 

**Cavan County Council**

**Environmental Impact Assessment**

**Screening Report**

**for**

**proposed**

**Bridge Widening to the northeast side of the existing Bridge at Dunancory Bridge**

**In**

**Dunancory,**

**Co. Cavan**.

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**Table of Contents**

Introduction Page 3

The proposed development Page 3

Legislative Basis for EIA Page 3

Screening Considerations Page 4

Conclusions Page 10

**Introduction**

This is an EIA screening report for the proposed new Bridge Widening Scheme to the northeast side of existing Dunancory Bridge, in Virginia, Co. Cavan. The purpose of the report is to screen the proposed development to establish whether it requires Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and as a result if an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) should be prepared in respect of it. An Appropriate Assessment Screening Statement has also been prepared as a separate document.

The screening process includes an assessment of the details of the proposal with reference to the relevant EIA legislation, including the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended by Planning and Development Regulations 2015), the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU) and relevant EU Guidance including Interpretation of definitions of project categories of Annex I and II of the EU Directive, EU, 2015 and Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on Screening, EU, 2017.

The EIA Screening covers

1. Description of the proposed development
2. The legislative basis for EIA
3. Screening consideration
4. Conclusions

**The Proposed Development**

The proposed development of new bridge widening scheme comprises of the following elements

1. Provision of a 6.5 metre bridge widening of approximately 35 metres in length and road embankment widening of approximately 60 metres in length;
2. Rehabilitation works to the existing southwest face of the bridge and approaches;
3. Removal of the existing steel rail parapet at the southwest face and construction of new stone wall to match the existing stonewall at the southwest face,
4. Construction of new retaining wall on the northeast face that will be clad with stone to match the existing stonewall at the southwest face,
5. Installation of rock armour adjacent to the piers and abutments of the newly constructed northeast face of the bridge,
6. Installation of decorative lighting at both the northeast and southwest face of the bridge.

**Legislative Basis for EIA**

EIA requirements derive from the EIA Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU). As the amended Directive came into force on 16th May 2017 and regulations transposing it into national legislation have been enacted. No changes to the prescribed project types or thresholds are required under the amended Directive so the types and thresholds set out in the 2001-2010 Regulations remain in effect.

EIA legislation as it relates to the planning process has been largely brought together in Part X of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2018. Part 1 of Schedule 5 to the Planning and Development Regulation lists project types, included in Annex I of the Directive which automatically require EIA. Part 2 of the same Schedule lists projects types included in Annex II. Corresponding developments automatically require EIA if no threshold is given or if they are exceeding a given threshold. Developments which correspond to Part 2 project types but are below the given threshold must be screened to determine whether they require EIA or not. This is done by consideration of criteria set out in Schedule 7.

**Screening Considerations.**

**Class of Development**

In the first instance it is necessary to determine whether the project is of a type (or ‘class’) that require an EIAR. This project does not correspond to any of the prescribed types listed in Annex I. However, it could be considered to correspond to the Infrastructure Projects types set out in Annex II, as discussed below.

**Infrastructure Projects**

*10. Infrastructure projects*

(a) Industrial estate development projects, where the area would exceed 15 hectares.

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

(ii) Construction of a carpark providing more than 400 spaces, other than a carpark provided as part of, and incidental to the primary purpose of, a development.

(iii) Construction of a shopping centre with a gross floor space exceeding 10,000 square metres.

(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**

Schedule 5, Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 includes this project type

**10. Infrastructure Projects**

(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 2- 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 – this is not considered to be a business district having regard to the existing land use at the site. This site is considered to fall under the ‘other parts of a built-up area’.

The EU guidance on *‘Interpretation of definitions of project categories of Annex I and II of the EIA Directive’ (2015)* interprets ‘urban development’ as taking ‘account of, inter alia the following

1. Projects with similar characteristics to car parks and shopping centres could be considered to fall under Annex II (10)(b). This could be the case for example, of bus garages or train depots, which are not explicitly mentioned in the EIA Directive, but have similar characteristics to car parks.
2. construction projects such as housing developments, hospitals universities, sports stadiums, cinemas, theatres, concert halls and other cultural centres could also be assumed to fall within this category. The underlying principle is that all these project categories are of an urban nature and that they may cause similar types of environmental impact.
3. Projects to which the terms ‘urban’ and ‘infrastructure’ can relate, such as the construction of sewerage and water supply networks, could also be included in this category.

The overall area of the proposed development is c.0.26 hectares, all is located on the outskirts of Virginia town centre. Therefore, the proposal is a prescribed project type but is considered significantly below threshold.

Section 50 of the Roads Act (1993-2015), as amended, sets out provisions for the preparation of an EIAR. The prescribed type of proposed road development, as defined by paragraph 8 of the Roads Regulations (S.I. NO. 119 OF 1994) for the purpose of subsection (1)(a)(iv) of Section 50 of the Act is as follows

(a)construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be 8 kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500metres 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 existing bridge is 35metres in length. The proposed scheme provides for the widening of an existing bridge and does not provide for a new bridge or tunnel, the proposed development does not therefore fall into the proscribed type of development whether it is considered to be in an urban or rural area. The Mandatory Threshold Trigger is not reached.

**Sub-threshold Development**

As the proposed development corresponds to an Annex II project type but does not meet the prescribed thresholds above, it can be considered to be a ‘sub-threshold’ development.

Having regard to the ‘wide scope and broad purpose’ of the Directive, it is appropriate to consider if it is likely to cause significant environmental impacts by reference to the relevant criteria for determining same, as set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Developments Regulations.

Given the scale of the proposed development it is unlikely to cause sufficiently significant effects to warrant a sub-threshold EIA. However, in order to provide a comprehensive screening, this screening proceeds to consider it against the Schedule 7 criteria, nonetheless. Schedule 7 specifies ‘Criteria for determining whether a development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment’ under these three headings.

1. Characteristics of Proposed Development
2. Location of Proposed development
3. Characteristics of Potential Impacts

The tables below and overleaf set out these considerations using both the main and sub criteria which are specified in Schedule 7.

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| SCHEDULE 7 CRITERIA | | Relevance | Commentary |
| 1.Characterises of Proposed Development  The characteristics of proposed development in particular | The size of the proposed development | No | The proposed development is located on a site with an area of c.0.26 ha. on the outskirts of Virginia town. |
| The cumulation with the proposed development | No | The area in question has a number of one off and housing developments constructed. There are no approved and yet to be constructed planning applications in the vicinity of the site. |
| The use of natural resources | Potential | The proposed development intends to use old stone from a structure that has received planning permission for demolition in Virginia town centre. With this, and the material that can be reused from the existing parapet wall, it is anticipated to be sufficient in terms of meeting the needs for the development. |
| The production of waste | No | There will be no construction waste as the exterior stone façade will be removed and reused in the new wall.  In the event of a small portion of stone that will be unable to be reused, this will be brought to a construction and demolition recycling centre for reuse. |
| Pollution and Nuisances | No | The impacts including noise and dust within acceptable standards are anticipated to be negligible. |
| The risk of accidents having regard to substances or technologies |  | Sufficient measures are put in place and approved by IFI that ensures the potential impacts are anticipated to be negligible. |

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| SCHEDULE 7 CRITERIA | | Relevance | Commentary |
| 2. Location of Proposed Development  The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development, having regard in particular to | The existing landuse | No | The proposed development will take place out the outskirts of Virginia town. The area in question is a vehicular bridge with a width for one car. The intention is to expand this bridge on one side in order to facilitate 2-way traffic and a footpath. This will increase vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The development will facilitate general road users as well as the housing developments in the vicinity of the site.  The existing land use of road and bridge will not alter. |
| The relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area | No | The impacts are anticipated to be negligible given the scale of the proposed development. |
| The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas |  |  |
| Wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths; | No | There is no loss of habitat arising from the proposed development. The proposal has been assessed and the Bat Survey has found evidence of bats in a crack midway under the arch. The remains of dippers nest were also recorded, and an alternative nest site will be provided to allow dippers to continue to nest at this site. An otter trail was recorded on the grassy island between the two arches. Measures have been recommended to ensure ecology is considered in the proposed development. |
| Coastal Zones | No | N/A |
| Mountain and forest areas | No | N/A |
|  | Nature reserves and parks | No | N/A |
|  | Areas classified or protected under legislation, including special protection areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC | No | The Appropriate Assessment Screening Report submitted as part of the Part VIII application concludes that the proposed development will not adversely affect any Natura 2000 site as a result of the proposed works. |
|  | Areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the EU have already been exceeded | No |  |
|  | Densely populated areas | No |  |
|  | Landscapes of historical, cultural, archaeological significance | No | The impacts particularly those of historical, and cultural significance are anticipated to be negligible.  The bridge is not a protected structure and the existing stone in the bridge will be re-used for the new parapet wall. |

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| **SCHEDULE 7 CRITERIA** | | **Relevance** | **Commentary** |
| 3.Characteristics of Proposed Development  The potential significant effects of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 above and having particular regard to: | The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (geographical areas and size of the affected population) | No | The impacts are anticipated to be insufficient given the scale of the proposed development. |
| The nature of the impact | No | The impact of the proposal will be negative during construction stage but will be positive once completed. The works will enhance the facilities for pedestrians and vehicular traffic. |
| The transboundary nature of the impact. | No | Not considered relevant |
| The magnitude and complexity of the impact. | No | The impacts are anticipated to be insufficient given the scale of the proposed development. |
| The probability of the impact | No | There are no significant environmental effects anticipated. |
| The expected onset, duration frequency and reversibility of the impact. | No | There are no significant environmental effects anticipated. |
|  | The cumulation of the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A) (b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment. | No | There are no significant effects anticipated. |
|  | The possibility of effectively reducing the impact | No | There are no significant environmental effects anticipated. |

**Conclusion**

The proposed development falls within the scope of the Infrastructure project type prescribed in the Directive or Regulations. However, it is considered to be sub-threshold in nature.

Having considered the nature, scale and location of the proposal, having regard to the characteristics and location of the proposed development, and having regard to the characteristics of potential impacts, it is considered that the project is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental impacts.

It is noted that a separate Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has concluded that here will be no negative impacts on the qualifying interests or species of any NATURA 2000 site.

It is concluded that there is no requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment to be carried out for the proposed bridge widening and there is no requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment Report to be prepared.