Scheme, Bawnafinny, does not fall within any class of development specified in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended (even as a sub-threshold type).

Therefore, sub-threshold EIA is not potentially required under the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

2.3.2 Roads Act 1993 and the Regulations Made Thereunder

Other than the requirements for mandatory EIA provided for under section 50(1)(a) of the Roads Act 1993 and article 8 of the Roads Regulations 1994, section 50(1)(b) – (c) of the Roads Act makes provision for further circumstances in which EIA will be required for road development. These are:

- S50(1)(b) – Where the Minister considers that any proposed road development (other than development to which paragraph (a) applies) consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, he shall direct the road authority to prepare an environmental impact statement in respect of such proposed road development and the authority shall comply with such direction.
- S50(1)(c) - Where a road authority (local authority) considers that a road development that it proposes (other than development to which section 50(1)(a) applies) consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, it shall inform the Minister in writing

and where the Minister concurs with the road authority he shall give a direction to the road authority under paragraph (b).

The purpose of this report to inform EIA screening is to assist the competent authority to determine whether the 'project' is likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to its obligations under section 50(1)(c) of the Roads Act.

The following sections of this report accordingly presents information specified in Annex II.A of the EIA Directive taking into account the criteria set out in Annex III of the Directive to assist in a determination of whether the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

This report also includes any additional information which has been identified as potentially relevant for the purposes of EIA Screening including the available results of other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment carried out pursuant to any Act of the Oireachtas or under European Union legislation (other than the EIA Directive). As appropriate, it references assessments undertaken under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). It also identifies mitigation measures which will be applied to the proposed development which will reduce or eliminate potentially negative impacts. Mitigation measures are identified for a range of potentially adverse impacts, not only those which may otherwise have been 'significant'.

3 Description of the Proposed Development

3.1 Site Location

The proposed development is located at the boundaries of the Kilnamucky, Bawnafinny, Dromasole and Coolflugh townlands, Co. Cork. The length of the proposed pedestrian and active travel improvements is approximately 0.8km.

Figure 3-1 illustrates the location of the proposed development.



Figure 3-1: Site Location

3.2 Development Description

The project will involve footpath improvements along a circa 800m section of Bawnafinny Road extending eastwards from the eastern side of Tower Village, the provision of several raised-table crossing points, junction improvements including enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities, improved road signage and road markings, and the construction of a new pedestrian bridge over the River Shournagh adjacent to the existing Tower Bridge. Associated works will include bridge foundations and supports, drainage measures, landscaping, temporary traffic management, site compounds and all ancillary works necessary to facilitate construction.

It is estimated that construction will take approximately six months in total.

Control measures required for the proposed development are set out in Section 4 to Section 11 of the CEMP and monitoring requirements are provided in Section 12 of the CEMP. A Water Framework Directive Assessment (Egis, 2026) has also been prepared for the proposed development.

4 Consideration of Likely Significant Effects of the Proposed Development on the Environment

This section of the report sets out the likely significant effects of the development on various environmental factors having regard to the characteristics of the proposed development as identified in section 3 and its location and environmental sensitivities. The environmental factors considered are those specified in Annex IIA and III of the EIA Directive, as transposed by the Roads Acts.

4.1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

Table 4-1: Characteristics of the proposed development

Characteristics of the Proposed Development – Screening Questions	Comment	Significant- Yes/No
Could the scale of the proposed works be considered significant?	The proposed works are considered small scale in nature as outlined in more detail in Section 3. Given the relatively small scale of the development, there is potential for only slight impacts.	No significant effect.
Considered cumulatively with other adjacent proposed developments, would the size of the proposed works be considered significant?	The online planning system for Cork City Council, was consulted on the 8th January 2025 for developments that may potentially have a cumulative impact with the proposed development. A total of two complete large-scale applications with associated decisions made by the local authority were returned for the last 5 years: Hydro LRD (CCC Ref: 2544173, currently subject of appeal to ACP, Ref: LH28.324425): Planning Permission for a Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) of 100 no. residential units comprising 63 no. dwelling houses, 23 no. apartment units and 14 no. apartment/duplex units, a creche facility and all ancillary site development works at lands associated with the Former St. Ann's Hydropathic Establishment, St. Ann's Hill, Kilnamucky, Tower, Blarney, Cork. Ringwood LRD (Ref: 2443031): Permission for a Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) at this site at Ringwood, Shean Upper, Blarney, Cork. The proposed development will consist of a largescale residential development (LRD), representing Phase 1 of the development in the Blarney East / Ringwood Expansion Area. Small-scale local planning applications in the potential zone of influence of the	No significant effect.

	proposed development include domestic dwelling developments (Ref: 2544263, 2341960, 2140404, 2140110), small scale agricultural developments (2240890) and a small- scale solar development (2241082). These planning applications have been subject to either screening for Appropriate Assessment, Habitats Directive Assessment and/or EIA screening as appropriate. These assessments have found that, where required, construction phase measures and operational designs will be implemented to avoid likely significant effects to the environment. Each of the assessments completed for these projects have concluded that the project will not have the potential to combine with other projects to result in likely significant effects on the environment. In light of this, the proposed pedestrian and active travel improvements does not have potential to result in in-combination or cumulative negative effects on the environment. <u>IPC Licenced Facilities</u> There are no industrial facilities operating under Integrated Pollution Control (IPC) licences in the vicinity of the proposed site.	
Is the nature of the proposed works significant?	The proposed works consist of a pedestrian/active travel improvements c.0.8km in length. The duration is temporary (c.6 months).	No significant effect.
Will the proposed works utilise a significant quantity of natural resources?	The proposed works will utilise a small quantity of natural resources during construction. Land – The proposed development is predominantly located along Bawnafinny Road and as such the land is primarily made ground, with mown grass (amenity grassland) adjacent to existing road verges, with c.80m scrub, immature and semi-mature trees and 3 no. highly pruned trees also present (Holly Arboriculture, 2026). The proposed development is described in Section 3 and the proposal drawings accompanying this planning application. From a ‘land’ perspective, the impact of the proposed development is minor in terms of area of land required: the proposed site comprises c.800 linear metres for development and will replace the existing made ground, amenity grassland and scrub/ semi-mature trees of negligible to low ecological value. Therefore, no significant impact on land is predicted.	No significant effect.

	Soil - The proposed development will result in earthworks requiring the excavation of a quantity of soils and subsoils. It is proposed to re-use excavated soil on site for landscaping where feasible, however, where necessary, surplus soil will be disposed of to an appropriately licensed soil recovery facility. Any effects on soils and geology would be localised and contained within the proposed development footprint. Therefore, no significant impacts on soil are predicted.	
Will the proposed works produce a significant quantity of waste?	The proposed development will require the excavation of hardstanding and soil for construction of the development. It is proposed to reuse the excavated material on site; where necessary, surplus excavated material will be disposed of off-site to a suitably authorised and licensed facility. All waste material will be removed and disposed of/ recycled in accordance with the Waste and Materials Management Plan (Egis, 2026). Fuels, lubricants, oils and hydraulic fluids will be used in machinery during construction and in any maintenance or repair work. Solvents, adhesives, sealants, oils, and paints will also be used during construction. The contractor will be required to manage any wastage in accordance with the relevant legislation. The use of spill kits will be a requirement on site. Sanitary waste and general construction waste will be managed in accordance with the Waste Management Act 1996 (as amended). Once operational, the project will not give rise to any additional production of waste and as such, no impact is envisaged.	No significant effect.
Will the proposed works create a significant amount or type of pollution?	The proposed development will be constructed in accordance with best practice construction methods and the requirements of the CEMP (Egis, 2026). No hazardous, toxic or noxious substances will be released to air. Potential impacts on aquatic habitats which can arise from this type of development during the construction phase include increased silt levels in surface water run-off and inadvertent spillages of hydrocarbons from fuel and hydraulic fluid. Elevated silt levels can, if of sufficient magnitude, result in changes in the ecology of nearby waters. The proposed development includes construction of a new pedestrian bridge over the Shournagh River. The crossing of the Shournagh River will be a single span structure. There will be no requirement for instream works, however construction of abutments will be required either side of the river channel. The CEMP	No significant effect.

	prepared for the proposed development includes measures for the control of surface water pollution and fuel and oil management measures during the construction phase. Given the nature and scale of the proposed development and the surface water management proposed for the construction phase, no impact from excess solids in surface water run-off during construction will occur. The Water Framework Directive Assessment (Egis, 2026) concluded that the Proposed Development will not cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or groundwater body, will not prevent any WFD waterbody from achieving its environmental objectives, and will not adversely affect the hydromorphological, biological or physico-chemical quality elements that support WFD status. Accordingly, the Proposed Development complies with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive. Significant adverse effects on Cork Harbour SPA located c.17km downstream are not likely. The construction and operational stage of the proposed development will not impact on surface water quality and will not have an adverse effect on surface water, groundwater, sea water or coastal waters. For more details on surface water and groundwater see the Appropriate Assessment screening report, the CEMP and the Water Framework Directive Assessment.	
Will the proposed works create a significant amount of nuisance?	Noise arising from the construction phase will be limited principally to plant operations and traffic movements to and from the proposed site. Worst-case construction noise levels will be within the required threshold limits included in British Standard 5228:2009 and the National Roads Authority Guidelines for the Treatment of Noise and Vibration (2004). The construction of the proposed development will require the use of standard plant equipment and the use of piling for construction of bridge abutments. No potential for significant noise production is identified. Given the duration of the works these impacts will be slight negative, temporary in nature and not significant.	No significant effect.
Will there be a risk of accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used?	No. The proposed works and construction methodologies are well established and will be subject to safety statements and risk assessments. There are no IPC, Seveso sites or existing EPA licensed sites within the immediate environs	No significant effect.

	of the proposed development. There is not considered to be a significant impact on the vulnerability to major accidents.	
Would any combination of the above factors be considered likely to have significant effects on the environment?	No in combination effects have been identified.	No significant effect.

Conclusions:

It is concluded that the nature of the proposed development is not considered to have likely significant effects on the environment.

Reasoning:

The scale of the proposed works, when viewed individually and cumulatively, is small in the context of both the EIA threshold criteria and types of projects listed in the regulations which require EIA. The proposed development is an improvement of pedestrian and active travel facilities at Bawnafinny. The works will be undertaken according to construction methodologies designed to reduce or eliminate the potential for environmental impacts as summarised above and within the CEMP and survey reports and assessments which accompany the application. The proposed works will be restricted to the site measuring c.0.8km in length.

Any waste arising on site will be taken from the site for reuse or disposal, subject to normal statutory controls. Any noise and nuisance associated with the proposed works will be temporary and subject to appropriate best practice procedures.

4.2 Location of the Proposed Development

Table 4-2: Location of the proposed development matrix

Location of the Proposed Development – Screening Questions	Comment	Significant- Yes/ No
Have the proposed works the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any site designated for conservation interest (e.g. SAC, SPA, pNHA)?	The AASR for this development concluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed construction and operation of the development, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, has no potential to significantly affect any European sites within a zone of potential influence. There are no NHAs within a 5km radius of the proposed site. There are seven pNHAs within a 5km radius of the proposed site: Lee Valley pNHA, Shournagh Valley pNHA, Blarney Castle Woods pNHA, Ballincollig Cave pNHA, Blarney Lake pNHA, Ardmacade Wood pNHA and Blarney Bog pNHA. As noted above, the AASR for this development concluded there will not be a significant impact on qualifying interests and conservation objectives for Natura 2000 sites. There is no potential for significant effects on nationally designated sites. For more details on potential impacts on European sites see the AASR.	No significant effect.

Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any habitats listed as Annex I in the EU Habitats Directive?	None of the habitats recorded within the proposed site correspond with Annex I habitats of the Habitats Directive. The terrestrial habitats recorded within the proposed site are considered to be of negligible to low conservation value. The Shournagh River is of local conservation importance. Therefore, there will be no direct or indirect impacts on Priority Annex I habitats.	No significant effect.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any habitats listed as Priority Annex I in the EU Habitats Directive?	None of the habitats recorded within the proposed site correspond with Priority Annex I habitats of the Habitats Directive. The terrestrial habitats recorded within the proposed development site are considered to be of negligible to low conservation value and the Shournagh River is of local conservation importance. Therefore, there will be no direct or indirect impacts on Priority Annex I habitats.	No significant effect.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any species listed as Annex II in the EU Habitats Directive?	No Annex II species were recorded within the proposed development site and no habitat suitable for Annex II species is present within the footprint of the proposed development site. The Shournagh River is not within a Freshwater Pearl Mussel sensitive area. Potential spawning habitat for Annex II species Atlantic salmon, Brook and River Lamprey is present in close proximity to the proposed bridge crossing. No instream works are required and construction will be completed in accordance with the requirements of the CEMP. As noted in the Water Framework Directive Impact Assessment, the proposed pedestrian bridge has been designed so that proposed bridge piers are aligned with the existing piers of Tower Bridge, thereby reducing potential effects on river flow conveyance, local hydraulics, and existing site constraints. Indirect impacts as a result of artificial lighting at night will be avoided by the use of lighting that minimises light spill on to valuable habitat for aquatic and semi-aquatic ecological receptors (i.e. Shournagh River and its associated riparian zone) during both the construction and operational phase. Evidence of otter has been recorded in the Shournagh River, however no evidence of otter was recorded within the footprint of the proposed development. Pre-construction otter surveys of the Shournagh River are proposed prior to commencement of construction. No risk of impacts on otter has been identified.	No significant effect.

Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any species listed as Annex IV in the EU Habitats Directive?	Two soprano pipistrelle emerged from the easternmost arch of Tower Bridge during a bat survey conducted by Greenleaf Ecology on 2 nd August 2026. No works are proposed to Tower Bridge, therefore there will be no direct impacts on this minor soprano pipistrelle roost. Indirect impacts as a result of artificial lighting at night will be avoided by the use of lighting that minimises light spill on to valuable habitat for wildlife (i.e. the arches of Tower Bridge, Shournagh River and its associated riparian zone) during the construction and operational phase. As such, the proposed development will not have a significant effect on roosting, foraging and commuting habitat for bats. No ground mammals or signs of mammals were recorded within the proposed site and no habitat suitable for other Annex IV species is present within the proposed development site.	No significant effect.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any species listed as Annex I of the EU Birds Directive?	Suitable habitat for Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>) is present at the Shournagh River and activity is expected in the vicinity of the proposed development. However, no nesting habitat has been recorded at the location of the proposed crossing point and the temporary works are not expected to result in significant disturbance to Kingfisher.	No significant effect.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on the breeding places of any species protected under the Wildlife Act?	The proposed development area comprises buildings and artificial surfaces and amenity grassland habitats, with c.80m scrub/semi-mature trees. Felling of trees and scrub will occur outside of the breeding bird season, therefore there will be no impacts on nesting birds. No protected species were recorded within the footprint of the proposed works at the Shournagh River, pre-construction surveys will be conducted for otter by a suitably qualified ecologist.	No significant effect.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on existing land use?	The proposed development area comprises buildings and artificial surfaces and amenity grassland habitats, with c.80m scrub/semi-mature trees. The land use at the proposed site will change to use as a pedestrian/active travel area as a result of the proposed development. No impacts on the use of surrounding lands for residential, commercial and amenity purposes are expected.	No significant effect.
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on any protected structures or Recorded Monuments and Places of Archaeological Interest?	The National Monuments Service is a database of archaeological monuments which is available on the website www.archaeology.ie . There is 1 no. site included on the Sites and Monuments Records (SMR): Bridge at Coolflugh (Ref: CO073-016), also referred to as Tower Bridge. Tower Bridge is also listed in the	No significant effect.

	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH). There is 1 no. further structure listed on the NIAH located adjacent to the proposed site (Figure 4-1): a farmhouse at Dromasole (Ref: 20907334), considered to be of Regional Importance. No works are proposed to Tower Bridge or the farmhouse to the east of the proposed development. Given the small scale of the development there will be no impact on Architectural Heritage.	
Has the proposed development the potential to impact directly or indirectly on listed or scenic views or protected landscapes as outlined in the County Development Plan?	The Cork City Council Planning Application Map viewer ¹ illustrates areas of high landscape value. The proposed site is not located within an area of high landscape value.	No significant effect.

Figure 4-1: Places of archaeological interest (Archaeology.ie)



Conclusion:

It can be concluded that there will be no significant direct or indirect impacts by virtue of the location of the proposed development on the receiving environment.

Reasoning:

The European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 requires that an Article 6(3) assessment be carried out where it is considered that a development is likely to have a significant effect on Natura 2000 sites (SAC/SPA). In this regard an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been completed for the proposed development. This report concludes that the proposed Tower Pedestrian Scheme, Bawnafinny has no potential to result in any likely significant or other effects on the Qualifying Interests or conservation objectives of any European Site, in particular Cork Harbour SPA, which is c.17km downstream. As no likely significant effect has been identified on any European

¹ [Cork City Development Plan 2022](#)

site and their respective Qualifying Interests, there is considered no requirement to proceed to Stage 2 of the AA process. No potential of significant effects on nationally designated sites has been identified. The risk of any significant negative impacts on any European or nationally designated sites can be excluded.

The Aquatic Ecology Survey undertaken by Mayfly Ecology in 2025 indicates that there is potential Atlantic salmon and lamprey spawning and nursery habitat in the vicinity of the proposed development, evidence of otter is present upstream and downstream of the proposed crossing location, potential Kingfisher habitat is present downstream and a minor pipistrelle bat roost was recorded within Tower Bridge by Greenleaf Ecology in 2025. There is potential for disturbance impacts on protected species as a result of construction activities and inappropriate use of lighting at night. Pre-construction surveys, the requirements of the CEMP and wildlife friendly lighting design will mitigate these potential impacts. No potential for significant effects on protected species has been identified.

No sensitive habitats considered to qualify as Annex I habitats under the EU Habitats Directive will be affected by the proposed development. In terms of land use, the proposed development will be confined to the c.0.8km site on which it is proposed. There will be no significant impact on land use.

The receiving environment of the proposed works can accommodate the development without significant impact.

4.3 Characteristics of Potential Impacts

A further screening exercise was completed to assess the most significant potential impacts, as outlined in Table 4-3 below. These are the sections that would be covered in any EIA as specified in the EU Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended by Directive 97/11/EC).

Table 4-3: Significance of impact

EIA Section	Brief Assessment of Impacts	Significant- Yes/ No
Human Beings	Impacts associated with the construction of the pedestrian and active travel improvements may include a temporary increase in background noise levels through operation of plant machinery. However, no potential for significant noise production is identified. Given the duration of the works these impacts will be slight negative, temporary in nature and not significant. No potential for significant noise production during the operational phase has been identified. There will be limited dust emissions during the construction stage, these will be controlled through the best practice construction methods and the requirements set out in the CEMP. The haulage of materials to and from the site will create a temporary impact to both road users and to residents living in the vicinity of the proposed development. To minimise these impacts, only authorised site access roads, as directed by the Local Authority, will be used by construction vehicles. The construction process will be planned to accommodate existing traffic flows and the daily construction operations adjacent to the development. A Traffic Management Plan will be developed by the appointed contractor and agreed with Cork City Council prior to the commencement of works.	No significant effect.

	Best practice and implementation of a Health and Safety Plan will be required to ensure no risks to the population working on the site or working adjacent to the site during construction. Implementation of measures set out in the outline CEMP will avoid and minimise impacts of noise and dust on human health and the population during the construction stage. No significant impacts for the operational phase are envisaged in terms of traffic, noise, air quality or climate. Drainage measures proposed will ensure that there is no runoff to surface water during the construction or operation phase therefore avoiding the potential for any significant impacts to humans.	
Biodiversity	The proposed development is primarily situated on artificial surfaces and amenity grassland habitats which are considered of negligible to low ecological value. Approximately 80m scrub/semi-mature trees, three extensively pruned trees and a small group of immature trees will be removed. It is proposed to transplant immature trees that are in conflict with the construction zone where feasible (Holly Arboriculture, 2026). No Annex I habitat was recorded within the proposed site during the site ecological surveys. Evidence of otter has been recorded on Shournagh River, which supports good habitat for this species. However, there is no evidence of otter within the footprint of the proposed development. Pre-construction surveys will be conducted as a precautionary measure. No risk of impacts on otter has been identified. Suitable habitat for Annex II species Atlantic salmon and lamprey species is present within the Shournagh River in the environs of the proposed crossing location (Mayfly Ecology, 2025). However, no instream works are required and construction activities will comply with the requirements of the CEMP. No risk of impacts on Atlantic salmon and lamprey species has been identified. Two soprano pipistrelle were recorded within the easternmost arch of Tower Bridge by Greenleaf Ecology in 2025 and bats were recorded foraging along Shournagh River. No works are proposed to Tower Bridge, therefore there will be no direct impacts on the minor pipistrelle roost. There will be minor removal of vegetation to facilitate construction of the pedestrian bridge, however, immature trees will be transplanted where feasible and the footprint of the proposed development is predominantly confined to the margins of the existing road network and artificial habitats associated with the local road network. As such, the proposed development will not have a significant effect on foraging and commuting habitat for bats. The lighting for the construction and operation phase will be designed to be wildlife friendly. Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>) activity is expected in the vicinity of the proposed development. The single span design of the proposed bridge and the temporary duration of the works avoids any potential disturbance or interference with the continued use of the river by Kingfisher.	No significant effect.

	Scrub and tree removal will occur outside of the breeding bird season. In view of the factors detailed above, no potential significant threats to species or habitats of conservation concern (i.e. Annex I habitats, Annex II and Annex IV species, Annex I bird species and species protected under the Wildlife Acts) during the construction or operational phase were identified. The AASR prepared for the application concluded that there is no potential for significant effects to European sites as a result of the proposal.	
Soils & Geology	Land – the proposed development is predominantly located in on built land comprising buildings and artificial surfaces and amenity grassland habitats, with small amounts of scrub/semi-mature trees. The proposed development is described in Section 3. From a ‘land’ perspective, the impact of the proposed development is minor in terms of area of land required (c.800 linear metres) for development and replacing the existing built land, amenity grassland and scrub of negligible to low ecological value. Therefore, no significant impact on land is predicted. Soil - The proposed development will result in earthworks requiring the excavation of a quantity of soils and subsoils. Where possible surplus soil will be reused for landscaping purposes on site. In the event that any excess excavated material is generated onsite during the course of the construction works, it will be disposed of off-site to a suitably authorised and licensed facility. Any effects on soils and geology would be localised and contained within the proposed development footprint. Therefore, no significant impacts on soil are predicted.	No significant effect.
Water	Water and Groundwater. During the construction phase there is potential for the emission of silt, grit, fuels, oils or known soil contaminants to the surrounding environment. The proposed development crosses over the Shournagh River; Cork Harbour SPA is located c.17km downstream. The proposed pedestrian bridge is a single span structure and there will be no works on the riverbed. Further, the CEMP prepared for the proposed development includes measures for the control of surface water pollution and fuel and oil management measures during the construction phase. The works method for the bridge crossing will be agreed in advance with IFI. Given the nature and scale of the proposed development and the surface water management proposed for the construction phase, no impact from excess solids in surface water run-off during construction will occur. There will be no discharges to the River Shournagh during operation. There will be no alteration to the existing hydrological regime during the operational phase. The SuDS & Surface Water Management Technical Note prepared for the proposed development (Egis, 2026) concluded that negligible increase in surface water run-of is envisioned as a result of the works, and a combination of overland flow and a gravity piped network along the road will convey any stormwater to the final discharge points.	No significant effect.

	Removal of soil and/or subsoil for development could lead to an alteration to groundwater movements in the area or alteration of the pathway of the groundwater flow through other materials. In terms of groundwater recharge, there would be no change in recharge from the proposed development. Therefore, there is not considered to be a likely significant impact on water and groundwater. An AASR has been prepared and concluded that the proposed works will not result in significant impacts to any European site.	
Air & Climate	Air and Climate - During construction there may be slight adverse effects on air quality, including generation of dust, as a result of construction related machinery. Effects are anticipated to be localised, slight and temporary in nature and can be mitigated against through best practice. No significant emissions to air will be emitted during the operational phase of the proposed pedestrian and active travel improvements. The proposed development may give rise to some transfer to active travel for local journeys. Any reduction in local car journeys has the potential to reduce air emissions, which would be a positive impact. However, given the size of the proposed development the positive impact is likely to be imperceptible. Noise - In terms of noise, the construction phase may lead to a temporary increase in background noise levels through operation of plant machinery. The closest potentially sensitive use are residential and commercial premises located adjacent to the proposed development. Given the nature of the works occurring, it is concluded that any construction related noise will be slight negative, temporary in nature and not significant. Operational noise will not lead to any significant change over background noise levels. Therefore, there is not considered to be a likely significant impact on air quality and noise. The proposed development will have a neutral visual impact from the existing urban area. Therefore, significant adverse landscape and visual impacts are deemed not likely.	No significant effect.
Material Assets	The main material assets existing along the route are services and utilities as well as the existing roadway. All relevant bodies (ESB, Eir, Cork City Council etc.) will be contacted and all drawings for all existing services sought prior to the commencement of works. The main impact in respect of material assets is the potential impact of traffic generated from the construction works on the condition/surfacing of the existing surrounding road network. The extent of impact on the condition of the road network is considered to be slight and temporary. As noted previously, the haulage of materials to and from the site will create a temporary impact to both road users and to residents living along the project. A Traffic Management Plan will be developed by the appointed contractor and agreed with Cork City Council prior to the commencement of works. Should any diversions or interruptions to services be required, they will be of short duration. There is not considered to be a likely significant impact on material assets.	No significant effect.

Cultural Heritage and Landscape	The proposed development is not located within a landscape of high value. The landscape will not be significantly altered as a result of the proposed development. Tower Bridge and a farmhouse to the east of the proposed site are included on the NIAH as being of Regional Importance; Tower Bridge is also listed on the SMR. No works are proposed to these structures and no areas of archaeological interest will be impacted by the proposed development. There will be no significant impact on the cultural heritage or landscape.	No significant effect.
Interaction of Foregoing	On the basis of the assessment of the above it is not considered that any environmental impacts resulting from the cumulative interaction of the above assessment impacts would be significant.	No significant effect.

Characteristics of Potential Impacts – Screening Questions	Responses	Significant- Yes/ No
Would a large geographical area be impacted as a result of the proposed development?	No, the proposed site is c.0.8km in length.	No significant effect.
Would a large population of people be affected as a result of the proposed development?	No, the proposed development may have a slight negative temporary impact on a relatively small population of people during the construction phase due to an increase in noise and construction traffic. No significant impacts are expected during the operational phase.	No significant effect.
Are any transboundary impacts likely to arise as a result of the proposed development?	No transboundary impacts are likely.	No significant effect.
Would the magnitude of impacts associated with the proposed development be considered significant?	No, the magnitude of impacts is not considered to be significant.	No significant effect.
In considering the various aspects of the environment, would the impacts of the proposed development be considered complex?	No, the proposed development is small scale and is not considered to be complex.	No significant effect.
Is there a high probability that the effects will occur?	No: temporary slight impacts as a result of noise and dust are anticipated, however, these are not expected to be significant.	No significant effect.
Will the effects continue for a long time?	No, any effects will be temporary.	No significant effect.
Will the effects be permanent rather than temporary?	No	No significant effect.
Will the impacts be irreversible?	No	No significant effect.
Will it be difficult to avoid, or reduce or repair or compensate for the effects?	No	No significant effect.

Conclusion:

It is concluded that the characteristics of the potential impacts are not considered significant. There are no long-term negative impacts which can be associated with the project. Potential impacts during the construction phase will be temporary and effectively managed through best practice measures provided in the CEMP prepared for the proposed development. No impact interactions have been identified. No likely significant long-term or permanent negative environmental impacts have been identified in the course of the screening process.

Reasoning:

All works will be confined to the proposed site covering 0.8km in length. With the successful implementation of measures provided within the outline CEMP, the potential for any direct or indirect impact on habitats and protected species is low and the likelihood of any significant effects occurring as a result of the development can be excluded.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

This Report to Inform EIA Screening provides an assessment of whether the development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment by addressing the criteria and information set out in Annex IIA and III of the EIA Directive.

This assessment concluded that no significant effects on the environment are considered likely to arise. On this basis it is considered that the development does not require Environmental Impact Assessment and that an EIAR is not necessary.

The main reasons for this conclusion are:

- Consideration has been given in relation to whether the development is likely to have significant effects on the environmental factors specified in Annex IIA and III of the EIA Directive, as transposed by the Roads Acts.
- This consideration has had regard to the existing context and condition of the area of the proposed development and its surrounding context. It has considered the impacts of the development and the likely resulting effects on the environment.
- In assessing likely impacts, mitigation measures that can be applied to minimise or eliminate likely effects on the environment have been considered, as relevant and appropriate. No mitigation measures to protect qualifying interests of any Natura 2000 sites were considered.
- No likely significant residual effects on any of the environmental factors screened were identified.

A mandatory EIA is not required.