

MWP

EIA Screening Report
Cahir Town Centre Public Realm Plan

Tipperary County Council

October 2021

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MWP, Engineering and Environmental Consultants

Address: Park House, Bessboro Road, Mahon, Cork, T12 X251

www.mwp.ie



1. Introduction

Tipperary County Council is preparing a Part 8 application for a Public Realm Enhancement located in Cahir Town Centre, Co. Tipperary (hereafter referred to as the ‘proposed development site’). It is proposed to construct a new streetscape layout for Town Square, Castle Street, Church Street, Old Church Street and St Mary’s Road with new alignment design for footpaths and trafficked areas incorporating new paving, kerbing, hard and soft landscaping and street furniture.

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 site’s conservation objectives; this will also accompany the planning application.

1.1 Scope

Under EU and Irish legislation (detailed in Section 3), an Environmental Impact Assessment (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.

2. Description of the Proposed Development

2.1 Site Location and Description

The subject site is located in Cahir town centre. The town of Cahir is located on the River Suir in Co. Tipperary and lies approximately 13km west of Clonmel and approximately 65 km northeast of Cork. The town is serviced by the R640 Regional Road and by a rail connection to Limerick Junction and to Waterford. The town is located approximately 2km south east of the M8 Cork to Dublin motorway and the junction with the N24 Waterford to Limerick road.

Cahir is located within the Electoral Division of ‘Caher’. CSO data indicates that, in 2016, this ED had a total population of 1,134 person’s resident. The dominant land-use surrounding the town is agricultural.

The site location is provided in **Figure 2.1**.

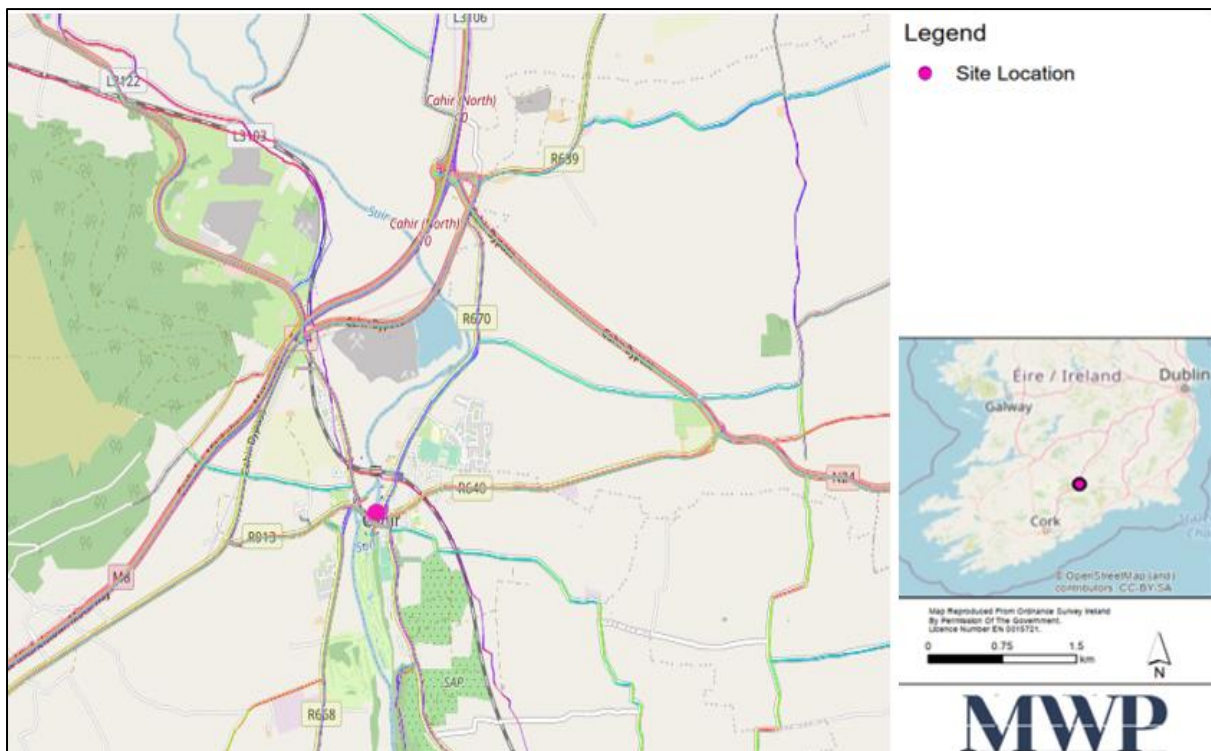


Figure 2.1 Site Location

2.2 Proposed Development

The proposed development includes for public realm refurbishment and enhancement in Cahir’s Town Centre comprising the upgrading of existing Square and approach streets with new high quality paving, kerbing, landscaping, public lighting, improved street furniture and utility diversions/works.

The proposed development will be carried out on Castle Street, Cahir Town Square, St Mary’s Road, Old Church Street and Church Street in the townland of Townparks, Cahir, Co. Tipperary.

Nature and Extent of Proposed Development:

- New raised table shared surface on Castle Street from Cahir Castle to the Castle Car Park entrance to the East and The Mall entrance to the North.
- New kerb alignment and pavement surfaces from the Castle Street Car Park entrance to The Square junction, including upgrading of pedestrian crossing, installation of new public lighting and soft landscaping.
- New streetscape layout for Cahir Square with new alignment design for footpaths, parking areas and trafficked areas incorporating a raised table shared surface from the junction with Castle Street, to the Junction with St Marys Road and to North of The Fountain, new kerb and pavement surfaces throughout The Square, new hard and soft landscaping, new street furniture, new bollards, new bicycle racks, installation of new and upgrade of existing public lighting.
- Alteration of on-street parking for Castle Street, The Square, Church Street, Old Church Street and The Square end of St Mary's Road.
- New pavement surfaces on St. Mary's Road, Old Church Street and Church Street.
- New controlled pedestrian crossings and soft landscaping on Church Street and Old Church St.
- Undergrounding of overhead electrical cables, installation of new public lighting and upgrading of existing public lighting across the entire project area. The Public Lighting scheme proposed uses single and double tear drop type LED lanterns mounted on 8m heritage columns together with localised uplighters in the Square and recessed wall lights to steps. All lighting schemes shall be in accordance with Tipperary County Councils Public Lighting Policy and IS EN 13201. These lights shall be controlled via individual dusk to dawn photocells.
- Development of associated drainage services and utilities across the entire project area. The proposed public realm project is a refurbishment of the existing streetscape and is a replacement of the existing hardstanding areas within the town square and approach roads. The area of hardstanding within the town centre will not be altered by the proposed design. SuDS techniques are incorporated into the design to provide sustainable surface water management. Where new trees have been introduced a localised reservoir beneath the trees is included as a SuDS design measure. Where manhole cover locations need to be repositioned to suit new line and level of the proposed streetscape design, this will be coordinated with Irish Water at detailed design. The proposed scheme does not include any new demands on the sewerage facilities.
- All associated works.

Footpath space will be widened, traffic calming will be developed through build out, reduced road carriageway widths and improved pedestrian crossings. Existing on-street parking to be reduced from the Square to a new Town Centre Car Park with a 86 spaces just off the Square to the north east. This car park is the subject of a separate Part 8 Planning application.

The traffic flow through the Square will be changed from the current two way on both the east and west sides of the Square to two way flow on the east side only. Service and emergency vehicle access will be maintained to the west side of the Square. Pedestrian movement will be prioritised by the design.

The development also includes for public realm refurbishment and enhancement on Castle Street, Church Street, Old Church Street and the Square end of St Mary's Road. A raised table on Castle Street will link the Castle entrance with the river walkways to the north.

The proposed development will comprise a total works area of 8,500m² and will predominantly involve the regeneration of Cahir Town Centre. The land area of the proposed development is limited to and contained within the area of Cahir Square and its four approach Roads (Castle Street to the west, Church Street to the north, Old

Church Street to the east and St Mary's Road to the south). The proposed development is therefore relatively small in scale and will be enclosed within the existing urban area.

2.2.1 Operational Phase

The proposed regeneration plan focuses on the promotion of cycling and walking while minimising the impact of vehicles within the town center. Currently the Square has a two-way roads around each side with parking on both of the roads on the east and west side of the Square. The result is a Square that is dominated by traffic with very little space given over to pedestrians and public realm. The four approach roads to the Square have parking on one or both sides with the footpaths being quite tight in places.

The proposed scheme removes the two-lane road and parking from the west side of the Square to create a significant public realm space. The footpaths on the other sides of the Square and on the approach roads are widened to improve facilities for pedestrians. There will be a reduction in the number of parking spaces within the Square and on the four approach roads. However, this loss will be more than offset by the construction of a new 86 space public car park to the northeast of the Square, with a pedestrian link directly to the Square. This is a separate scheme that has already been submitted for Part 8.

2.2.2 Construction phase

The renewal and reconfiguration of the square and street layouts will necessitate the excavation of the existing footpaths and pavements, formation of suitable subbase and levels, relocation of existing utilities, installation of new street surface paving, street furniture and lighting. Footpaths will be broken by mechanical hammer and roadway surfaces planed, the resultant materials will be loaded onto a dump truck by machine bucket for removal to an appropriately licensed waste facility. The majority of ESB cables within Cahir currently run underground. Where localised sections of overground cabling exist, new trenches will be required to underground these cables. Additional trenches will only be required where relocation of services is necessary. This will be advised during detailed design. The new finishes to the streets will be a mixture of high-quality limestone paving slabs, limestone or granite setts and asphalt.

The works will be undertaken on a phased basis with Construction due to commence in late 2022. It is anticipated that construction work will be completed within 12 months. Working hours will be 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 2pm on Saturday. No work will be undertaken on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

The phasing of the construction works shall be outlined in the Construction & Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The CEMP will be prepared by the appointed contractor and issued to TCC for agreement prior to works commencing and will be implemented for the duration of the works.

Access to the Square, approach roads and properties within Cahir will be maintained at all times during the construction phase. This may require limited night works for final surfacing and utility installation etc. Scheduling of these activities will be addressed in the CEMP.

The construction works will always allow one lane of traffic on any section of road being worked on.

Bus routes will be maintained through the town.

The number of construction staff on site will vary throughout the works. The nature of the Cahir Town Centre Public Realm Plan enables multiple crews to work simultaneously in different areas. A typical crew will have 4-5 members plus a machine operator for excavation works. Where street paving resurfacing works are being undertaken, the crew will increase to 12-15 members plus associated plant, and delivery trucks. It is expected that the peak number of staff working on the Public Realm project will be no more than 20-25 staff at any one time.

A detailed Construction and Traffic Management Plan will be prepared by the Main Contractor carrying out the works and issued to TCC for agreement prior to any works starting on site.

The Construction and Traffic Management Plan will include details of the location of construction site offices, staff parking, access routes and set down areas for construction vehicles for the delivery and removal of materials, this will be agreed with TCC.

Over the duration of the Plan, it is estimated that approximately 400 truck journeys would be required for the project based on estimated quantities of materials at the preliminary design stage. This equates to approximately 8 truck per week over the duration of the project.

The Contractor will ensure that the proposed works are carried out in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No. 291 of 2013). As construction works are standard in nature and well understood, there is a low probability that accidents will occur. Normal good construction practices are to be employed and will ensure that the risk of accidents will be low. Having regard to substances or technologies used, it is envisaged that the risk of accidents, is very low and therefore will not result in significant environmental effects.

Figure 2.2 Site Layout/Project Plan

2.3 Environmental Setting

The proposed development is located within the Electoral Division (ED) of 'Caher'. CSO data indicates that, in 2016, this ED had a total population of 1,134 residents.

The Corine 2018 land cover is categorised as Artificial Surfaces, Urban Fabric and Discontinuous Urban Fabric.

The proposed development is located in the town of Cahir. The surrounding townlands in the region are Townlands, Carrigeen, Caherabbey Upper, Caherabbey Lower, Barnora, Monaraha, Ballyhenebery, Killemlly, Farranlahassry, Killeigh, Lissava Grange Beg and Ballymacadam West.

The underlying soil cover consists of a mixture Made Ground, Sandstone till and Alluvium. The underlying bedrock consists of Limestone.

The River Suir flows in a northwest to southeast direction adjacent to the western extent of the proposed development.

There are several EPA surface-water quality monitoring stations in the vicinity of the town centre. The EPA assessment of water quality is based on the macro-invertebrate community and physio-chemical characteristics of the waterbody at these locations. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) status of the River Suir for the 2013-2018 period was Moderate, based on Biological Status (Poor) and Dissolved Oxygen Saturation (Fail). The EPA has classified the River Suir as being 'At Risk' of failing to meet its Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives.

The AA Screening identified 2 No. Natura 2000 sites comprising 2 No. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) occurring within 15km of the proposed development, as well as 7 No. proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs).

In terms of zoning, Public Realm Improvements have been identified for the square in the town centre in the Local Area Plan (LAP). The Cahir LAP 2011 states the following in relation to redevelopment of the square:

'The Square is the focal point of the town but is currently dominated by car parking rather than retailing and recreational uses. The relocation of car parking from the centre of The Square to the Castle Street Car Park and the redevelopment of the Square as a landscaped plaza, essentially making the town centre a pedestrian priority area will greatly enhance the Town Centre. The use of landscaping and street furniture will encourage residents and tourists alike to use this space and in turn improve the vitality and vibrancy of the area, blurring the barrier between buildings and the street and encouraging uses to spill out from the shops and cafés into the public realm. The development of a central plaza in the town would also enable the relocation of the Farmers Market from its existing location at the car park adjacent to the Craft Granary to The Square and could also be used as an entertainment space for street performance when and if the need arose. It is intended to restore the Memorial Fountain to its former condition and to reinstate the water supply to this feature. Planting will also be enhanced on either end of the proposed plaza. Ultimately the improvement works set out above will assist in developing the retail function, café culture and vitality and vibrancy of the town centre.'

The Proposed Cahir Local Area Plan 2021-2027 has now been published and further emphasises the need for Public Realm Improvements at the Square. The proposed plan sets out the following objectives in relation to the town centre development:

Objective TCO4.1

'Continue to develop and implement the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy in partnership with the Rural Regeneration Development Fund and other funding sources as may be available'

Objective TCO4.2

‘Prepare a plan for the improvement of the public realm in Cahir, including proposals for redesign of the square, improving the pedestrian environment for residents and visitors, and traffic management in the town’.

3. EIA Screening Process

This section of the report outlines the legislative basis for EIA Screening in order to determine if 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:

1. A project of a type listed in Annex I; or
2. A project of a type listed in Annex II which either meets thresholds or criteria set by the Member State; or
3. 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 May 2017 and was transposed into Irish planning law on 1 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 EU 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

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 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. See section 3.5 below.

3.2 Relevant Guidance

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

- EPA's draft 'Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' (2017) (hereafter referred to as the 'EPA draft 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's 'Interpretation of definitions of project categories of annex I and II of the EIA Directive' (2015);
- EC's 'Guidance on EIA Screening' (2001);
- Government of Ireland's 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Board Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, (2018);
- Department of Housing Planning and Local Government's (DHPLG) 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment' (2018); and
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR)'s 'Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Practice Note' (2021).

3.3 Appropriate Assessment

Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 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:

The assessment results were used to inform this EIA Screening that no evidence of protected species or qualifying interest species or habitats were recorded during the site walkover. A number of bird species were recorded, primarily in the vicinity of the bridge. No invasive alien species were recorded during the survey. Habitats within

the footprint of the project site were classified according to Fossitt (2000). A total of five habitats were identified within the study area comprising of habitats primarily of low ecological value, with buildings and artificial surfaces being the most prominent habitat.

3.4 Methodology

Ascertaining whether this proposed development requires an EIA is determined by reference to mandatory and discretionary provisions set out in the Roads Act 1993 (as amended)/Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

EIA screening was undertaken in line with Section 3.2 of the EPA’s draft ‘Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Report’ (EPA, 2017). The assessment also takes into consideration the DHPLG’s ‘Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment’ (DHPLG, 2018)

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.

The proposed development does not fall under any class of development listed in Part 1 of Schedule 5.

Consideration was given to the following projects listed in Part 2:

Table 3-1 – Summary of the Mandatory Legislative Requirements for Environmental Impact Assessment Impact Screening

Mandatory	Mandatory Criteria Met?
Part 2 (10) (b) (iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.	No

It can be concluded that the proposed development does not fall under any class of development or project type listed in Schedule 5.

Therefore, the proposed development is not a mandatory project for EIA under Schedule 5, neither does it fall under any of the thresholds specified, therefore mandatory EIA does not apply.

3.4.2 Sub-threshold Assessment

Where the proposed development does not meet, or exceed, the applicable threshold (Table 3-1), 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 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 proposed development against the criteria included in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations (as amended) (**Table 3-3**). 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:

1. Characteristics of project/proposed development;
2. Location of project/proposed development; and
3. Type and Characteristics of Potential Impacts.

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. 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).

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 3-4**).

Table 3-1 Schedule 7 Criteria Assessment

Characteristics of Proposed Development	Appraisal
(a) the size and design of the whole proposed;	<p>Small scale project, with a total works area of approximately 8,500m². The renewal and reconfiguration of the square and street layouts will necessitate the excavation of the existing footpaths and pavements, formation of suitable subbase and levels, relocation of existing utilities, installation of new street surface paving, street furniture and lighting. Footpaths will be broken by mechanical hammer and roadway surfaces planed; the resultant materials will be loaded onto a dump truck by machine bucket for removal to an appropriately licensed waste facility. The majority of ESB cables within Cahir currently run underground. Where localised sections of overground cabling exist, new trenches will be required to underground these cables. Additional trenches will only be required where relocation of services is necessary. This will be advised during detailed design. The new finishes to the streets will be a mixture of high-quality granite paving slabs, limestone or granite setts and asphalt.</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 06/09/21. The search flagged planning applications within a period dating back to 2016; any refused, invalid or withdrawn applications were omitted. Furthermore, any small-scale residential type developments, such as extensions and modifications, minor amendments to existing dwellings and changes of use developments were omitted from the search. The most recent (<5 years) grants of planning for the townlands adjacent to the proposed development have been reviewed.</p> <p>The findings show small, medium to large-scale developments within the 5 km radius scope that have been approved or on-going. The majority of planning applications within 5km of the proposed development are related to development of and alterations to residential properties and are considered to be small in scale. Current grants of permission include works such as demolition, remediation and extensions to existing private dwellings and commercial buildings in Cahir town (Tipperary County Council on-line planning enquiry system). Tipperary County Council has a separate Part 8 application to undertake the development of a 86 space public car park off Church Street to the northeast of the Square. An existing derelict building will be demolished to form the access to the car park. There will also be a direct pedestrian link to the north east of the Square. No significant additional environmental impacts are anticipated due to the concurrent construction of these proposals.</p> <p>Given the size, scale and location of the proposed works, it is not expected that the proposal will act in combination with the above projects to cause significant cumulative or in-combination impacts. It is concluded that significant cumulative and or in-combination impacts, between these activities and the proposal, are not reasonably foreseeable.</p> <p>An AA Screening has been prepared for this project and concluded that there would be no significant cumulative impacts on the adjacent Natura 2000 sites.</p>
(c) 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 within the town centre, and the soil underlying the town centre site constitutes Made Ground.</p> <p>The Suir River forms part of the Lower River Suir SAC. A Screening for Appropriate Assessment has also been carried out. There will be no requirement for water abstraction for the proposed development as water requirements will be met by the public water supply.</p> <p>Construction activity will include shallow and localised excavations up to an approximate maximum depth of 200mm bgl. It is anticipated that most of the material excavated will be existing road surfacing, concrete footpaths and signage, and it is unlikely that any in-situ rock breaking will be required. It is proposed to use high quality natural stone material in the upgrade works. Overall, it can be concluded that there is no evidence to suggest the project will be detrimental to natural resources. The natural resources required including land, soil and geo-resources are typical for a project of this scale. A desktop study and ecological site walkover did not indicate loss of any protected plant or animal species.</p> <p>The following materials and approximate volumes are required for the works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete – 1,600m³ • Precast/Granite setts/Tarmac/Resin Bound path – 1,000m³

Characteristics of Proposed Development	Appraisal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topsoil – Small quantities for tree pits and rain gardens within the urban space -Neutral • Ducting – 2,200m.
(d) the production of waste;	<p>Given the scale and type of development, there is unlikely to be any significant volumes of waste generated during the construction phase. Waste is expected to consist of concrete from existing footpaths and surface planing from the existing roadways. Small quantities of incidental waste materials such as pallets and packaging will also be generated. No hazardous waste material will be generated.</p> <p>All waste will be managed in accordance with a Construction Waste Management Plan. The plan will be prepared by the main contractor carrying out the works and issued to TCC for agreement prior to any works commencing on site waste will be transferred from the site by a licensed haulier and recovered or disposed of at a suitably authorised waste facility.</p> <p>Volumes are estimated as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete/Blacktop/Precast concrete (average 250mm thickness) – 2,010m³ <p>In addition, any excess construction materials will be returned to the supplier. All construction waste will be managed in accordance with a Construction Waste Management Plan which will be prepared by the main contractor carrying out the works and issued to TCC for agreement prior to any works commencing on site.</p> <p>The proposed scheme does not include any new demands on the sewerage facilities.</p> <p>It is considered that the production of any waste associated with the construction of the 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>The proposed works may cause a temporary disturbance or nuisance to occupants of the immediate and surrounding environs of the town centre. Works will be very localised to minimize any disturbance. The extents of excavated surface will be less than 500m² at all times. Runoff will be directed to the existing drainage system after passing through silt traps located in existing gullies. The discharge will be to the town main drainage system.</p> <p>Potential pollution pathways and nuisances for consideration include increases in exhaust emissions to air as a result of construction machinery; noise and vibration from equipment use; social effects as a result of temporary traffic diversions; leaks and spills of hydrocarbon containing materials used, and runoff of material to nearby watercourses. 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>
(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>Important considerations are the potential risks of the proposed development causing a major accident¹ 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>Given the temporary to short-term nature of the proposal and the small scale of the project, 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. In the case of the occurrence of a severe weather event such as flooding, work will be curtailed. A Stage 1 and 2 Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) was undertaken for the project which concludes that the site is in Flood Zone C (low risk), coastal flooding does not occur, and the risk of pluvial, groundwater flooding and flooding from artificial drainage systems is considered low. The proposed scheme will not adversely impact flooding within the town or in areas upstream/downstream of the site.</p>

¹ 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).

Characteristics of Proposed Development	Appraisal
	<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>During the operational phase, the proposed pathway design will ensure that surface water drains quickly from the pathway via over-the-edge drainage; thereby reducing the risk of flooding in the area.</p>
(g) the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).	<p>There will be minor temporary nuisances associated with the project. The proposal will include noise from machinery on site (short duration, temporary). The project is a relatively small in scale, which will not involve significant risks to human health. 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.</p>
Location of Proposed Development	Appraisal
(a) the existing and approved land use	<p>The proposed development site is located in the town centre area, currently used for retail and recreational activities. Public Realm Improvements have been identified for the square at the town centre in the Cahir Local Area Plan 2021. The Corine 2018 land cover is categorised as Artificial Surfaces, Urban Fabric and Discontinuous Urban Fabric. The proposed development will enhance the centre of Cahir by providing socio-economic, cultural and environmental benefits for residents, businesses and visitors. There will be no change in existing land-use. The works will be carried out in an existing urban area and the modifications will be to existing surfaces and street furniture in the square and streets, and their replacement with materials including high quality natural stone material and proposals which will enhance the aesthetics of the area. According to the Cahir Local Area Plan 2011 the area of proposed works is zoned as Town Centre. 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;	<p>The proposed development does not involve use or destruction of natural resources, such that there would be a significant threat to their regenerative capacity. The proposed works are within the confines of the town centre and confined to particular streets and junctions and do not traverse any designated conservation areas. A Screening for Appropriate Assessment was undertaken, and this concluded there will be no significant impact on any Natura 2000 sites within the zone of potential influence.</p> <p>At no point will water be abstracted from the river Suir during the construction works. Construction materials, including macadam and concrete will be imported from outside the area during the construction phase. All imported materials will be sourced from licensed suppliers.</p>
(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 located within an urban area, adjacent to the River Suir. The works are in Cahir town centre, on the east bank of the Suir river, which forms part of the Lower River Suir SAC. Under existing conditions within the town, surface water enters the drainage system including existing silt traps and gullies. This water ultimately discharges to the Suir river. The development will not create additional run off and will continue to function within the capacity of the natural environment.</p> <p>During construction daily inspections of water courses will be undertaken as part of the Construction and Environmental Management Plan to be implemented by the Contractor.</p>
(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;	<p>The proposed development is not located within a coastal zone but is adjacent to the River Suir. The River Suir enters the Celtic Sea at Waterford some 67km to the southeast.</p>

Characteristics of Proposed Development		Appraisal
(iii)	mountain and forest areas;	The site is located within the town centre of Cahir. There are forestry and mountains in the greater region, but none will be affected by the project.
(iv)	nature reserves and parks;	There are no nature reserves or parks in the area that will be directly affected by the project. Cahir Park is located to the south of the proposed development and will not be impacted by the construction works or the operational phase.
(v)	areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive;	The proposed development is adjacent to the Lower River Suir SAC (00137) and approximately 8.3 km east of the Galtee Mountains SAC (001952). As identified in the AA screening there are no other Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the development. A Screening for Appropriate Assessment was undertaken, and this concluded there will be no significant impact on any Natura 2000 sites within the zone of potential influence.
(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;	<p>The section of the River Suir adjacent to the project development is presently classified as having a 'Moderate' status for surface water, based on the EPA Catchments database.</p> <p>The EPA has classed the risk of the River Suir of failing to meet its WFD objectives as 'At risk'. The proposed project will not impact negatively on water quality in the River Suir. Surface water will continue to drain into the existing drainage network and no additional pollutants or no additional discharges will enter the water as a result of the project. Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) will be incorporated into the design where appropriate.</p>
(vii)	densely populated areas;	The proposed development site is located in the town of Cahir which has a population of 3,593 according to the 2016 census. The proposed development site is located within the Electoral Division of 'Caher'. Other settlements in the wider vicinity are Clonmel located 13km south east of the proposed development and Tipperary Town 18 km north west of the site. Smaller settlements include Ardfinnan to the south, Bansha to the north west and Ballyclerahan to the north east.
(viii)	landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.	As outlined in the NMS 'Historic Environment Viewer' ² , there are a number of assets recorded on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) in Cahir Town center. There are several listed buildings and cultural heritage assets within the proposed development site. There will be no negative physical impacts on the architectural heritage of the town. The proposed new paving, traffic calming, reduction in car parking spaces and tree planting will result in positive long term visual impacts on the street, streetscape and individual buildings. Overall, the project aims to improve the aesthetics of the town and the improved quality will benefit the cultural features and buildings of the town and any protected structures. If required, the works can be supervised by an Archaeologist.

Type and Characteristics of the potential impacts		Appraisal
(a)	the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	<p>The proposed development comprises a works area of approximately 8,500m² within Cahir town centre. The town has a population of 3,593 people (Census 2016).</p> <p>During the construction phase, the proposed project will affect the local population including those working, visiting and passing through the town. During the operational phase, the magnitude and spatial extent of the project will be confined to the footprint of the project and the local and visiting population.</p>
(b)	the nature of the impact;	<p>Population and Human Health</p> <p>It is likely that there will be potential temporary negative impacts such as noise and dust arising from construction activities, workers and traffic during 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. Best practice measures, which will be outlined in the Contractor's CEMP, will be implemented during the construction phase, including dust suppression measures.</p>

² <https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/> Accessed August 2021

Type and Characteristics of the potential impacts	Appraisal
	<p>A detailed Construction and Traffic Management Plan will be prepared by the Main Contractor carrying out the works and issued to TCC for agreement prior to any works starting on site. The Construction and Traffic Management Plan will include details of the location of construction site offices, staff parking, access routes and set down areas for construction vehicles for the delivery and removal of materials, this will be agreed with TCC.</p> <p>Over the duration of the project, it is estimated that approximately 400 truck journeys would be required for the project based on estimated quantities of materials at the preliminary design stage. This equates to approximately 8 truck per week over the duration of the project.</p> <p>A slight negative temporary effect on the immediate population is predicted during the construction phase. When complete, the planned upgrade of Cahir town centre will have a long term positive impact on both the local population and visitors.</p> <p>Effects will be temporary. Construction will take place over a 12 month period with most disruption taking place in the first number of months e.g. earthworks, excavations, concrete deliveries. Impacts are not complex.</p> <p>A Construction and Environmental Management Plan will be put in place, as will a Traffic Management Plan, both of which will outline best practice measures to reduce impacts during the construction stage.</p> <p>It is not considered that the proposal will result in a significant negative effect on population and human health, either alone, or in combination with other projects, including the proposed car park at Church Street. Overall, the project will have a long term positive effect on the town.</p> <p>Biodiversity</p> <p>An ecological field survey was carried out by MWP on the 8th September 2021. The proposed site is comprised primarily of buildings and artificial surfaces and has no intrinsic ecological value. No evidence of protected species or qualifying interest species or habitats were recorded during the site walkover. A number of bird species were recorded, primarily in the vicinity of the bridge including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wren (Troglodytes troglodytes) - Blackbird (Tardus merula) - Grey Heron (Ardea cinera) - Pied Wagtail (Motacilla alba yarrellii) - Chaffinch (Fringilla coelebs) - Robin (Erithacus rubecula) - Jackdaw (Corvus monedula) - Dipper (Cinclus cinclus) - Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos) <p>No invasive alien species were recorded during the survey. A total of five habitats were identified within the study area as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buildings and Artificial Surfaces BL3 – Project site which primarily comprises of roads, paths and walls of negligible ecological value. 4 no. of heavily modified horse-chestnut (Aesculus hippocastanum) trees located within town centre, in the middle of the project site. - Scattered Trees and Parkland WDS – Three mature lime Tilia species. Trees flanking the east bank of the River Suir within a small area of amenity grassland, adjacent to an access road and outdoor seating area for a local café. These trees have some limited roosting potential for bats and act as a commuting corridor, connecting to a treeline north of the project site.

Type and Characteristics of the potential impacts	Appraisal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stone Walls and Other Stonework BL1 – This habitat is primarily associated with the old stone walls bounding the bridge to the west, and rising from the east bank of the River Suir. This habitat was noted to support species such as Ivy Leaved Toadflax (<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>), Bindweed (<i>Calystegia sepium</i>), Sowthistle (<i>Sonchus</i> spp.) Maiden Hair Spleenwort (<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>), Polypody (<i>Polypodium</i> spp.) and Red Valerian (<i>Centranthus ruber</i>). Along the east bank wall, recorded vegetation also included Hogweed (<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>), and Alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>). There is an old stone wall in the east area of the project site bounding the town’s graveyard. This wall was relatively free of vegetation at the time of the survey, apart from Ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>) and Maiden Hair spleenwort. - Ornamental/Non-Native Shrub WS3 and Flower Beds and Borders BC4 – There are small pockets of ornamental shrubbery in formal beds and flower boxes throughout the project site. - Exposed Calcareous Rock ER2 and Recolonising Bare Ground ED3 - There is a section of exposed calcareous rock at the base of Cahir Castle, separated from the bridge by an area of recolonising bare ground habitat. Both habitats were noted to support species as Herb Robert (<i>Geranium robertianum</i>), Willow (<i>Salix</i> spp.), Ragwort (<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>), Nettle (<i>Urtica</i>), and Willowherb (<i>Epilobium</i> spp.) as well as Valerian and Alder. <p>The proposed development is located adjacent to the River Suir (Lower River Suir SAC (00137) and approximately 8.3 km east of the Galtee Mountains SAC (001952).</p> <p>As concluded in the AA screening, the proposed works will not have an impact on water quality. Therefore, it is considered there will be no disturbance and/or displacement of the species for which the Lower River Suir SAC is designated by virtue of habitat loss and/or alteration.</p> <p>A Construction and Environmental Management Plan will be put in place for the duration of the works. This plan will include measures for monitoring and managing surface water drainage.</p> <p>There will be an imperceptible- to-not significant impact on biodiversity from the proposed works. Construction impacts will temporary and last for approximately 12 months resulting in temporary to short-term effects.</p> <p>It is not considered that the proposal will result in a significant effect on the biodiversity, either alone, or in combination with other projects.</p> <p>Water</p> <p>The proposed development site is localised to Cahir town centre and lies adjacent to the River Suir (Lower River Suir SAC). There is potential for water run-off from the site reaching the River Suir. However, there will be no direct discharges to surface water during the construction phase of the project.</p> <p>The area of hardstanding within the town centre will not be altered by the proposed design. SuDS techniques have been incorporated into the design to provide sustainable surface water management. Where new trees have been introduced a localised reservoir beneath the trees is included as a SuDS design measure. Where manhole cover locations need to be repositioned to suit new line and level of the proposed streetscape design, this will be coordinated with Irish Water at detailed design.</p> <p>With regards to runoff, works will be localised, and the extents of localised excavated surface will be less than 500m² at all times. Runoff will be directed to the existing drainage system after passing through existing silt traps in existing gullies. This will ensure no silt and runoff will enter the drainage network below thus will not impact the Lower River Suir SAC.</p>

Type and Characteristics of the potential impacts	Appraisal
	<p>There is a low probability of significant effects to water as a result of the project.</p> <p>Construction will take place over a 12 period with most disruption taking place in the first number of months e.g. earthworks, excavations, concrete deliveries, therefore impacts will be temporary in nature. No instream works will take place and impacts are not anticipated to be complex. Significant impacts are not envisaged due to scale of development, and the contained nature of site and works. As such, the construction phase of the project is not predicted to result in a significant negative effect on hydrology or surface water quality.</p> <p>Significant cumulative impacts with other projects including the proposed car park off Church Street are unlikely to occur with regards to water.</p> <p>A Construction and Environmental Management Plan will be implemented by the Contractor which will include best practice measures to protect water quality. With regards to use of fuels/oils, all fuels will be stored within secure and impermeable storage areas. Re-fuelling of plant and equipment will only take place within designated areas. The temporary site compound will be located at least 25 metres from any drains or other water features.</p> <p>Land and Soils</p> <p>The extent of land and soil affected will mainly localised to the footprint of the project.</p> <p>The town of Cahir is underlain by Limestone (occasionally cherty) of the Kilsheelan Formation. The underlying soil cover consists mainly of Made Ground with sections of Sandstone till (Devonian) and Alluvium Undifferentiated. Modifications will be to existing surfaces and street furniture, and their replacement with materials that are broadly similar. Existing road surfacing, concrete footpaths, street furniture and signage will be removed from the work site. Excavation required will be to a maximum approximate depth of 200mm bgl. Geological resources required are typical for this type of development. 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>Changes to land and soils as a result of the project will result in effects which are imperceptible given that there is no land loss and pavements and footpaths will be replaced with upgraded natural materials.</p> <p>There is a low probability of significant effects to land as a result of the project. Significant cumulative impacts are unlikely to occur.</p> <p>Construction will take place over a 12 month period with most disruption taking place in the first number of months e.g. earthworks, excavations, concrete deliveries. Impacts are not complex.</p> <p>A Construction and Environmental Management Plan will be put in place for the duration of the works. This plan will include measures for dealing with soils and other excavated materials.</p> <p>Air and Climate</p> <p>The main air quality impacts will be associated with dust generation during site preparation and construction works. The implementation of best management practices as part of the CEMP, will minimise the generation of dust during the construction phase. With the adoption of these measures, it is anticipated that the dust produced would not cause a significant effect on the environment. Effects are predicted to be slight negative in the short term during the construction phase and neutral during the operation phase. Significant cumulative impacts on air quality are not predicted as a result of this project in combination with other projects including the proposed car park at Church Street.</p>

Type and Characteristics of the potential impacts	Appraisal
	<p>Climatic impacts are expected to be minor given the scale of the project. Emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere will result from truck movements and the operation of site construction equipment, however, a significant effect is not considered likely given the scale and size of the proposed development. The effects on climate will be temporary and imperceptible.</p> <p>During the operational phase, the effects associated with exhaust emissions from vehicles will be neutral when compared to current levels of emissions..</p> <p>Noise and Vibration The construction phase of the proposed development has the potential to increase noise levels at noise sensitive locations surrounding the site. Impacts from the construction phase will depend on the number and type of equipment employed during the works.</p> <p>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 Tipperary 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, it is expected that effects associated with noise will be slight and temporary in nature.</p> <p>During the operational phase, there will be no additional significant noise and vibration effects from the proposed development.</p> <p>Landscape and Visual Temporary landscape and visual effects on a small number of sensitive receptors; for example, retail and residential properties within the footprint of the works will arise as a result of construction work; however, given the scale and duration of the proposed development, these impacts will be slight and temporary in nature.</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 will be confined to the Town Centre. 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. Overall, the project will improve the aesthetics of the town and the public realm. The visual effects of the project during the operational phase will be positive, slight and long-term in nature.</p> <p>Cultural Heritage There are a number of cultural heritage assets within the 1 km of the proposed development site. While these assets will not be physically impacted by the proposed development, there is the possibility of adverse effects to the setting of the designated assets by noise, dust and vibration from construction related traffic which could diminish the importance of these assets; however, effects will be temporary and with the implementation of best practice measures outlined in the CEMP, significant effects are not anticipated.</p> <p>Material Assets During the construction phase there will be additional traffic on the existing road network. 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 and a Traffic Management Plan will be implemented for the duration of the works.</p>

Type and Characteristics of the potential impacts	Appraisal
	<p>The majority of ESB cables within Cahir currently run underground. Where localised sections of overground cabling exist, new trenches will be required to underground these cables. Additional trenches will only be required where relocation of services is necessary. This will be advised during detailed design. The new finishes to the streets will be a mixture of high-quality limestone paving slabs, limestone or granite setts and asphalt.</p> <p>Due to the duration of the works and their temporary nature, significant effects are not anticipated.</p>
(c) the transboundary nature of the impact;	Not applicable.
(d) the intensity and complexity of the impact;	<p>The majority of the impacts are associated with the construction phase of the proposed development are temporary (i.e., 12 months). 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 either alone or in combination with other proposed projects. Intense and complex impacts are unlikely to occur during the operational phase.</p>
(e) the probability of the impact;	<p>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.</p>
(f) the expected onset, duration, frequency, reversibility of the impact;	<p>With the appropriate control measures, potential impacts, including noise, traffic and dust impacts, will be temporary (12 months) in nature during the construction phase and will be reversible over time.</p> <p>Positive effects during the operational phase would likely be permanent.</p>
(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	<p>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. Other development projects are mostly located at an adequate distance from the proposed development, therefore not expected to cause cumulative effects. The nearest potential development is a car park at Church Street which bounds the north-eastern side of the proposed development site boundary. In-combination effects associated with the regeneration project and the proposed carpark are not predicted to be complex or significant. These projects would likely be temporary in duration, occurring primarily during the construction phase only; therefore, no significant cumulative effects are anticipated.</p> <p>In the operational phase, there is likely to be a positive, long term, slight to moderate cumulative effect from the proposed development in the area.</p>
(h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.	<p>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. This includes implementation of the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and the Traffic Management Plan (TMP).</p>

Table 3-2 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 works of the Project involve actions that will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies, etc.	Yes- There will some local minor physical changes to topography which involve the excavation and upgrade of footpaths and carriageway surfaces, with street furniture, seating, planting, bicycle parking and lighting. The proposed development is relatively small in scale and will be enclosed within the existing urban area. There will be no change to any water bodies.	No- given the scale and type of the works, significant effects to topography and landuse are not anticipated due to the minor physical changes proposed. No changes to water bodies are 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 - Construction of the project will entail the use of soil, stone and water, all of which are typical and readily available construction materials.	No- all imported materials are readily available and will be sourced from licensed suppliers. Excavation requirements at the development are not extensive. 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?	Yes- During construction only. Minor amounts of fuel and oils will be used in construction plant and machinery on site.	No – 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. A CEMP will also be implemented.
4. Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes- During construction only. Minor quantities of organic (green waste) and inert materials will be generated from site clearance and excavations. There will be some minor excavations of made ground. Minor quantities of waste will be generated at the construction site compound.	No- Materials will be ordered on an as needed basis using the Just-In-Time (JIT) philosophy. Any excess construction materials will be returned to supplier. Small quantities of waste generated will be sent to an authorised waste recovery/disposal 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 on 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)?	No -There are no elements of the proposed development that will result in the generation or release of noxious, hazardous or toxic substances to air.	No
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.	No – During the construction phase any potential noise, vibration and traffic effects will be temporary in nature. During operation noise levels will revert to typical baseline levels.

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, there is potential for minor leaks and spills of hydrocarbons from construction plant and machinery used on site to leak to ground.	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 environment. All storage areas and compounds will be located at least 25m away from any water courses and all such materials will be stored in bunded storage containers.
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 is not of a sufficient nature, size or scale likely to cause a major accident or disaster.	No
9. Will the Project result in environmentally related social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	Yes- It is anticipated that the proposed development will improve the town centre of Cahir by improving access, reducing congestion, improving open space thus providing socio-economic, cultural and environmental benefits for residents, businesses and visitors.	No. Whilst effects on population will be positive in the long terms no significant effects on demography, traditional lifestyles, employment are 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 other developments such as the proposed future car park at Church Street.	No - significant positive long terms effects are not predicted due to the temporary nature of the works alone or in combination with other projects.
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?	Yes- There are two (2) Nature 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development.	No- The AA Screening determined that there will be no significant adverse effects on these two Natura sites.
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?	See above. The proposed development site is located adjacent to the River Suir. Development works by their nature have the potential to impact watercourses and groundwater by way of pollution. There is a potential for discharges associated with the construction phase of the proposed development that may impact the receiving watercourses. Cahir Park is located to the south but no effects on this park are predicted.	No- The AA Screening determined that there will be no significant adverse effects are anticipated. Good practices and daily inspections during construction will ensure impacts on watercourses are minimised.
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?	Yes- There are two (2) Nature 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development.	No- The AA Screening determined that there will be no significant adverse effects on these Natura sites.

Questions to be considered	Yes/No/? Briefly Describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?
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 proposed development is located adjacent to the River Suir.	No- There is no direct hydrological connection between the proposed development and this water course. Existing silt traps and gullies on the drainage system will continue to operate during construction and operational phases.
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 – Due to the scale of the development, landscape and visual effects are considered unlikely.	No
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 to the town centre, church, bridge, Cahir GAA Ground, Cahir Park, Cahir Castle car park, and to retail and commercial activities may be temporarily effected.	No- Given the scale of the proposed development, significant effects are unlikely to occur. A Traffic Management Plan will also be put in place for the duration of the works which will manage the movement of traffic and pedestrians during the construction phase.
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 will be impacts on traffic congestion within the area.	No - A detailed Construction and Traffic Management Plan will be prepared by the Main Contractor carrying out the works and issued to TCC for agreement prior to any works starting on site. The Construction and Traffic Management Plan will include details of the location of construction site offices, staff parking, access routes and set down areas for construction vehicles for the delivery and removal of materials, this will be agreed with TCC. Effects on traffic will be temporary in nature during the construction phase. Effects on traffic in the operational phase are predicted to be positive longterm.
18. Is the Project in a location in which it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Yes- the proposed development is located in the town of Cahir and will be particularly visible during the construction phase. Once operational the project will result in an improvement to the visual resource in the town.	No. Visual impacts will be temporary during construction. Post construction the visual effects will be positive in the long term.
19. Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location that could be affected by the Project?	Yes- There are cultural heritage assets within the 500 m of the proposed development site. These include - Cahir Castle which bounds the site western side of the proposed development - Stone sculpture within the Cahir Castle grounds c. 35m south of the site boundary	No – Historical or cultural assets will not be physically impacted by the proposed development.

Questions to be considered	Yes/No/? Briefly Describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 18th/19th Century House within Cahir Castle grounds c.90m south of the site boundary - Memorial Stone along Castle Street - Cahir Bridge 	
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 in an urban area with artificial surfaces on made ground.	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?	<p>Yes- Public open spaces within the Town Centre will be increased as a result of the proposed development.</p> <p>There will be temporary impacts on retail in the vicinity of works, however the completed development is expected to have a long term positive effect on the Town Centre.</p>	No – The proposed development is located in an existing urban area with infrastructure of a similar footprint. The completed regeneration development is expected to have a long term positive effect on the Town Centre.
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 extensions and development.	NA
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 is located in Cahir town centre. There may be a localised impact on residential and commercial properties in the vicinity of the works.	<p>No- During the construction phase, it is anticipated that there may be potential noise, vibration and traffic impacts; however, effects will be temporary and therefore are not likely to cause significant effects to sensitive receptors in the area.</p> <p>Once completed, the proposed development is expected to have a long term positive impact for the surrounding population, by improving the aesthetics and experience within the existing urban area.</p>
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?	There are areas occupied with sensitive land uses which could be affected temporarily including: St Mary’s church, GAA grounds, Our Lady of Mercy primary School, Tipperary ETB on Church St and Montessori Naionra on Church St., Cahir Business & Enterprise Centre. There may be a short-term impact during the construction.	During the construction phase, it is anticipated that there may be potential noise, vibration and traffic impacts to sensitive receptors in the area; however, these impacts will be temporary. 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.	Yes- The proposed development is located adjacent to the River Suir. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) status of the River Suir for the 2013-2018 period was	No- Significant effects are not anticipated as concluded in the AA Screening report.

Questions to be considered	Yes/No/? Briefly Describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?
groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, that could be affected by the Project?	Moderate, based on Biological Status (Poor) and Dissolved Oxygen Saturation (Fail). The EPA has classified the River Suir as being 'At Risk' of failing to meet its Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives.	
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 proposed development is located adjacent to the River Suir. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) status of the River Suir for the 2013-2018 period was Moderate, based on Biological Status (Poor) and Dissolved Oxygen Saturation (Fail). The EPA has classified the River Suir as being 'At Risk' of failing to meet its Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives.	No- Significant effects are not anticipated as concluded in the AA Screening report. There will be no direct discharges to any water course from the construction phase of the project and all discharges will continue to drain to existing gullies which are fitted with silt traps.
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 proposed development is not at risk for the flooding as it is not located close to any flooding area as per the OPW flood maps. A Stage 1 and 2 Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) was undertaken for the project which concludes that the site is in Flood Zone C (low risk), coastal flooding does not occur, and the risk of pluvial, groundwater flooding and flooding from artificial drainage systems is considered low. The proposed scheme will not adversely impact flooding within the town or in areas upstream/downstream of the site.	No
Summary of features of Project and of its location indicating the need for EIA:		
The need for EIA is not indicated by the proposal. Significant impacts on the environment are unlikely by virtue of:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a small-scale project, the construction phase for which is temporary, and which provides for the provision of a Public Realm Enhancement in an urban area. • The proposed development would not cause unusual or significant levels of pollution or nuisance of a type that would require an EIA. • The possibility of effectively reducing negative impacts through best practices and control systems. 		

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.

References

- DoEHLG. (2009). *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities*, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
- DHPLG. (2018). *Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment*, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.
- EC. (2017). *Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on Screening*, European Commission
- EPA. (2017). *Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Report*, Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland.