

**MWP**

**Environmental Impact Assessment  
Screening Report**  
**Replacement of Clairín pedestrian Rail Bridge**

**Tipperary County Council**

**September 2022**

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## 1. Introduction

Tipperary County Council is preparing a Part 8 Planning Application for Replacement of the existing pedestrian rail bridge (OBL149A) (hereafter referred to as the 'proposed development'). The Bridge is located to the northwest of Carrick-on-Suir, 1.4km west of the train station. The bridge links St John's Terrace to the north of the track with Clareen Close and the N24 to the south. The proposal is to remove the existing bridge and replace it.

MWP has been engaged by Tipperary County Council to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening of the proposed development to accompany the application. MWP has also carried out an Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening to determine whether the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on any European site (i.e., Natura 2000 Sites), in view of the sites' conservation objectives; this will also accompany the planning application.

### 1.1. Scope

Under EU and Irish legislation (detailed in Section 3), an EIA is required for certain prescribed projects and is required for others which are likely to have significant effects on the environment, by reason of their nature, extent or location.

The purpose of this EIA screening report is to determine whether EIA is required for the proposed development. It presents the findings of an assessment to determine whether EIA is required under the mandatory or sub-threshold categories or whether it is likely to have any significant effects on the environment, which would also trigger the requirement to complete EIA.

As per the EPA's draft guidance, a significant effect can be defined as "*An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment*" (EPA, 2017).

## 2. Description of the Proposed Development

### 2.1. Background

MWP were engaged by Tipperary County Council to provide consultancy services for the replacement of Clairín pedestrian rail bridge (OBL149A) on the north-western outskirts of Carrick-on-Suir. The bridge was inspected by MWP on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (**Figure 2-1**).

The existing bridge is a four-span structure, with two side spans south of the tracks of 7.8m and 3m, a main span of 9.14m above the tracks and a single side span of 9.05m north of the tracks. The side spans consist of steel beams and steel deck plates, while the central span consists of a steel trough deck with a concrete infill. The main supports consist of twin steel column sections with cross beams and lateral bracing. There is approximately 4.4m vertical clearance from the rail track to the soffit of the main span. The lateral clearance, from the rail track to the vertical supports is 3.5m to the south and 3.6m to the north. The width of the existing bridge, at deck level, is 1.63m, while the clear width between the handrails is 1.4m. The steel parapets are 1.34m high, with a solid metal sheet infill for the main span.

The following issues were noted in relation to the bridge:

- The cross beam supporting the southern end of the main trough deck has suffered severe corrosion with a complete loss of section from areas of the web. This corrosion is due to water ingress from the joint in the deck above. This is not an issue for the northern cross beam;
- The lower sections of the twin columns of the two main supports have suffered from a loss of section. The southern twin column support was strengthened some time back, but the bottom 1.2m of the northern twin column support needs to be strengthened;
- The waterproof membrane is a mineral felt that is also the surfacing on the bridge. This has debonded from the deck in a number of places and is leaking over the southern cross beam;
- There is a 3m section of cap angle missing from the northern end of the eastern parapet;
- There is extensive graffiti on the solid metal infill panels of the parapets; and
- The southern approach ramp is steep and is not compliant with current standards.

There are significant issues with corrosion of the steelwork in the bridge. While initially the intent was to repair the bridge to extend its' lifespan by approximately 10 years, following consultations with Irish Rail and the National Transport Authority (NTA), consideration was given to replacing the bridge. A Structural Options Report was produced by MWP in September 2021. Subsequently, Tipperary County Council (TCC) received approval to proceed with detailed design of a replacement bridge.



Figure 2-1: View of Existing Bridge Looking West



## 2.2. Site Location and Description

The proposed development site is located in the northwest of Carrick-on-Suir, 1.4km west of Carrick on-Suir train station (**Figure 2-2**). The pedestrian bridge crosses the Waterford to Limerick railway line at 62 miles, 470 yards.

The bridge links St John's Terrace to the north of the track with Clareen Close and the N24 to the south. There is also a Lidl store off Clareen Close. The loss of the bridge would result in a 1.8km diversion via the R696 and the N24 for residents of St John's Terrace wishing to access Clareen Close.

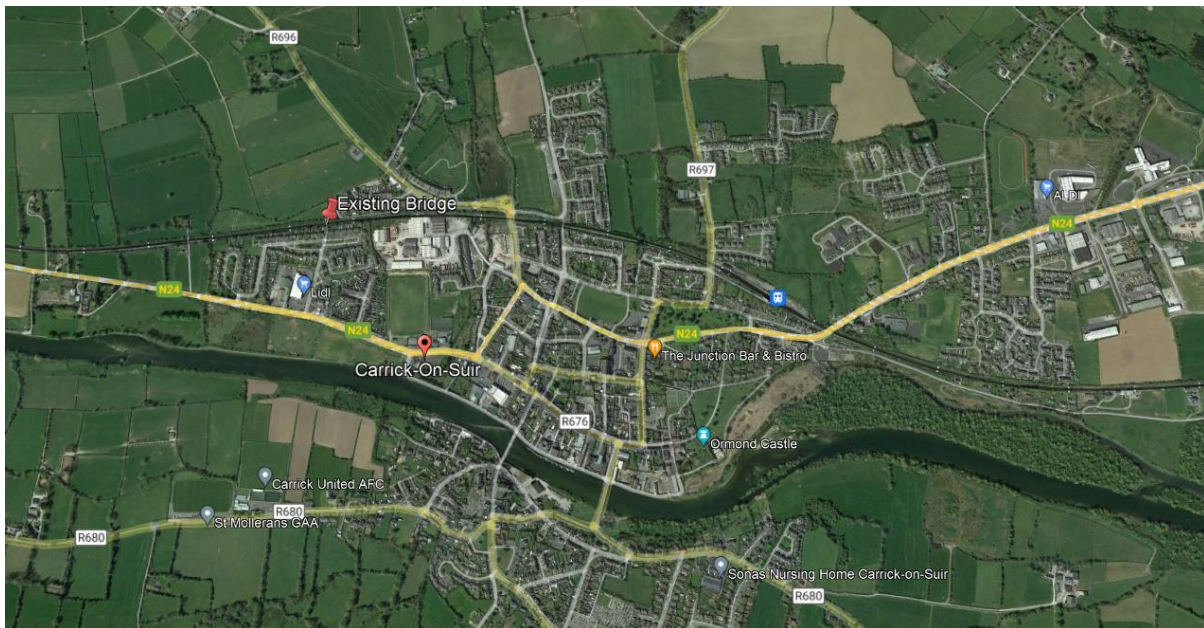


Figure 2-2: Site Location

## 2.3. Environmental Setting

The proposed development will be undertaken on an already disturbed footprint area. The existing bridge will be replaced as part of the proposal. The bridge location is shown below on **Figure 2.3**.

The railway is in a cutting at the bridge site and the cutting embankments are well vegetated. An initial assessment of these embankments, by an MWP Ecologist, suggests that there are no protected species or invasive species in the immediate area of the bridge.

The AA Screening identified Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Natura 2000 sites occurring within 15km of the proposed development. While the bridge site is less than 500m north of the River Suir, which is a designated SAC, there is no direct hydrological connection between the bridge site and the river. No Special Protection Areas (SPA) are located within 15km of the project site. The AA Screening has concluded that no significant effect on any Natura 2000 sites will occur due to the proposed works.

The proposed development site is located within the GLENBROOK\_010 basin in the Suir\_SC\_140 sub catchment which forms part of the larger Suir Catchment (16) area. The river waterbody status as per the Water Framework Directive (WFD) 2013-2018 for River Suir south of the site is categorised as being 'poor'.

The EPA has classified this river as being under category of 'at risk' as per its' Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives<sup>1</sup>, while the groundwater underlying the site has also been categorised as 'good'. The main groundwater aquifer is described as Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock which is Generally Moderately Productive. The site

<sup>1</sup> [www.catchments.ie](http://www.catchments.ie) Accessed August 2022

location is underlain by Till derived from Devonian sandstones. The Corine 2018 land cover is categorised as artificial surfaces.



Figure 2-3: Aerial view of Existing Bridge

## 2.4. Proposed Development

### 2.4.1. Project Description

The existing bridge (**Figure 2.4**) will be removed and a replacement bridge constructed (**Figure 2.5**) The replacement bridge will be a precast concrete portal frame with an n-shaped upper unit and 2 No L-shaped abutments/footings per ring. There will be two rings in this bridge, giving an overall width of 3.5m and a width between the inside face of the parapets of 3m.

The L-shaped footings will have an *insitu* reinforced concrete stitch added on site to form the foundation heels of the abutments. The overall span, between the faces of the abutments, will be 10.6m. The height of the abutments will be approximately 6m, above top of base. The abutments will be 0.4m thick. The deck will be 0.4m thick at the abutments and 0.55m thick at mid span. There will be an *insitu* stitch along the junction between the two precast concrete rings. There will be a 10mm joint at the back of both abutments. This will have a closed cell polystyrene filler with a rod backed polysulphide sealant on top.

The parapets on the bridge will have an overall height of 1.8m with the bottom 1.2m being solid and the top 0.6m in IP2X mesh. The parapet will be fixed to a 0.15m high concrete upstand, with the inside face of the upstand in line with the inside face of the metal parapet. The inside face of the parapet will be designed to be non-climbable and will not have grab rails. There will be an anti-climbing cowl on the outside face of the parapet, where it meets the concrete upstand. This parapet will extend off the bridge as far as the existing Irish Rail boundary fences at the top of both sides of the cutting.

New 3m wide approach ramps will be constructed and will be in reinforced concrete to provide for both pedestrians and cyclists. The northern approach ramp will be on an earthen embankment and will not require parapet railings. The southern approach ramp will be provided with 1.25m high parapets, with grab rails at 0.9m high.

The replacement bridge will be more aesthetically pleasing than the existing. However, as the bridge is over a railway cutting, the elevation will only be fully visible from the rail track. The parapets will be the most visible element of the bridge. These will be specified to a high standard, compliant with Irish Rail requirements. The concrete surface of the bridge and approach ramps will be sprayed with a coloured epoxy anti-slip surface treatment.



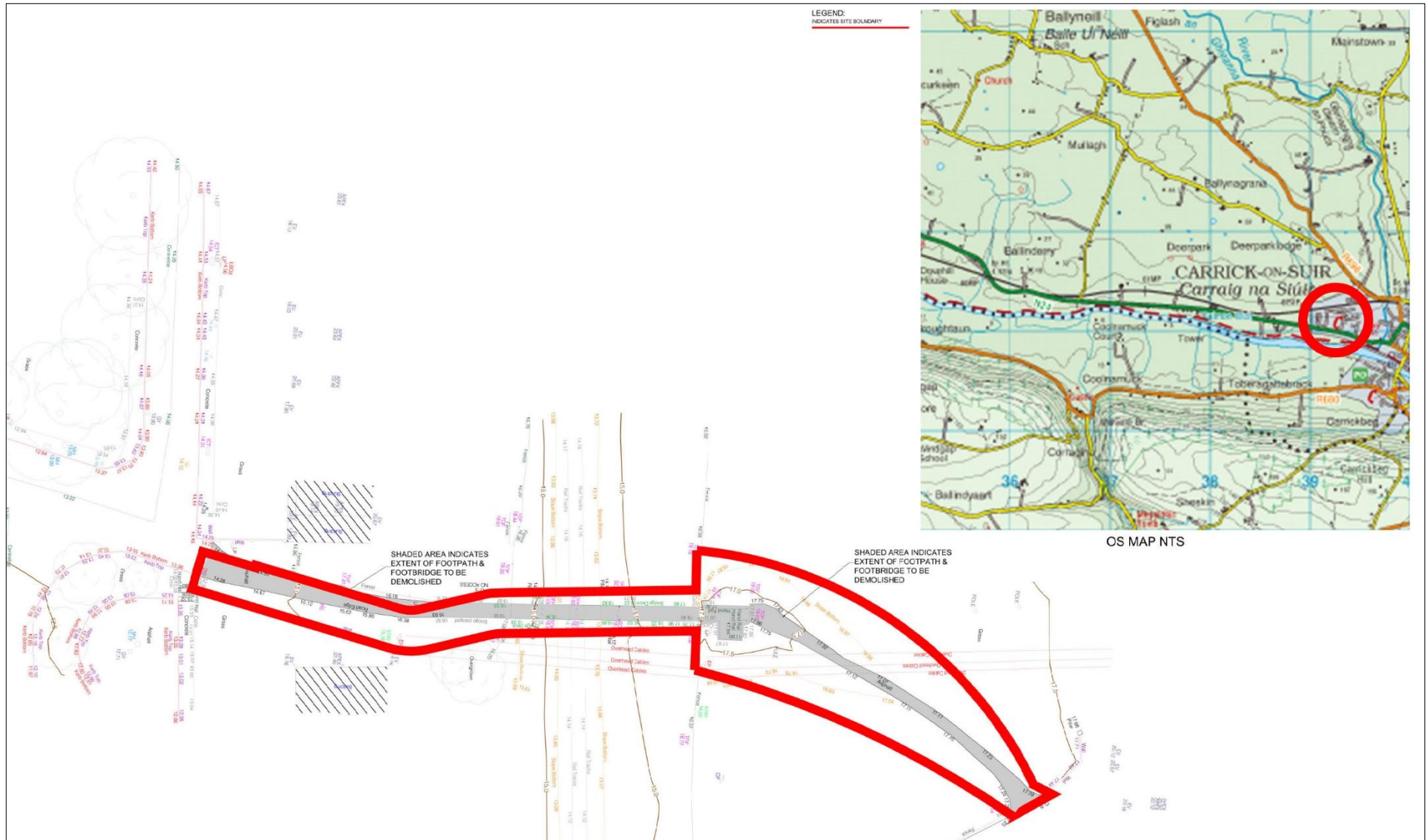


Figure 2-4: Existing Bridge

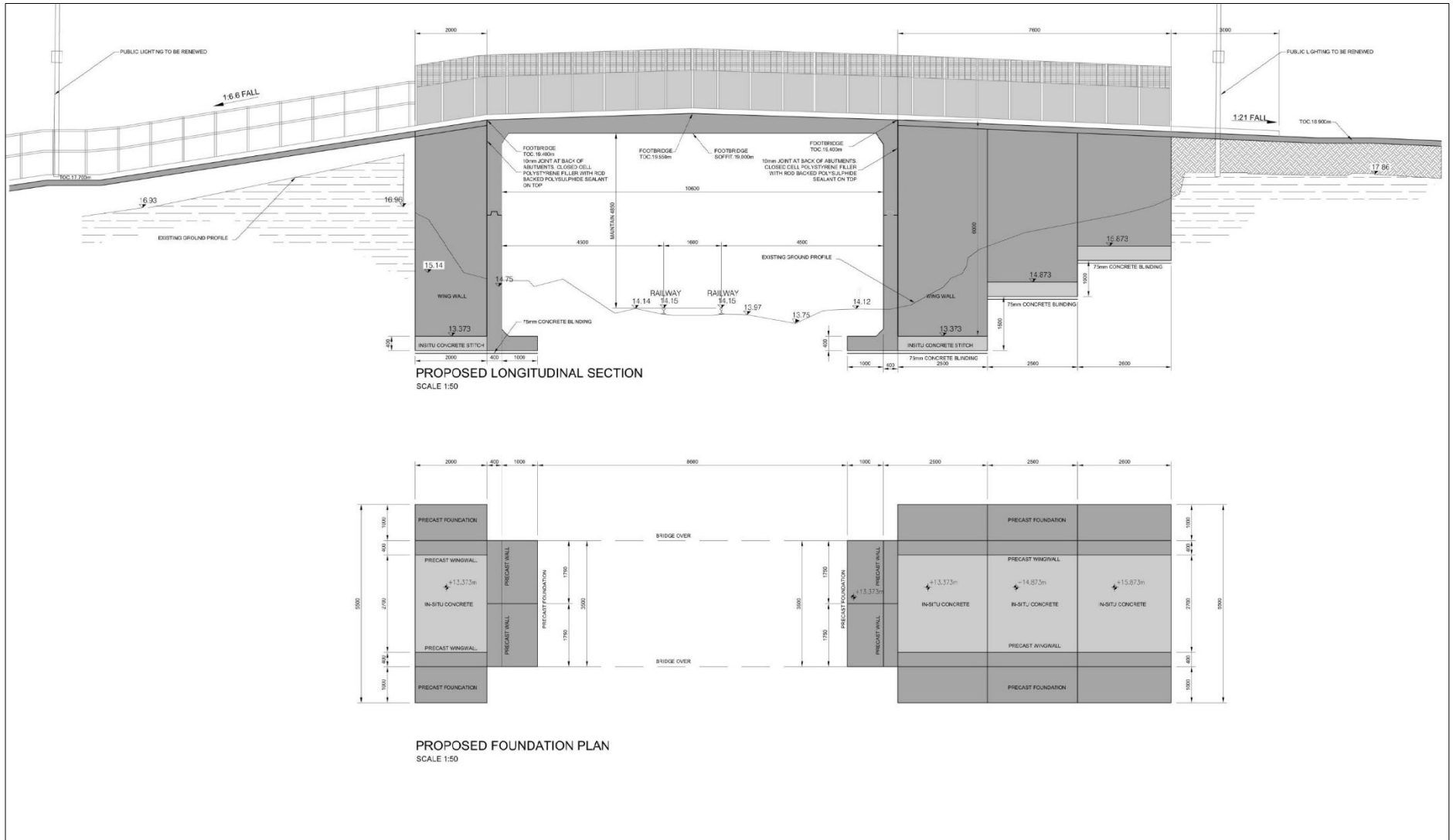


Figure 2-5: New Footbridge and Foot Path

### **2.4.2. Drainage**

The bridge deck will be waterproofed, using Eliminator spray applied bridge deck waterproofing or similar approved. This will be applied under the anti-slip surface. There will be a 1:40 longitudinal fall to either end of the bridge. Rainwater on the northern side of the bridge will runoff the ramp onto the grassed embankment. The 0.15m high concrete upstands, supporting the parapets on the bridge, will be extended for 3m beyond the Irish Rail boundary fence. This is to ensure that surface water from the bridge does not percolate back into the rail cutting. Rainwater on the southern side of the bridge will be collected into linear drains across the ramp and connected to the storm water system on the southern side of the bridge.

### **2.4.3. Construction**

Construction works will take approximately 12 weeks from commencement. The bridge will be closed for a minimum period of six weeks. The railway station will be closed for three weekends during the construction period. Works are expected to commence in Q3 of 2023. It is likely that a 200t crane will be required to lift out the old bridge and lift in the new bridge.

## **3. EIA Screening Process**

This section of the report outlines the legislative basis for EIA 'Screening' in order to decide whether the proposed development requires the preparation of an EIA.

### **3.1. Legislation**

#### **3.1.1. EIA Directive**

EIA requirements derive from Council Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended by Directives 97/11/EC, 2003/35/EC and 2009/31/EC) and as codified and replaced by Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. EIA Directive 2014/52/EU, amends Directive 2011/92/EU (hereafter referred to as the 'EIA Directive').

The EIA Directive requires an environmental assessment to be carried out prior to development consent being granted for projects considered likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

The EIA Directive lists those projects that require a mandatory EIA (Annex I), and those projects for which an assessment must be undertaken to determine if they are probable to result in likely significant effects (Annex II). For Annex II projects, individual Member States can choose to institute specific thresholds or project specific considerations, or a combination of both approaches to arrive at a decision regarding the requirement to undertake an EIA.

Annex II developments that do not exceed the thresholds for the mandatory requirement to prepare an EIA are categorised as sub-threshold and must be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether or not they are likely to have significant effects on the existing environment. The likelihood of a significant environmental effect is the principle matter around which consideration of the requirement for an EIA is based. Annex III, of the EIA Directive, sets out the criteria to be examined when carrying out a sub-threshold assessment. These criteria include the characteristics of projects, location of projects, and type and characteristics of the potential impact.

Therefore, in order for a project to be subjected to an assessment of its environmental effects, in accordance with the procedural requirements of the EIA Directive it must be:

- A project of a type listed in Annex I; or
- A project of a type listed in Annex II which either meets thresholds or criteria set by the Member State; or
- A project of a type listed in Annex II which is under the threshold, but following case by case examination, is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

### **3.1.2. Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations**

The 2014 EIA Directive had direct effect in Ireland from 16<sup>th</sup> May 2017 and was transposed into Irish planning law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018 in the form of the European Union (EU) (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018.

In Ireland, generally the process of ascertaining whether a development requires an EIA is determined by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) which takes into consideration the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) have been amended by the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 296 of 2018) to take account of the requirements of the EIA Directive.

#### **3.1.2.1. Mandatory and Sub-threshold EIA- Schedule 5/Annex I & II**

EIA is mandatory for development of a class set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), which exceeds a limit, quantity or threshold set for that class of development. Schedule 5 transposes Annex I and Annex II of the 2011 EIA Directive into Irish law under Parts 1 and 2 of the Schedule, respectively. There have been no changes to Annex I introduced by the 2014 EIA Directive or the 2018 Regulations. A new Annex IIA has been inserted requiring certain additional information be provided for Annex II projects, as follows:

*“1. A description of the project, including in particular:*

*(a) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole project and, where relevant, of demolition works;*

*(b) a description of the location of the project, 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 project.*

*3. A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the project on the environment resulting from:*

*(a) the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant;*

*(b) the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.*

*4. The criteria of Annex III shall be taken into account, where relevant, when compiling the information in accordance with points 1 to 3.”*

Sub-threshold development is defined in Part 10 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) as *“development of a type set out in Schedule 5 which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in that Schedule in respect of the relevant class of development”*; however, the planning authority may

consider that the development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore would require EIA. As such, the possibility that the proposed development might fall within this definition is considered.

### 3.1.2.2. Likely Significant Effects- Schedule 7/Annex III

The EU Directive Annex III [transposed into Irish Law in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)], sets out the criteria for assessing whether or not a development would or would not be likely to have 'significant' effects on the environment. Schedule 7 transposes Annex III of the EIA Directive.

The criteria are grouped under the three headings listed below and are used to help in the screening process to determine whether a development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

- Characteristics of Proposed Development;
- Location of Proposed Development; and
- Type and Characteristic of Potential Impacts.

They are used to help in the screening process to determine whether a development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

## 3.2. Appropriate Assessment

Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21<sup>st</sup> May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, which is more commonly known as 'the Habitats Directive', requires Member States of the European Union (EU) to take measures to maintain or restore, at favourable conservation status, natural habitats and wild species of fauna and flora of Community interest. The provisions of the Habitats Directive require that Member States designate Special Areas of Conservation for habitats listed on Annex I and for species listed on Annex II. Similarly, Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (more commonly known as 'the Birds Directive') provides a framework for the conservation and management of wild birds. It also requires Member States to identify and classify SPAs for rare or vulnerable species listed on Annex I of the Directive, as well as for all regularly occurring migratory species. The complete network of European sites is referred to as 'Natura 2000'.

Under article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, any plan or project which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but would be likely to have a significant effect on such a site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, must be subject to an 'Appropriate Assessment' (AA) of its implications for the SAC / SPA and its nature conservation objectives.

In Ireland, the requirements of Article 6(3) are transposed into national law by Part 5 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations) 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) (more commonly referred to as the 'Habitats Regulations') and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

As set out in the NPWS guidance (DoEHLG, 2009), the task of establishing whether a plan or project is likely to have an effect on a Natura 2000 Site is based on a preliminary impact assessment using available information and data, including that outlined above, and other available environmental information, supplemented as necessary by local site information and ecological surveys. This is followed by a determination of whether there is a risk that the effects identified could be significant.

The purpose of the AA screening assessment is to record in a transparent and reasoned manner the likely effects, on relevant Natura 2000 Sites, of the proposed works. The AA screening assessment, which was undertaken for the proposed development, has concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, based on objective information, and considering the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites, that significant impacts from the project, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, on the Natura 2000 sites examined, can be excluded.



### 3.3. Relevant Guidance

The EIA Screening was undertaken in accordance with the relevant guidelines including:

- EPA 'Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' (2022) (hereafter referred to as the 'EPA guidelines');
- European Commission (EC), 'Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects, Guidance on the preparation of Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU) (2017);
- EC 'Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive' (2015);
- EC 'Guidance on EIA Screening' (2001);
- Government of Ireland 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Board Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, (2018);
- Department of Housing Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment' (2018); and
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) 'Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Practice Note' (2021).

### 3.4. Methodology

Ascertaining whether the proposed development requires an EIA (EIA screening) is determined by reference to mandatory and discretionary provisions set out in Irish legislation. This EIA screening assessment was undertaken in line with Section 3.2 of the EPA's 'Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Report' (EPA, 2022). The assessment also takes into consideration the Department Of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG's) 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála' on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment' (DHPLG, 2018).

It is important to note that this report has been prepared in order to provide a sufficient level of information to the competent authority, in this case Fingal Co. Council on which to base the EIA Screening for the proposed development.

An overview of these legislative requirements and their applicability to the proposed development are outlined in the following sections.

#### 3.4.1. Mandatory EIA- Annex I and II/Schedule 5

Developments which require an EIA for the purposes of Part 10 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) are outlined under two separate sections, Part 1 and Part 2. The schedule of projects listed in Part 1 and Part 2 of Schedule 5 was consulted to determine whether the new development required an EIA. Table 3-1 provides a summary of the Part 1 projects and their applicability to this development (relevant sections if applicable have been expanded and shown using italics). **Table 3-2** provides a summary of the Part 2 projects and their applicability to this development (relevant sections if applicable have been expanded and shown using italics).

**Table 3-1: Schedule 5, Part 1 Checklist**

Part 1 of Schedule 5		Relevant to Project Development Site
1	Crude-oil refineries	No
2	Thermal and Nuclear Power Stations	No
3	Reprocessing of irradiated nuclear fuel	No
4	Integrated works for the initial smelting of cast iron and steel and Installations for the production of non-ferrous crude metals from ore, concentrates or secondary raw materials by metallurgical, chemical or electrolytic processes	No
5	Installations for the extraction of asbestos and for the processing and transformation of asbestos and products containing asbestos	No
6	Integrated chemical installations	No
7	A line for long-distance railway traffic	No
8	Inland waterways and ports for inland-waterway traffic and Trading ports, piers for loading and unloading connected to land and outside ports	No
9	Waste disposal installations for the incineration, chemical treatment of hazardous waste	No
10	Waste disposal installations for the incineration, chemical treatment of non-hazardous waste	No
11	Groundwater abstraction or artificial groundwater recharge schemes	No
12	Works for the transfer of water resources between river basins	No
13	Wastewater treatment plants	No
14	Extraction of petroleum and natural gas for commercial purposes	No
15	Dams and other installations designed for the holding back or permanent storage of water	No
16	Pipelines for the transport of gas, oil, chemicals or carbon dioxide streams	No
17	Installations for the intensive rearing of poultry or pigs	No
18	Industrial plants	No
19	Quarries and open-cast mining	No
20	Construction of overhead electrical power lines	No
21	Installations for storage of petroleum, petrochemical, or chemical products	No
22	Any change to or extension of projects listed in this Annex where such a change or extension in itself meets the thresholds	No
23	Storage sites on the geological storage of carbon dioxide	No
24	Installations for the capture of CO2 streams for the purposes of geological storage	No

**Table 3-2: Schedule 5, Part 2 Checklist**

Part 2 of Schedule 5		Relevant to Project Development Site
1	Agriculture, silviculture and aquaculture	No
2	Extractive Industry	No
3	Energy Industry	No
4	Production and processing of metals	No
5	Mineral Industry	No
6	Chemical Industry	No
7	Food Industry	No
8	Textile, Leather, Wood and Paper Industries	No
9	Rubber Industry	No
10	Infrastructure Projects	No
(b)	<i>Urban development projects, including the construction of shopping centres and car parks:</i> <i>(i) Construction of more than 500 dwelling units.</i> <i>(ii) Construction of a car-park providing more than 400 spaces, other than a car-park</i>	No

Part 2 of Schedule 5		Relevant to Project Development Site
	<i>provided as part of, and incidental to the primary purpose of, a development.</i> <i>(iii) Construction of a shopping centre with a gross floor space exceeding 10,000 square metres.</i> <i>(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.</i>	
11	Other Projects	No
12	Tourism and Leisure	No
13	Any change or extension of projects listed in Annex I or this Annex, already authorised	No
b	<i>Any change or extension of development being of a class listed in Part 1 or paragraphs 1 to 12 of Part 2 of this Schedule, which would result in the demolition of structures, the demolition of which had not previously been authorised, and where such demolition would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out under Schedule 7</i>	No
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.	No
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.	No

From **Table 3-1** it is evident that the proposed development does not fall under any class of development listed in Part 1 or Part 2 of Schedule 5. Consideration was given to Section 10(b), 13(b) and 15 of Part 2 as shown in red in **Table 3-2**. Based on the size and design, the proposed development does not fall under any of the thresholds specified under Schedule 5 Part 2; therefore, the proposed development is not a mandatory project for EIA or EIA Screening under Schedule 5.

### 3.4.2. Mandatory EIA – Section 50, Roads Act 1993 (as amended)

The mandatory EIA requirement for a road project is outlined in Section 50 of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) and in Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994.

An overview of these legislative requirements and their applicability to the proposed development are outlined **Table 3-3** below.

**Table 3-3 Summary of the Mandatory Legislative Requirements for Environmental Impact Assessment Impact Screening under the Roads Act (as amended)**

Mandatory	Regulatory Reference	Mandatory Criteria Met
Construction of a Motorway	S. 50(1)(a) of the Roads Act, 1993, as substituted by S. 9(1)(d)(i) of the Roads Act, 2007	The proposed development is not a Motorway.
Construction of a Busway	S. 50(1)(a) of the Roads Act, 1993, as substituted by S. 9(1)(d)(i) of the Roads Act, 2007	The proposed development is not a Busway.
Construction of a Service Area	S. 50(1)(a) of the Roads Act, 1993, as substituted by S. 9(1)(d)(i) of the Roads Act, 2007	The proposed development is not a Service Area.
Prescribed type of proposed road development • The construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or	Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994 (Road development prescribed for the purposes of S. 50(1)(a) of the Roads Act, 1993	The proposed development does not involve the construction of a road with four or more lanes, or a bridge or tunnel over 100m in length, or any other criteria.

Mandatory	Regulatory Reference	Mandatory Criteria Met
widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500 metres or more in length in an urban area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100 metres or more in length</li> </ul>		

Based on the size and design, the proposed development does not meet the thresholds requiring a mandatory EIA under Section 50 of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended).

### 3.4.3. Sub-threshold Assessment

Where the proposed development does not meet, or exceed, the applicable threshold, the likelihood of the proposed development having significant effects on the environment may need to be considered. The discretionary (or sub-threshold) requirements are based on an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the proposed development.

The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) under Schedule 5 Part 2 Category 15 therefore also includes a requirement for EIA for:

*“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.”*

Given the nature and type of the proposed development, albeit below the threshold, it is considered prudent to undertake an EIA screening assessment to determine if a full EIA is required. This is outlined in the following sections.

### 3.5. Methodology for Schedule 7 Criteria Assessment

The EIA Screening was completed by reviewing the proposal against the criteria included in Annex III of the EIA Directive (2014/92/EU). 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 are outlined here below.

#### 3.5.1. Characteristics of proposed development

The characteristics of the projects must be considered, with particular regard to:

- The size and design of the whole project;
- The cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects;
- The use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;
- The production of waste;
- Pollution and nuisances;
- 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
- The risks to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution).

Refer to **Table 3-** for the details pertaining to the characteristics of the proposed development.

#### 3.5.2. Location of proposed development

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

- The existing and approved land use;
- The relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground;
- The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:
  - Wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;
  - Coastal zones and the marine environment;
  - Mountain and forest areas;
  - Nature reserves and parks;
- Areas classified or protected under legislation; Natura 2000 areas designated by Member States pursuant to Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC;
- 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;
- Densely populated areas; and
- Landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

Refer to **Table 3-5** for the details pertaining to the location of the proposed development.



### 3.5.3. Type and Characteristics of Potential Impacts

The potential 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, and having regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in Article 3(1), taking into account:

- The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the affected population likely to be affected);
- The nature of the impact;
- The transfrontier/ transboundary nature of the impact;
- The magnitude intensity and complexity of the impact;
- The probability of the impact;
- The expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;
- The cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects; and
- The possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

Refer to

**Table 3-** for the details pertaining to the types and characteristics of the potential impacts associated with the proposed development.

Article 3(1) of the Directive states:

The environmental impact assessment shall identify, describe, and assess in an appropriate manner, in the light of each individual case, the direct and indirect significant effects of a project on the following factors:

1. Population and human health;
2. Biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC;
3. Land, soil, water, air and climate;
4. Material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape; and
5. The interaction between the factors referred to in points 1) to 4).

Authorities must have regard to the criteria under these headings when forming an opinion as to whether or not a sub-threshold development is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The proposed development was further appraised using the EIA Screening Checklist taken from the European Commission's Guidance on EIA Screening (EC, 2017). This Screening Checklist provides a list of questions about the project and its environment which can be used to help answer the question whether the project likely to have a significant effect on the environment (**Table 3-7**).

**Table 3-4: Characteristics of the Proposed Development**

Characteristics of Proposed Development	Appraisal
(a) the size and design of the whole proposed;	<p>Small scale project, the existing bridge is to be removed and a replacement bridge provided. The new bridge consists of a deck width of 3m to provide for both pedestrians and cyclists. The southern approach ramp to be upgraded. The replacement bridge be a single span of 10.9m, with 2m of approach retaining walls on the south side and 7m on the north side. Subject to the results of a geotechnical investigation, it is anticipated that the foundations for the bridge and approach walls will be ground bearing. The southern approach ramp will be approximately 40m long with low retaining walls on either side to avoid side slopes encroaching on adjacent properties.</p> <p>The size, scale and design of the proposed development is not considered significant.</p>
(b) cumulation with other existing development 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;	<p>A desktop search of proposed and existing planning applications was undertaken on the 30<sup>th</sup> August 2022. The search flagged planning applications within a period dating back to 2017 (last 5 years); any refused, invalid or withdrawn applications were omitted.</p> <p>The most recent (&lt;5 years) grants of planning for the townlands adjacent to the proposed extension include small scale developments:</p> <p>Application Number: 22430 (2022) - a single storey extension to the rear and side comprising a bedroom/shower room and alterations to the residence and all associated site works.</p> <p>Application Number: 211819 (2021) - alterations to the previously granted solar farm (Tipperary County Council Reg Ref 17600928) Permission was originally granted for a solar photovoltaic installation comprising arrays of approximately 13,770 solar PV panels on ground mounted frames no taller than 2.8m; 2 no. inverter/transformer container units; a battery storage container unit; a 20kV on-site substation; landscaping, fencing and CCTV cameras around the solar PV arrays and connecting to the off-site Deerpark ESB substation; provision of a temporary construction compound; widening of the existing farm entrance and internal tracks; and all ancillary works on a site of 9.12 ha. Permission is now sought for the following: optimised solar pv panel configuration to comprise up to 23,581 m<sup>2</sup> of solar panels on ground mounted frames; increase in height to the permitted solar panels from 2.72m to 2.82m and; Permission for an operational period of the solar farm from 35 years. Planning Permission is sought for a period of 10 year.</p> <p>Application Number: 19601103 (2019) - construction of 39 no. new dwelling houses consisting of 1 no. detached 4 bedroom dwelling, 16 no. 4 bedroom semi-detached dwellings, 18 no. 3 bedroom semi-detached dwellings and 4 no. 3 bedroom terraced dwellings along with a foul sewer pumping station, etc.</p> <p>Application Number: 17601041 (2017) - replacing existing sitting room window with a new window and exit door combined located to the front of my residence at ground floor level.</p> <p>Application Number: 07560045 (2017) - development on lands of c.12.3 acres (4.975 ha), comprising of 94 no. 3, 4 and 5 bed detached and semi-detached two storey houses (with a total floor area of c.10,883 sq.m.), retail/ commercial units along the Dublin Road (area c.480 sq.m.) and a childcare facility (area c.220 sq. m.). The proposed development also includes for all associated site development and infrastructural works, surface car parking, landscaping, boundary treatment and open spaces. Access to the development will be via the Dublin Road, adjacent to the existing ESB substation.</p> <p>A Part 8 Planning Application was submitted in Q3 of 2021 for the Carrick-on-Suir rrb an regeneration project: this project has been granted permission and construction is expected to commence in Q3 of 2023 at the earliest on a phased basis. This development includes for public realm refurbishment and enhancement in Carrick on Suir’s town centre comprising the upgrading of existing streets and lanes with new high quality paving, kerbing, public lighting, improved street furniture and utility diversions/works (including undergrounding of overhead ESB cables). Footpath space will be widened, traffic calming will be developed through build out, reduced road carriage widths and improved pedestrian crossings. Existing car parks will be improved and new car parking spaces provided. Pedestrian movement will be prioritised by the design. The development also includes for public realm refurbishment and enhancement at Sean Healy Park comprising the development of a new vehicular parking area with entry and exit, footpaths and hard paved areas, widening of the Blueway and the development of associated landscaping and services/utilities to serve the proposed and future uses. The extension of the Suir Blueway along North Quays to provide cycleway and pedestrian linkages from Sean Healy Park to Ormond Castle and the town centre. The upgrading of Strand Walk with new paving and the development of a new access to Ormond Castle grounds and closing of the existing ramped access.</p>

Characteristics of Proposed Development	Appraisal
	<p>The closest point of the urban regeneration project to Clairín is at the corner of Sean Healy Park, approximately 275m away. The proposed replacement of Clairín Bridge is a small-scale project of temporary duration. It is considered that the proposal to replace the bridge does not have the potential to cause cumulative/in-combination effects with the urban regeneration project.</p> <p>Other than the urban regeneration project described above, no medium-large scale developments were found in close proximity to the project development site. Given the nature and scale of the above-described developments, no cumulative effects are predicted as a result of this development.</p>
(c) the nature of any associated demolition works;	<p>The original bridge is to be demolished and replaced by the proposed bridge. Demolition will involve the removal of the existing bridge surface, steel work and some concrete. The demolition phase is expected to last for one weekend.</p>
(d) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;	<p>The proposed works will be within an urban environment, which has been significantly modified by human activity. Soil cover is absent and the site constitutes Made Ground. The bridge will be constructed where the existing bridge is currently located and a small area will need to be cleared temporarily to create the hard standing area required for the crane. There will not be a significant impact to biodiversity as a result of this project.</p> <p>There will be no requirement for water abstraction for the proposed development as water requirements will be met by the public water supply. Construction activity will include shallow and localised excavations to maximum depth of approximately 900mm bgl. Excavated materials will be stored in the construction compound area and reused on site. It is not anticipated that in-situ rock breaking will be required.</p> <p>The replacement bridge will be a precast concrete portal frame with an n-shaped upper unit and 2 No L-shaped abutments/footings per ring. There will be two rings in this bridge, giving an overall width of 3.5m and a width between the inside face of the parapets of 3m. The L-shaped footings will have an insitu reinforced concrete stitch added on site to form the foundation heels of the abutments. The overall span, between the faces of the abutments, will be 10.6m. The height of the abutments will be approximately 6m, above top of base. The abutments will be 0.4m thick. The deck will be 0.4m thick at the abutments and 0.55m thick at mid span. There will be an insitu concrete stitch along the junction between the two precast concrete rings.</p> <p>The project will require the use of concrete, tarmac, resin bound path, reinforcing steel, steel railings &amp; parapets and Class 6F1 stone material. The project is considered small in scale and volumes used will not be significant.</p>
(d) the production of waste;	<p>Given the scale and type of development, it is unlikely that there will be significant volumes of waste generated during the construction phase. Demolition waste will comprise steel, which will be recycled, and minor amounts (2m<sup>3</sup>) of concrete and some mineral felt which will be segregated for removal off-site to an appropriately authorised recovery or disposal facility. Debris and waste created at the construction site compounds will be disposed of at an authorised waste facility. In addition, any excess construction materials will be returned to the supplier.</p> <p>It is considered that the production of any waste associated with the proposed development as described above would not cause unusual, significant, or adverse effects of a type that would require an EIA.</p>
(e) pollution and nuisances;	<p>Nuisance: constructions works may cause a temporary disturbance or nuisance to users of the existing walkway as access will be restricted during the works. The bridge will be closed for a minimum period of six weeks and at least three weekend rail line closures will be required. It is likely that a 200t crane will be required to lift out the old bridge and lift in the new bridge</p> <p>Good construction management practices and standard environmental management during the construction works will be employed for the duration of construction and will serve to minimise the risk of pollution and nuisances.</p> <p>The proposed development would not cause unusual or significant levels of pollution or nuisance of a type that would require an EIA.</p>

Characteristics of Proposed Development	Appraisal
<p>(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;</p>	<p>Important considerations are the potential risks of the proposed development causing a major accident<sup>2</sup> and/or disaster during the construction and operational phases, and the vulnerability of the proposed development to potential man-made and natural disasters.</p> <p>The size of the proposed development is not of a sufficient size or scale to cause a major accident or disaster during the construction phase as normal construction measures (such as the contractors Health and Safety plan, an approved Contractor’s Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and approved methods of work) will be adhered to on site. The implementation of appropriate control measures (including an emergency spill response plan) and best management practices will reduce the risk of accidents from polluting substances entering soil and groundwater.</p> <p>In addition, given the temporary nature of the construction works, the risk of disasters (typically considered to be natural catastrophes e.g., very severe weather event) or accidents (e.g., fuel spill, traffic accident) is considered low.</p> <p>A review of OPW flood mapping was undertaken to ascertain whether the development site is at risk of flooding. The review concluded that the site is not at risk of flooding. In the case of a severe weather event work will be curtailed.</p>
<p>(g) the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).</p>	<p>There will be minor temporary nuisances associated with the proposed development during the construction phase. For example, construction works will generate noise from machinery on site (short duration, temporary). With the implementation of appropriate best practice measures during the construction phase (including an emergency spill response plan), in addition to the scale of the development, the risk to human health is considered low.</p> <p>There will be no emissions to air during the operational phase as the proposed development is non-vehicular; therefore, no risks to human health are anticipated. It is not considered that the proposal will result in a significant negative effect on human health, either alone, or in combination with other projects. Overall, the project will have a long term positive effect on the town by maintaining connectivity between communities on either side of the railway line.</p>

<sup>2</sup> A major accident, in the context of this assessment is defined as: “Events that threaten immediate or delayed serious environmental effects to human health, welfare and/or the environment and the use of resources beyond those of the client or its appointed representatives to manage. Whilst malicious intent is not accidental, the outcome (e.g. train derailment) may be the same and therefore many mitigation measures will apply to both deliberate and accidental events.” (IEMA, 2020).

**Table 3-5: Location of the Proposed Development**

Location of Proposed Development	Appraisal
(a) the existing and approved land use	<p>The OBL149A Pedestrian Bridge is located on the northwest side of Carrick-on-Suir, 1.4km west of the train station. The bridge links St John’s Terrace to the north of the track with Clairin Close and the N24 to the south. There is also a Lidl store off Clairin Close.</p> <p>The town of Carrick-on-Suir is underlain by limestones. There will be a balance between waste material and soil generated and imported stone and fill for the new development. The likely impact on land is neutral.</p> <p>According to the Carrick-on-Suir Town Development Plan 2013, the area of proposed works is zoned as Residential. There will be no change in land-use.</p>
(b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground;	At no point will water be abstracted from rivers or streams during the construction works. Construction materials will be imported from outside the area during the construction phase. All imported materials will be sourced from licensed suppliers. Excavated material/soil will be reused on site where possible. The proposed development does not involve use or destruction of natural resources, such that there would be a significant threat to their regenerative capacity.
(c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:	
(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;	<p>The proposed development site is within an urban area, located within Carrick on -Suir town. The town of Carrick on-Suir lies on both banks of the River Suir. While the bridge site is less than 500m north of the River Suir, which is a designated SAC, there is no direct hydrological connection between the bridge site and the river.</p> <p>Best practice measures will be implemented during the construction phase in order to reduce the risk of pollution to surface waters.</p>
(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;	The proposed development lies approximately 28km from the coast. There is no potential for the project to have an effect on coastal areas and the marine environment.
(iii) mountain and forest areas;	n/a
(iv) nature reserves and parks;	n/a
(v) areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive;	<p>There are three Natura 2000 sites within the zone of potential influence. The AA Screening has objectively concluded that the following sites are not likely to be significantly affected by the proposal and can therefore be screened out for appropriate assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower River Suir SAC (002137)</li> <li>• Comeragh Mountains SAC (001952)</li> <li>• Hugginstown Fen SAC (000404)</li> </ul>
(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;	n/a
(vii) densely populated areas;	The proposed development site is located in an urban residential area and within the Electoral Division of ‘Townparks’ of Carrick-on-Suir Urban. The town of Carrick on-Suir lies on both banks of the River Suir and had a population of 5,771 in the 2016 census. No significant negative impact is anticipated.
(viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.	There are recorded cultural heritage features in or within close proximity to the development area which have the potential to be impacted by the proposal. No effects on landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance. are predicted.



**Table 3-6: Type and Characteristics of the Potential Impact**

Type and Characteristics of the potential impacts	Appraisal
<p>(a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);</p>	<p>Any likely potential impacts will be limited to the proposed development site and sensitive receptors in and immediately around the site. During the construction phase, the proposed project has the potential to affect the local population including those living near the bridge, working, visiting, and passing through the proposed works area. The demolition and of the existing bridge and construction of the new bridge will result limited pedestrian and cyclist access between the north and south side of the rail line. Restricted access will however be temporary and impacts will be localised. During the operational phase, the magnitude and spatial extent will include the local population and users of the proposed development. There will be a positive impact to communities living on either side of the rail line by providing a safer and more aesthetically pleasing bridge.</p>
<p>(b) the nature of the impact (negative, positive or neutral);</p>	<p><b>Population and Human Health</b></p> <p>It is likely that there will be temporary localised potential negative impacts such as noise and dust arising from construction activities, workers, and traffic during the construction phase. However, it is not anticipated that there will be any significant, negative effects from the proposed development to human health during the construction phase. The proposed development site is located to the west Carrick On Suir where there is existing residential development. The new bridge will allow access between the residential areas to the north and south of the railway. Best practice measures, which will be outlined in the Contractor’s CEMP, will be implemented during the construction phase, including dust and noise suppression measures to reduce potential impacts on human health. The impacts on human health during construction phase will not be significant.</p> <p>The proposed development will provide a safe transport route over the railway which will allow free movement of pedestrians and cyclists. During the operational phase, it is anticipated the proposed development will result in a positive and long-term effect on the local population.</p> <p><b>Biodiversity</b></p> <p>The AA Screening identified three Nature 2000 sites occurring within 15km of the proposed development. No Special Protection Areas (SPA) located within this radius and no SPAs or SACs are found within the site.</p> <p>While the bridge site is less than 500m north of the River Suir, which is a designated SAC, there is no direct hydrological connection between the bridge and the river.</p> <p>The bridge will be constructed where there existing bridge is currently located. There will not be a significant impact to biodiversity as a result of this project. It is likely that a 200t crane will be required to lift out the old bridge and lift in the new bridge.</p> <p><b>Water</b></p> <p>Potential negative water quality effects arising as a result of the proposed development could potentially occur as a result of erosion and run-off of fines/nutrient-enriched material from excavation works or temporary storage areas for construction materials. Effects could also result from the accidental release of pollutants such as fuels, oils and other such substances during the construction phase. Rainwater either drains to ground on the northern side of the bridge or on the southern side of the bridge to linear drains which are connected to the storm existing water system on the southern side of the bridge. Any suspended sediment will fall out in gullies on the existing drainage system.</p> <p>Significant effects are unlikely to occur given the duration of the works and the distance of the works from the nearest water resource. In addition, best practice standards, environmental guidelines and control measures will be defined in the CEMP and adhered to in order to reduce the likelihood of potential impacts on the water environment.</p> <p>Drainage and water management during construction and the operational phase will be implemented. Rainwater on the northern side of the bridge will runoff the ramp onto the grassed embankment. Rainwater on the southern side of the bridge will be collected into linear drains across the ramp and connected to the storm water system on the southern side of the bridge. The 0.15m high concrete upstands, supporting the parapets on the bridge, will be extended for 3m beyond the Irish Rail boundary fence. This is to ensure that surface water from the bridge does not percolate back into the rail cutting.</p>

Type and Characteristics of the potential impacts	Appraisal
	<p><b>Land and Soils</b></p> <p>The town of Carrick-on-Suir is underlain by limestones. Soils generally comprise of made ground and works will be carried out in an existing urban area. Modifications and replacement will be to existing surfaces and infrastructure with materials that are broadly similar.</p> <p>During the construction phase, activities will include demolition of the existing bridge, excavation and earthworks. Potential negative effects include (in the absence of adequate management) weathering and erosion of the surface soils, increased silt levels or pollutants from the construction processes, and accidental spills and impacted runoff. Best practice standards, environmental guidelines and control measures will be defined in the CEMP and adhered to in order to reduce the likelihood of potential impacts on soil quality; therefore, significant effects are not anticipated.</p> <p>The new bridge will be constructed on the existing footprint area and as such, on an already disturbed site. With the implementation of the CEMP, the likely impact on land is therefore neutral.</p> <p><b>Air and Climate</b></p> <p>The construction phase will give rise potential negative effects due to dust and additional air emissions from construction vehicles, plant and machinery. However, this will be temporary and considering the scale of the project, will not be significant. No odour emissions are anticipated.</p> <p><b>Noise and Vibration</b></p> <p>The construction phase of the proposed development has the potential to increase noise levels at noise sensitive locations surrounding the site (residential areas). Best practice in the form of BS5228 –1&amp;2:2009 + A1 2014, Code of Practice for the Control of Noise and Vibration on Construction and Open Sites will be adopted during the construction phase in order to minimise the noise generated by construction activities and nuisance to neighbours.</p> <p>There is potential for ground vibration due to the construction phase works which will mainly be derived from groundworks associated with excavations and demolition works.</p> <p>Effects from the construction phase will depend on the number and type of equipment employed during the works. It is assumed noise and vibration limits will be outlined within the noise and vibration management section of the CEMP that will be produced by the contractor for the proposed development and agreed with Longford County Council prior to the commencement of construction. These limits will be adhered to at all times during the construction phase of the proposed development. With these measures in place, no significant negative effects on sensitive receptors are anticipated.</p> <p>During the operations phase, there will be no significant noise and vibration effects from the proposed pedestrian bridge development.</p> <p><b>Landscape and Visual</b></p> <p>Visual sensitivity of the landscapes in this area are generally Low to Medium. There may be temporary negative landscape and visual effects on a small number of sensitive receptors; for example, residential properties near the bridge, will likely arise as a result of construction works and the movement of large construction vehicles, however, given the scale and duration of the proposed development and that it is a new bridge in place of an existing bridge, no significant effects are anticipated.</p> <p>During the operational phase, while changes to the local environment will be clearly recognisable, the overall extent and scale of the proposed development may alter views locally but not in the wider area. The new bridge has also been designed to be more visually appealing in terms of aesthetics in comparison to the existing bridge. Visual effects are therefore considered to be not significant during the operational phase. The existing landscape character will remain largely unaltered, and the proposed development will fit into the existing setting resulting in no change to the landscape character as it is an extension to existing infrastructure.</p>

Type and Characteristics of the potential impacts	Appraisal
	<p><b>Cultural Heritage</b> There are recorded cultural heritage features in or within close proximity to the development area. There is therefore a Neutral impact on Cultural Heritage.</p> <p><b>Public Transport (</b> Works will be carried out on three weekends during the construction phase. The train station will be closed during these periods. There are four no. train services calling at Carrick-on-Suir train station Monday to Saturday, one in the morning and evening in each direction. No train service operates on Sundays. There will be a negative effect over three weekends associated with the construction of the proposal. There will be a neutral effect during operation.</p> <p><b>Material Assets</b> During the construction phase there will be some additional traffic on the existing road network due to construction vehicles. Possible effects include additional traffic volumes on the local road network; introduction of construction traffic movements on the local and national road network, impacts on residential amenity by both construction traffic vehicles and future residents. Access to existing roads will be maintained. Due to the duration of the works, significant effects are not anticipated. Transport / travel interruptions on the rail will be experienced over 3 weekends during the construction phase. This will be managed by the contractor through the implementation of a traffic / transport management plan that will be implemented during the construction phase to reduce the impact on passengers and the overall operation of the train.</p>
(c) the transboundary nature of the impact;	Not applicable to this development.
(d) the intensity and complexity of the impact;	<p>The majority of the impacts are associated with the construction phase of the proposed development (minimum period of six weeks when the bridge is closed). Therefore, given the duration of the works and scale of the proposed development, in addition to the implementation of appropriate best practice measures, it is not anticipated that proposed development will result in intense or complex impacts. Intense and complex impacts are also unlikely to occur during the operational phase. A summary of the significance of effects is provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population and human health (from noise and air emissions):             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Construction Phase: There may be a <b>slight</b> effect on human health from dust and noise generation during this phase.</li> <li>○ Operation Phase: <b>Neutral</b> No effects on human health will occur during this phase.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ecology / Biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Construction Phase: There will be a <b>slight</b> impact as the new bridge will be constructed where the existing bridge is currently located and a small area will need to be cleared to create the hard standing area required for the crane.</li> <li>○ Operation Phase: <b>Neutral</b>. No effects on the ecology will occur during this phase.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Water (hydrology and geohydrology):             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Construction Phase: <b>Not significant</b> impact during construction activities. The development area is not located hydraulically connected to the River Suir. The implementation of mitigation measures and water management at the site will prevent any significant impacts on surface and groundwater.</li> <li>○ Operation Phase: <b>Imperceptible</b> due to the implementation of stormwater management practices already discussed through the design.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Type and Characteristics of the potential impacts	Appraisal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land and Soils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Construction Phase: <b>Not significant</b> as the area is already disturbed and not within a protected area.</li> <li>○ Operation Phase: <b>Neutral</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Landscape and visual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Construction Phase: <b>Not significant</b> as the area already has a pedestrian bridge. The new bridge has also been designed to be more aesthetically pleasing. The project will not alter the existing landscape.</li> <li>○ Operation Phase: <b>Slight positive</b> effect as the project will not alter the existing landscape but the new bridge will have better aesthetics.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Cultural Heritage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Construction Phase: <b>Neutral</b>. No effects on the cultural heritage will occur during this phase.</li> <li>○ Operation Phase: <b>Neutral</b>. No effects on the cultural heritage will occur during this phase.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Waste Disposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Construction Phase: <b>Not significant</b> as waste generated will be non-hazardous and removed to an authorised recovery/disposal facility.</li> <li>○ Operation Phase: <b>Neutral</b> as no waste will be generated by the bridge when operational.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Transport: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Construction phase: <b>slight negative effect</b> on rail transport during three weekends of construction and a <b>moderate negative effect</b> on pedestrians / cyclists during the construction phase. Effects will be temporary.</li> <li>○ Operation Phase: <b>Slight positive effect</b> as the development will provide a safer crossing of the railway line by cyclists and pedestrians.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
(e) the probability of the impact;	Owing to the relatively straight forward nature of the proposed development, coupled with the potential impacts stated and the sensitive receptors located close to the proposed development site, there is a high degree of certainty in the magnitude, intensity, duration or consequences of any impact identified; however, as discussed, the likelihood of significant negative effects on the receiving environment is extremely low due to the planned implementation of such best practice construction measures. No long-term negative, significant effects are predicted as likely.
(f) the expected onset, duration, frequency, reversibility of the impact;	With the appropriate control measures, potential impacts, including noise and dust impacts, will be temporary (12 weeks) and transient in nature during the construction phase and will be reversible over time. Positive effects during the operational phase would likely be permanent.
(g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A)(b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment; and	As discussed, the proposed development is unlikely to result in significant effects on the environment. Should the construction of a number of developments, as identified within the planning search, occur at the same time, then there is potential for negative effects on the existing environment. However, these would likely be temporary in duration, occurring primarily during the construction phase only; therefore, no significant cumulative effects are anticipated. Consequently, there is likely to be a positive, long term, slight to moderate cumulative effect from the proposed development with other cycleway and pedestrian routes in the area.
(h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.	The proposed development is not anticipated to result in any significant effects on the existing environment. However, where temporary, negative and transient impacts are likely to occur, the implementation of appropriate best practice measures will reduce the duration and intensity of the impact.

**Table 3-7: EU Guidance EIA Screening Checklist**

Questions to be considered	Yes/No/? Briefly Describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?
1. Will construction, operation, decommissioning or demolition work of the Project involve actions that will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies, etc.	Yes- There will be some local minor physical changes to topography which will involve the demolition of the existing bridge and the construction of the new bridge.	No- given the scale and type of the works, significant effects are not anticipated due to the minor physical changes proposed.
2. Will construction or the operation of the Project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or are in short supply?	No- The new bridge will be constructed in place of the existing bridge. All construction materials will be sourced locally and do not fall within the non-renewable or short supply category. Water, where required, will be brought to site for domestic purposes. No water will be needed for construction activities.	No- All imported materials will be sourced from licensed suppliers. The land where the new bridge will be located is currently used for the existing bridge. There will be no requirement for water abstraction for the proposed works. None of the above resources have been identified as being in short supply in the area.
3. Will the Project involve the use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health, to the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	No- The generation of dust will occur during construction only. Minor amounts of fuel and oils will be used for machinery on site.	No – A CEMP will be in place to control dust and other emissions. A Health and Safety Plan will be in place and all site staff will be briefed on the Health and Safety Plan prior to commencing works.
4. Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes- During demolition and construction only. Minor quantities of organic and inert materials will be generated from site clearance, excavations and demolition works. Minor quantities of waste (Debris and rubbish) will be generated at the construction site compound.	No- Debris and rubbish created at the construction site compound will be recovered/disposed of at an authorised facility. In addition, any excess construction materials will be returned to the supplier. Waste from the demolition works will also be recovered / disposed of at an appropriately authorised facility. Waste management shall form part of the overall CEMP for the construction phase and contain a number of control measures for the management of waste generated at the proposed development site.
5. Will the Project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air or lead to exceeding Ambient Air Quality standards in Directives 2008/50/EC and 2004/107/EC)?	Yes- The construction phase will produce limited air pollutants (dust). These pollutants will however not be hazardous, toxic or noxious. Climatic impacts are expected to be minor emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere from truck movements and the operation of site construction equipment.	No-Levels during the construction phase are not anticipated to create air pollution that will exceed permitted thresholds. Considering the scale of the proposed development, effects on existing air quality are not anticipated to be significant. Best practice construction management techniques and guidance will be followed during the construction of the proposed development. During the operational phase, the proposed development will encourage more people to use public transport, hence, reducing the emissions in air.
6. Will the Project cause noise and vibration or the releasing of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes- The construction phase of the proposed development has the potential to increase noise levels at noise sensitive locations surrounding the proposed development site (residential areas). The existing public lighting will be replaced and upgraded as part of the works.	No - With appropriate control measures in place, no significant effects on sensitive receptors are anticipated. For example, it is assumed noise limits will be outlined within the noise and vibration management section of the CEMP. These limits will be adhered to at all times during the construction phase of the proposed development. While the lighting will be replaced, no additional lighting will be introduced to the area.



Questions to be considered	Yes/No/? Briefly Describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?
7. Will the Project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	Yes- During construction phase for example, from possible leaks and spills of hydrocarbon from construction vehicles to be used on site.	No - Adverse water quality effects could potentially arise due to the accidental release of pollutants such as fuels, oils and other such substances to the aquatic / groundwater environment. However, with appropriate measures in place, no significant effects are anticipated. The site is not directly hydrologically connected to the River Suir.
8. Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project that could affect human health or the environment?	No- The proposed development project will be governed by a Health & Safety Plan to manage the risk of accidents from the design stages through to the completion of the construction and maintenance phases. During operation, the proposed development does not introduce any new or additional risk.	Not Applicable
9. Will the Project result in environmentally related social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	Yes- The construction phase will create short term jobs. The development will result in a safe walkway for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the rail line.	No- Given the scale and timeframe of the proposed development, significant effects are not anticipated.
10. Are there any other factors that should be considered such as consequential development which could lead to environmental impacts or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	Yes- There will be temporary and transient impacts from noise, traffic and dust associated with construction of the proposed development in combination with the surrounding developments, if these were to occur at the same time.	No- Given size and type of development, potential effects are considered to be not significant and temporary. There is likely to be a positive and long term cumulative effect from the proposed development for pedestrians and cyclists needed to cross the rail line.
11. Is the project located within or close to any areas which are protected under international, EU, or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the Project?	No – There are no SPAs or SACs located within the development area. There are three SAC occurring within 15km of the proposed development but no SPAs. While the bridge site is less than 500m north of the River Suir, which is a designated SAC, there is no hydraulic connection between the bridge and the river.	No.
12. Are there any other areas on or around the location that are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, that could be affected by the Project?	No - While the bridge site is less than 500m north of the River Suir, which is a designated SAC, there is no hydraulic connection between the bridge and the river.	No.
13. Are there any areas on or around the location that are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, overwintering, migration, which could be affected by the Project?	No - The railway is in a cutting at the bridge site and the cutting embankments are well vegetated. An initial assessment of these embankments, by an MWP Ecologist, suggests that there are no protected species in the immediate area of the bridge.	No.
14. Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters (or features of the marine environment) on or around the location that could be affected by the Project?	Yes- The development location is less than 500m north of the River Suir which is tidal as far as Carrick-on-Suir. The groundwater aquifer is	No- There are no hydraulic connections between the development site and the river. Best practice standards, environmental guidelines and control measures are incorporated into the design and will be defined

Questions to be considered	Yes/No/? Briefly Describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?
	described as Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock which is Generally Moderately Productive	in the CEMP and adhered to in order to reduce the likelihood of potential impacts on the water environment (groundwater). No significant impacts on water resources are anticipated.
15. Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the Project?	No - Visual sensitivity of the landscapes in this area are generally Low to Medium as the existing bridge is located on the rail line and between residential areas. The development area is not located in a high landscape or scenic value location.	No- Due to the scale of and duration of the construction works, significant landscape and visual effects are considered unlikely. The proposed development is unlikely to adversely alter the established landscape character of this area upon completion as it is an upgrade of an existing development.
16. Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the Project?	Yes- During the construction phase, access from one side of the railway line to the other for pedestrians and cyclists will be limited. Access to the river and to the park will be limited for residents on the north of the railway line. There is also potential that train operation will be impacted during the construction phase.	No- Given the scale of the proposed development, significant effects are unlikely to occur. The contractor will also develop a traffic / transport management plan to reduce the impact. Effects will be temporary in nature.
17. Are there any transport routes on or around the location that are susceptible to congestion, or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the Project?	Yes- During the construction phase, there may be minor and temporary impacts on traffic congestion within the area.	No-A Traffic Management Plan (TMP) will be put in place before commencement of work. Train journeys will not be impacted.
18. Is the Project in a location in which it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Yes- The most sensitive receptors are residential properties surrounding the proposed development site to the north and south. The area is urban around the development site.	No - Temporary landscape and visual effects on a number of residential properties located close to the proposed development site during construction phase. Given scale and duration of works, effects are unlikely to be significant. At completion of construction works, visual effects are generally considered to be not significant during the operational phase as the new bridge will replace an existing bridge.
19. Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location that could be affected by the Project?	No- There are no cultural heritage assets on or in proximity to the development site that will be affected as a result of the proposed development	No
20. Is the Project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	No- The proposed development will be constructed on the same footprint as the existing bridge once demolished.	No
21. Are there existing land uses within or around the location e.g. homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining or quarrying that could be affected by the Project?	No- there will be no land use changes as a result of the proposed development.	No
22. Are there any plans for future land uses within or around the location that could be affected by the Project?	No- The planning applications within close proximity to the proposed development are predominantly small-scale residential extensions.	Not Applicable

Questions to be considered	Yes/No/? Briefly Describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?
23. Are there areas within or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, that could be affected by the Project?	Yes- The project development site is located in the town of Carrick on Suir. There may be a localised impact on residential in the vicinity of the works during the construction phases.	No- During the construction phase, it is anticipated that there may be potential noise, vibration and traffic impacts; however, associated effects will be temporary and therefore are not likely to cause significant effects to sensitive receptors in the area. During the operation, it is anticipated that the proposed development will likely result in a positive and long-term effect to the population.
24. Are there any areas within or around the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities, that could be affected by the Project?	Yes- there are several schools and pre-schools south of the railway line which may currently be used by residents north of the rail line, and by whom the existing bridge is used. During the construction phase these individuals will be required to use an alternate route. .	No- During the construction phase, it is anticipated that users of the bridge will be affected, however there are alternate routes available. Construction works will be temporary and access will be reinstated during operation. It is anticipated that the proposed development will likely result in a positive and long-term impact to communities in the area.
25. Are there any areas within or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, that could be affected by the Project?	No- While there are three SACs located within 15km of the proposed development site, there are no high quality or scarce resources located near the development site. The development will not have an impact on any of areas. The River Suir Blueway is located to the south of the site but will not be affected by the development.	No- Best practice standards, environmental guidelines and control measures will be defined in the CEMP and adhered to in order to reduce the likelihood of potential impacts on the water environment. No significant impacts on the river are anticipated
26. Are there any areas within or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, that could be affected by the Project?	Yes- The site is located less than 500m north of the River Suir. The EPA has classified this river as being 'At Risk' of failing to meet its Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives.	No – there is no hydraulic connection between the proposed development area and the River Suir.
27. Is the Project location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the Project to present environmental problems?	No - The OPW has no past records of occurrence of flooding in and around the site area.	Not Applicable
Summary of features of Project and of its location indicating the need for EIA: N/A		

## 4. Conclusion

Having considered the proposed development in the context of mandatory EIA under the regulations, there is no requirement for an EIA. The proposal was also further assessed in accordance with the regulated criteria for determining whether or not a development would or would not be Likely to have Significant Effects on the Environment as specified in Annex III of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by 2014/52/EU).

Having regard to the characteristics of the proposal in consideration of the size, nature, location and characteristic of the potential impacts, it is considered that the proposed development would not introduce any new or additional effects of a significant or adverse nature such as to have a significant effect on the environment or warrant an EIA.

## 5. References

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